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Mary Kate Schmermund
Community Resilience in the Face of
Community Violence

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was created to learn more about communities that are labeled as dangerous by external sources. This research explores how organizations and community groups in cities nationally ranked as violent cultivate resilience within the community.

People who work in these cities completed an online survey answering qualitative and demographic questions. The study found that respondents portrayed their communities of work and resilience within those communities in complex ways offering increased insight into resilience at the mezzo level. Themes of community cohesion, organizational collaboration, and community violence were present in several responses.

The research concludes that while violence is part of many participants' experience, resilience, strength, unity, passion, and organization are also present and working to counteract the negative impacts of violence. The study concludes that further research would be helpful in better understanding and expanding communities' abilities to utilize their strengths.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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Deep thank you to my participants who offered perspective, awareness, and passion. I continue to be in awe of their contributions with each read. Their responses fill me with hope, inspiration, and the energy to get more involved in understanding communities' strengths and the power of collaboration.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Pervasive violence is a form of collective trauma. It can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and a sense of hopelessness. It can create hypervigilance and increase dependence on family ties. In crafting a policy, program, or intervention for helping resolve this social issue, this study aims to explore the resiliency of communities experiencing violence and better understand how these cities are able to move forward and strengthen despite violence. Creating and implementing potential macro and mezzo interventions that increase access to services, job training, job accessibility, and positive community connections and address poverty, racism, sexism, and classism can only be fully realized by learning from communities themselves and building upon their strengths and histories.

To first understand the dynamics in cities experiencing collective trauma, one must identify these cities. While rankings of the most dangerous cities can be problematic as explored throughout this study, utilizing one such ranking was the basis in identifying communities to learn from. 24/7 Wall St. used the FBI's 2012 Uniform Crime Report to determine and report the "10 most dangerous cities in America" (MarketWatch, 2013). The ranked cities in this particular article were: Baltimore, Maryland, Birmingham, Alabama, Cleveland, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, Flint, Michigan, Memphis, Tennessee, New Haven, Connecticut, Oakland, California, St. Louis, Missouri, and Stockton, California. There are many ways in which ranking cities as particularly dangerous or violent can narrow the perception of these communities' self-

sufficiency, strengths, and resources (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Division, 2012). This study hopes to focus on those very aspects.

In discussing cities that have elevated rates of violence, what is lost is the resilience of these communities, their residents, systems, groups, history, and culture that define communities beyond violence and external labels (Jain & Cohen, 2013). Aisenberg and Herrenkohl describe that community members “witness[ing] media portrayals of their neighborhoods as crime ridden, threatening, and unsafe” fuels “an internalized sense of marginalization, powerlessness, and sense of despair among the most vulnerable” (2008, p. 299). The FBI’s own website has a ‘Caution Against Ranking’ page that states, “many entities-news media, tourism agencies, and other groups...use reported figures to compile rankings...These rankings, however, are merely a quick choice made by the data user; they provide no insight into the many variables that mold the crime in a particular town, city, county, state, region, or other jurisdiction. Consequently, these rankings lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that often create misleading perceptions adversely affecting cities and counties, along with their residents” (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Division, 2012). This research aims to glean a more accurate perception based on the perspectives of those working in “the most dangerous” cities to contribute to the literature and offer suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

While community violence can negatively influence places and people, focusing only on violence limits understanding. Community violence impacts community members' sense of safety and can lead to anxiety, depression, school drop out, lower academic achievement, substance abuse, defiance, and aggression (DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens & Linder, 1994; Jain & Cohen, 2013). The literature identifies many risk factors such as "poverty, overcrowding, inadequate medical care, scarcity of community resources, and parental unemployment" that encourage community violence and exacerbate its impact on community members (Lynch, 2003, p. 265). However, like the media, the literature often uses a deficit-focused model that only studies maladaptive responses and negative effects of exposure to community violence risks (Clauss-Ehlers & Levi, 2002; Hill, Hawkins, Raposo & Carr, 1995; Jain & Cohen, 2013; Luthar & Goldstein, 2004; Lynch, 2003; Rynearson & McCreery, 1993). Therefore, there is a need to explore the fact that despite the high potential for these deleterious impacts on individuals and communities, there are strengths to tap into, understand, and learn how to cultivate given that "most youth exposed to community violence demonstrate positive adaptation or resilience over time" (Jain & Cohen, 2013, p. 651). This study sets out to learn more about the factors that lead to resilience in these communities.

Resilience has been defined in realms as disparate as physics and individual therapy (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005, p. 399; Cutter, Barnes, Berry, Burton, Evans, Tate & Webb, 2008, p. 598; Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum B., Wyche & Pfefferbaum R., 2008, p. 127). Because that term is thrown around quite frequently, understanding what resilience means in different

contexts and beyond individual factors, can be more challenging. Focusing exclusively on individual and familial forms of resilience not only offers a narrow view of the potential within communities, it can also lead to victim blaming (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008, p. 304). This victim blaming can arise from a sense that individual factors alone create or disparage resilience and that those who are not as resilient somehow failed. Learning more about the many systemic and communal aspects that contribute to or decrease resiliency will offer a more vast understanding of how the micro, mezzo, and macro or individual, community, and societal realms interact with each other in resiliency formation.

Furthermore, individual resilience operates within community and familial systems and can only be activated through “the dynamic process of transactions within and among multiple levels of children’s environment over time that influences their capacity to successfully adapt and function despite experiencing chronic stress and adversity” (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008, p. 303). As much of the literature contends that resilience is a process, this notion and the process itself becomes even more complex at the community level (Jain & Cohen, 2013; Sousa et al., 2013). While some literature notes the need for further investigation of resilience at the school and community levels (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Jain & Cohen, 2013), beyond individual and parental protective and risk factors few studies illustrate and understand the specifics of how community resilience is built. Learning what specific resources are important to build or are available to enhance in the face of community violence is important just as understanding what specific factors are helpful in building resilience after a natural disaster (Norris, 1992). Aisenberg and Herrenkohl’s 2008 article thoroughly outlines the need for more research and understanding about community resilience and protective factors at the mezzo level including “the social, economic, and structural organization of neighborhoods” in response to

community violence (p. 297). As the literature notes mezzo forms of protective factors in resilience including social service organizations (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003), exploring further how these social service organizations are noticing and cultivating resilience seems critical and is what my survey sets out to discover.

As stated earlier, much of the literature to date regarding resilience at community or mezzo levels relates to disaster relief (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, R. L., 2008). While this literature can offer some insight into how communities with the collective trauma of persistent violence are resilient, the findings can only map on so far. This disaster-based resilience literature often incorporates the notion of a ‘new normal’ after a natural or person-made disaster such as 9/11 (Norris, et al., 2008). However, there’s something unique about the concept of a ‘new normal’ when violence is consistent and pervasive. When the culprits of violent acts can be externalized as a radical organization or Mother Nature, there are differences in community responses and conceptualizations compared to when community members are perpetrating violence. Narratives become critical in understanding any crisis. Communal narratives “give the experience shared meaning and purpose” and certainly shift depending on the nature and source of the crisis (Norris, et al., 2008, p. 140). As narratives are vital in processing events and situations, noting the external narratives placed on these communities such as through rankings of violence is important. My study aims to create new or reclaimed narratives by interviewing people working on the ground in these communities.

To better comprehend mezzo resilience in the context of community violence through narratives, one must consider relevant notions of resilience. In considering how to operationalize the emerging and understudied notion of community resilience, Ahmed, Seedat, van Niekerk,

and Bulbulia (2004) wrote about the creation of their questionnaire “to assess and delineate the nature of community resilience” focusing on neighborhoods in South Africa (p. 386). The dimensions they found significant in assessing community resilience were “neighborhood cohesion, community hope, community structures, leadership, social supports; the ownership of a business, physical security...and knowledge of treatment of injuries” (Ahmen, et al., 2004, p. 386). My survey aims to inquire about these principles within the context of a participant’s city and organization of work. Norris et al. (2008) who studied disaster readiness outlined the following as adaptive capacities for communities: economic development, social capital, information and communication, and communication competence. While disasters can be perceived differently from community violence, this study aims to examine whether these themes are also important in community resilience in the midst of violence as opposed to in the aftermath of uncontrollable natural phenomena. Sousa, Haj-Yahia, Feldman, and Lee (2013) studied community resilience in response to political violence, a topic more closely related to community violence. They considered how individuals interact with the resources in their environment. These interactions included opportunities for political engagement, social support, accountability, and how an individual’s culture relates to community resilience. My questionnaire also attempts to identify these aspects.

Also emphasized in the literature is the correlation between class, race, and densely populated urban areas with violence exposure (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008; Foy & Goguen, 1998; Garbarino, Hammond, Mercy, & Yung, 2004; Hill & Madhere, 1996). Offering participants questions regarding how they identify in terms of race and education and how their clients and colleagues identify racially and religiously works to discern more about these correlations. The literature also emphasizes how “risk and protective factors interact with

demographic variables such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, social class, immigration history, culture, and race/ethnicity” (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008, p. 304), in issues of community violence and resilience (Resnick et al., 1997; Turner, Norman, & Zunz, 1995). Allowing participants to describe demographics in both open-ended and close-ended ways allows for expanded information regarding these interactions.

Reading the literature and considering its emphasis on natural disasters, individual variables in resilience, and the request for increased research into community resilience demonstrate the need for this study. Using the literature’s findings about the factors that influence resilience was invaluable in crafting the survey. Considering this knowledge is a foundation in noticing emerging themes and contributing to developing conceptions of community resilience.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This study examined the strengths in communities labeled as violent. Studying the strengths in community responses to the collective trauma of violence can offer insight into how resiliency can be cultivated. Paying attention to the adaptive systems of these communities is important in offering strengths-based portrayals to build upon and expand. I noticed what was missing from the literature about resilience was what communities are doing at mezzo levels to notice and cultivate protective and proactive responses to violence. My study works to investigate what is already happening at the community level in the ten cities determined to be most dangerous by the FBI's 2012 Uniform Crime Report.

Sample

To conduct my study on how communities experiencing pervasive violence cultivate and utilize resiliency, I sampled employees at agencies and organizations within these communities who work directly to confront collective trauma and build resiliency. Surveying employees at community organizations may offer a broader overview of systems and resources within communities. Initially, participants had to be employees or interns working at community organizations or agencies in one of the most dangerous American cities: Baltimore, MD, Birmingham, AL, Cleveland, OH, Detroit, MI, Flint, MI, Memphis, TN, New Haven, CT, Oakland, CA, St. Louis, MO, and Stockton, CA. Upon receiving responses from participants working in the private sector and noticing the importance of their perspectives, this study was expanded to include people working at both non-profit and private organizations in the cities

listed above.

Recruitment. To recruit participants, convenience and snowball sampling methods were used. The first wave of recruitment included posting on this researcher's Facebook page which was shared on the pages of personal and professional contacts. The next wave of recruitment included e-mailing and calling non-profit organizations in the targeted cities. The researcher also posted on a variety of Internet boards including Reddit and Facebook pages specific to the identified cities. E-mailing professional and personal contacts of the researcher and the researcher's advisor was also used to recruit participants. One of the researcher's personal contacts connected the researcher with Social Work Podcast who shared the survey through that organization's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Informed Consent Procedures. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, the survey began with a detailed informed consent form (Appendix A). The researcher prepared a Human Subject Review application which was approved by Smith College School for Social Work Institutional Review Board (Appendix C). While the survey did ask demographic questions, specific identifying information such as name, contact information, and place of work was an optional final question. The question regarding personal information began with reminding participants that the survey would be confidential unless they chose to identify themselves. The researcher chose to maintain the confidentiality of participants, both those who identified themselves and those who did not, to offer a more uniform data presentation and analysis.

Risks and Benefits of Participation. As the survey covered a wide-range of material including material with the potential to be triggering or potentially limit confidentiality of participants and their clients, great efforts were made to explain these risks to participants.

Potential benefits of participating in the study included having the opportunity to present one's own perspective and experiences working in a specific city and contribute to others' understanding of the city. Having an opportunity to reclaim or create a new narrative about one's place of work was another potential benefit. Contributing knowledge to the field of social work about community resilience in the context of violence was another benefit.

Data Collection

Data was collected for this study from January 14, 2014 through March 3, 2014. A qualitative survey on surveymonkey.com was created by the researcher and included the questions listed in Appendix B. The survey included questions about how organizations notice and cultivate resiliency in the community and in their clients. This research method was chosen in an effort to more fully learn how communities are confronting these issues without asserting an "expert" stance on how they should or should not be noticing violence or creating resiliency. My biases include that I am a white, middle-class, woman who has not lived in a community with pervasive violence though I have worked in communities with pervasive violence. In terms of feasibility, it was important that I thoughtfully determined which agencies and organizations would be open to participating and contact them with respect and consideration.

What was most important in considering data gathering and analysis was determining what questions would further understanding of resilience in response to pervasive community violence and collective trauma at the mezzo level. This researcher incorporated questions of race as much of the literature distinguishes responses to traumatic experiences by racial background. Including questions about religion was to consider how religious approaches to resilience could alter outcomes. Asking participants how they see the communities in which they work through different lenses assisted in limiting my biases and gaining clarity. The survey questions were

piloted with employees at an organization that serves clients who encounter pervasive community violence. The survey was administered through surveymonkey.com with an estimated completion time of 30-45 minutes depending on the responses of participants. Participants who worked in surrounding communities of the cities specified were considered outliers and not analyzed in an effort to crystallize the data. Participants who had incomplete surveys were included as each survey, whether fully complete or not, provided adequate information to be valid and included. The survey responses were coded using grounded theory, noticing themes that organically emerged from participants.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences, perspectives, and innovation of people working in communities considered dangerous or violent. Additionally, the study aims to understand more fully how communities in need cultivate resilience at the mezzo level. This chapter contains findings that are based on 50 qualitative surveys conducted online by people working in these communities. Many themes emerged from participants' responses.

Demographic Data

A total of 50 individuals participated in the survey. Surveys completed by individuals who do not work in the targeted communities were considered outliers and were removed in an effort to distill the data representing specific locations. As Table 1 indicates, people working in each specified city participated.

Table 1. Cities where respondents work.

City	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Baltimore, Maryland	9	18%
Birmingham, Alabama	2	4%
Cleveland, Ohio	3	6%
Detroit, Michigan	1	2%
Flint, Michigan	6	12%
Memphis, Tennessee	6	12%
New Haven, Connecticut	7	14%
Oakland, California	7	14%
St. Louis, Missouri	7	14%
Stockton, California	2	4%

The city most highly represented was Baltimore with 18% of respondents working in that community. New Haven, Oakland, and St. Louis were next most highly represented with 14%

each of respondents working in those communities. The city with the fewest respondents was Detroit with 1 participant.

Respondents work in a variety of places as captured in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents’ places of work.

Place of Work/Industry	Number of Respondents
University	4
Research Organization	2
Local Government	1
Non-profit & Government Consulting	1
Healthcare	3
School	4
Event Promotions	1
Non-Profit	8
Church	1
After-School Program	2
Preschool	1
Prison Facility	1
Tech Company	2
Private Criminal Defense Firm	1
Non-profit Capacity Building	1
Hospital	5
Construction/Design Firm	1
Mental Health Agency	4
Law Office	1
Consulting Firm	1
Summer Arts Program	1
Real Estate Developer	1

The type of work with the most representatives was non-profits with 8 participants. Hospitals were also highly represented with 5 participants. There were 4 participants each working at universities, schools, and mental health agencies.

In terms of identifying the religion of clients, 23 participants answered the question while 27 participants skipped the question. Of those who answered the question, “I don’t know” was the most common response at 82.61%. Participants were able to check more than one response.

The religion most highly reported was Christian: Protestant with Christian: Catholic following.

No respondents identified having Sikh clients. Table 3 indicates the responses more specifically.

Table 3. Respondents report of clients’ religions

Client Religion	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Agnostic	2	8.70%
Atheist	1	4.35%
Buddhist	2	8.70%
Christian: Protestant	7	30.43%
Christian: Catholic	5	21.74%
Christian: Evangelical	3	13.04%
Jewish	3	13.04%
Hindu	1	4.35%
Muslim	2	8.70%
Sikh	0	0.00%
I don’t know	19	82.61%

Community Cohesiveness

Many respondents mentioned the cohesiveness of the communities they work in.

Community cohesiveness is the degree to which community members connect with and look out for each other, have a sense of pride in their community, or are organized in community efforts.

Examples of community cohesiveness include community members being focused on their families. A study participant who works at a non-profit organization in a large city described the strengths in that community as “resilience, strong family ties, strong ties between siblings, working together, valuing of elders, respect.” Caring for neighbors was also emphasized as someone who also works in that city described, “Some of the refugee communities are very close-knit and watch out for each other very closely. They organize gatherings all the time and will bend over backwards to help each other.” Close knit was another common description as illustrated by a participant working in a different city: “It is a very close knit community where everyone knows each other and most support each other in times of hardship. For example, during Thanksgiving time care packages are made for the elderly by the local Head Start.”

Community meetings and events also seemed to enhance community cohesiveness. One participant described that having clients participate in community events is helpful in cultivating resilience in clients. A participant from another city mentioned:

There are at least two community centers for older Asians and often they have fundraisers and community events such as an annual pancake breakfast around Easter that the mayor attends. [The police department] has a task force of volunteers who walk around Chinatown to be ‘eyes and ears’ for the community. Farther north in the more traditionally black areas, there is a culture of murals and street art (not tagging), but I’m not sure if it’s an organized effort or not.

Another theme was people banding together wanting to create more in their community and wanting more for their cities. As described by an employee in one city:

Everyone sticks together. When crime was rampant here after a bunch of cops were laid off, neighborhoods came together and formed record numbers of neighborhood watch groups. The supportive personnel for training these groups had previously done a few trainings per year. When crime spiked, they did more than a few trainings per week... People began organizing and volunteering their time to make [this city] a better place. With the adversity of municipal bankruptcy, high crime, and a foreclosure crisis, people who just talked about doing something began to take action.

A respondent from a different urban area stated, “More young professionals are participating in ways to improve the community from many different points of view. This contributes to collective effort from all members of the community to make [this city] a great place to live.”

Another asset of community cohesiveness is pride, a term that came up significantly across cities and organizations in a variety of ways. An office manager described her city as

“proud yet disillusioned by violence, ignorance, corruption, mismanagement...trying to make the best of a bad situation...trying to make a lot happen with very little resources.” She also noticed “the persistent feeling of optimism in the face of so many social problems, a feeling that our city is worth the effort and we are still proud to be here. Genuine care for neighbors and an overall feeling of politeness if you are receptive.” A business analyst in a different area described that city this way:

[The city] feels like a very tight-knit blue collar community to me. The majority of the people are from the area and have lived there their whole lives. They take pride in where they come from and where they live. [The city] always struck me as a prideful place. You hear a lot about the bad things that happen in parts of the city but you don’t hear as much about the good people that live in those communities and are trying to change the city for the better.

A real estate developer in the same city echoed this notion describing the community as having “a strong sense of pride in one’s home and a caring for neighbors.” A participant working at a non-profit in a different city had this to say: “We work in every county in the state. However, [this city] specifically is coming into a renaissance. We’re all incredibly proud of the area. Personally, living in [this city] has reassured me that I belong in [this state]. Everyone is friendly.” An employee working in a different city said: “People are proud of [this city], but still recognize that it’s a troubled city. [This city] seems to find a sense of community in its troubles and its attempts to fix those troubles.”

Direct Violence

Despite focusing primarily on questions of resilience in many forms, direct violence was a theme that emerged from most respondents. Direct violence includes gun violence, physical

assaults, fighting, and muggings. Drug and gang involvement were also mentioned by many participants as activities that involve violence. As one respondent from a large city stated, “My 6th grade boys have seen it all, physical assault, people’s brains being splattered from shotguns, walking up on dead bodies. I have students with brain damage from being beaten as small children. You name it, a 6th grader has experienced it.” He went on to say, “physical assaults and domestic disputes seem most common. Obviously there's gun violence as well.” Another participant shared

There is violence in the community. Over winter break, a child was shot on his way back from B&G club and it was a student from the school next to us. Many of our students knew this child. In school, some students will try to handle disagreement with physical violence. There is a lot of work being done to address this through the restorative justice program.

A respondent from a different city said, “Our guests have told us stories of violence and trauma in their own lives. This happens most often to our guests who are precariously housed.” “Violence associated with poverty” was also a consistent theme.

Private Violence

Reports of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and interactions with aggressive aspects or undertones were also reported. One respondent said about violence in the community: “At times violence from parents (hitting) and perhaps physical fights from siblings. I think they might witness other types of domestic violence or interpersonal in their homes but am not sure (have not directly been told so- but it seems likely).” This respondent continued,

I notice some students become physical with others- push each other, or use violent language towards each other. Some seem to have a glamorized image of violence from

YouTube videos, etc. I feel the students witness a lot of violence in their community as well, and at times in their home. Students report that their parents hit them for discipline (and have told us they don't listen to us because we don't hit them).

Another respondent shared, "I've interacted with some preschool children...whose parents are clearly abusive. However, there is not much I or my organization can do about this. We report issues to DHR, but that is as far as we can go."

A participant from another city stated about violence: "Most common: intimate partner violence, child abuse, and emotional violence that I have observed between family members and friends of my patients. Also, many of my patients have partners who are currently incarcerated."

Another respondent spoke to violence this way: "...our students are constantly under stress around not knowing where their next meal might be or what they are coming home to." A respondent from a different city commented, "violence isn't necessarily just what is reported... a lot of negativity and violent action between neighbors, not just large scale."

Safe Areas and Shifts in Violence

Many respondents shared that while they hear about violence in their communities, they have not necessarily witnessed it first hand or report that violence exists primarily in certain areas of their cities. Another focus was how violence is decreasing in many communities. One participant described the city she worked in as: "A community that housed people who seemed to have a low socio-economic status due to the appearance of the neighborhood's housing structures and lack of beautification. The area also gave the impression of having a high crime rate because of the unusually high amount of media attention from the local news." From a different city, another participant said, "In the area where I live and work I do not see or notice any violence." One respondent described a large city in the Midwest as

very much a city of neighborhoods, which makes it very hard to say much about the city through overarching statistics. I've noticed that each neighborhood has its own traditions and sense of community. There are restaurants and coffee shops that have weekly concerts or open mike nights where people of the community come together, there are neighborhood stores that become local meeting places.

Another participant observed “There is violence on a daily basis in [this city] and sometimes it is fatal. While our immediate neighborhood is relatively safe, we are close to a rougher part...that sees more crime.” A participant from another city said, “I personally live in a safe area of the community. A couple of my staff members have been mugged, but that is over 10 months. That is to be expected in any somewhat metropolitan area.” A respondent from another city stated, “We are ranked fairly high for violence, and certainly murders (due to gang violence/layoff of police) were at their peak a couple of years ago. But, crime stats have dropped substantially. We still have issues, but the police dept. is getting fed/state help...Most of the everyday violence around here involves petty thefts, graffiti, and sometimes home robberies.”

Ambiguity Surrounding Gentrification

There were a variety of framings regarding gentrification and community revival. One participant held the ambiguity by sharing, “The university works to redevelop the neighborhood and bring more business to downtrodden areas, but that often means pushing more low-income people out in order to house more students.” Another respondent said about her city that it is “going through a downtown revival. A lot of businesses are reopening downtown. The universities are expanding and doing great things downtown. There is still quite a bit of poverty/violence/crime throughout the north and east side of the city... The city just received a grant for destruction of vacant houses.” Another participant described:

The mission of the University [participant's place of work] is to conduct education, research and responsive community service. The President has committed to integrating the University campus with the surrounding city and has committed resources to create a campus community neighborhood. It is doing this by working with private real estate developers to develop permanent housing to boost downtown residency and home ownership. It also has articulation agreements to provide security and create a services culture for residents

focusing more on perceived benefits of such projects.

Organizational Collaboration

Organizational Collaboration encompasses how participants notice a variety of community organizations and services working together to increase resilience in communities and clients. These efforts could include different non-profits working together or even different types or organizations such as government organizations partnering with non-profit organizations. This collaboration could also exist between staff members and clients or between staff members and the organization.

In terms of collaboration amongst organizations, one respondent reported that: "The local high-school students would read to the Head Start students, and perform at their events. The community center and high school were in a partnership with the Head Start center to share facilities and resources." Another respondent from that city also noticed collaboration and described the mayor's innovation team's most successful campaign:

The team gathers prospective small-business tenants and pairs them with property owners in neglected areas where the businesses create pop-up shops for specified period of time. It culminates in a giant block party where food trucks are brought in, new crosswalks,

parking, and bike lanes are created on a temporary basis. It has been very successful in revitalizing several parts of [this city].

In a different city, a participant described an active group which is

open to anyone in the community, we come together once a month to promote a community for zero violence. We use a platform called strategic doing to move talk into action. The group has created a community prayer to bring all churches together, held a youth summit that over 100 youth attended last year. The group is currently working on a prisoner re- entry summit and another youth summit.

This participant also described a master plan being created for the first time in forty years and that “the community involvement throughout the whole process was amazing. People in this community care, and we're excited to be involved in the process.”

A participant from another city stated the city “has many nonprofits and organized efforts to improve the community such as one that goes into the schools to teach children mindfulness and yoga, one that works with former sex workers and women who have been trafficked, food programs, etc.” A participant engaged in an organization “engaged in social justice advocacy, policy, and community organizing,” stated:

We have built a fighting labor movement that is focused on large-scale transformation not just wages. We bring together clergy, labor, and communities to forge a shared agenda and shared values and as a result we are moving forward and winning progressive change at a time when so many places around the country are going backwards and having previous gains stripped away.

A participant from a different city described the community as having a “Strong nonprofit/community-based organization presence (often led by community members

themselves) that is dedicated to working with community members to create solutions to violence, worker disenfranchisement, lack of opportunity, etc.” and the presence of “Neighborhood ‘ambassadors’ (as opposed to police) that maintain a presence in the community to be resource to people, increase safety, etc.” A different respondent working in the same city described,

the school is a community based organization and brings programs to showcase student work to engage the adults in. In addition there are programs...that work in the arts and enrichment field to raise awareness and provide safe space for young people... we have programming called Apprenticeships where we bring volunteers together to teach students about different things like robotics, arts, nutrition, etc.

While this collaboration is newer in some areas as one respondent described, “while before these groups were fragmented and there was very little attempt at a systematic approach, that is changing,” it seems to be the foundation for many cities in creating change. Another respondent described the multi-levels or organizational collaboration this way: “The police department works with neighborhood watch groups. The housing department works with non-profits, such as homeless and battered women's shelters. And so on.”

In terms of organizational collaboration between staff and clients, there was a wide range of how this manifested at different organizations. One respondent described: “Our clinic has a patient and staff co-led community garden which has been one formal effort to collaborate and strengthen those we serve in a collaborative way. We also have biannual health fairs as well as different health and wellness groups available to patients of the clinic.” A respondent from a different city reported, “patient centered treatment planning” as helpful in creating resilience in clients. A different respondent stated: “We are not a service organization, we organize to build

power among working people to fight for economic and racial justice”. To achieve that end the organization “work[s] in a range of communities, we work with religious leaders across the state, with ‘grasstops’ elected officials and community and organizational leaders but primarily with low-income inner city communities of color”. That respondent continued,

Despite being beaten down over generations by poverty and structural racism, many people are willing to take the leap of faith necessary to believe change is possible and get together to fight for it. People also overlook differences or don't get caught up in stereotypes because they have more important things to focus on. More pressing concerns. This is not to say that prejudices -for example against LGBT people- don't exist or aren't widespread, just that people are often more focused on survival and material well being of their families and communities. I have never seen or been part of such a broad, diverse, radical movement for justice that brings people together across differences and builds common ground and common vision of change -despite this city being highly segregated and political forces opportunistically working to divide and conquer communities.

That respondent also described the importance of sharing information with clients:

We do popular education - empowering people with the knowledge and analysis to see their own situation in a broader context and to gain the skills and confidence to DO something about it. When we understand poverty as a collective problem not just a personal failure then we can come together to address it roots.

A respondent from a different city also made mention of the importance of organizations sharing information and creating empowering partnerships with clients with the organization's

Focus on cultivating potential power in clients who have typically experienced extreme

systemic social oppression, racism, sexism, etc... Programs are popular education driven, focus on cultivating mutual support/trust to achieve common goals and empower clients to become self-sufficient and family sustainers. Community organizing principles. Lots of group discussion, sharing common challenges of systemic oppression, create safe space for people to have a voice.

Collaboration between staff and the organization they work for also seemed critical in cultivating resilience at staff, client, and community levels. One participant described:

We work and make decisions collaboratively, we get to know each other very personally, we use a mentorship/lead organizer model of leadership development. We encourage staff to be open and honest about what they're going through so we can support each other in this very difficult work. We also encourage staff to build deep relationships with the people and communities in which they organize. Staff have many opportunities to channel their passion, express their concerns and be part of leading the organization.

Another respondent talked about their organization's

Focus on professional development, creating a culture where people challenge themselves and grow. Proving that we can tackle big issues, one small change at a time, that each of our efforts makes a difference and is connected to the organization's larger goals. Empowering staff to work hard, set ambitious goals, and supporting them with tools. Talking openly about taking risks, failure, innovation, and small/big wins.

A respondent from a different city shared that his organization cultivates staff resilience "By respecting their time, caring for them personally as well as professionally, and giving them the resources they need to succeed." A different respondent from the same city talked about having a "culture of support and open feedback."

Many respondents also mentioned professional and leadership development opportunities as helpful in cultivating resilience and partnership with staff. One respondent talked about their organization's "trainings around teacher management and partnership building. It also occasionally will do workshops around understanding the community you are serving and/or raising scenarios that might occur and how to respond with an understanding of multi-cultural experiences." A participant from another city shared, "The staff encourages one another daily, and also the organization invites motivational speakers to speak with us during trainings."

Community Descriptors

Participants described the cities in which they work in a variety of ways. There was a wide range of descriptors. The terms friendly, respect, predominantly African American, unity, passion, inequality, and low-income were terms that came up most frequently. One respondent described her community in this way: "suffering in many ways from violence, inequality, unemployment, racism, lack of opportunity/ability to move up from poverty, neighborhood gentrification." A participant from another city shared, "[The city] has some great resources with [well-known university] and other institutions and it is one of the poorest cities in the United States. There is an alarming amount of violent crime as well."

A respondent from the same city elaborated:

Crime and violence are prevalent here as in many urban areas. Higher levels of inequality are said to produce greater violence than poverty alone and this is one of the most unequal places in the country- we have some of the worst disparities in health, wealth, and education. In [this city] you see some areas where people are middle and upper middle class mostly white and almost all working or the homemaker spouse of working partner but just blocks away you have communities where 30% of people can't find a

stable job. So there is a great deal of violence. Gangs are a big problem and violence surrounding drug dealing. But there are also robberies and thefts that become violent. Murders of young black men usually by other young black men are the worst and most common type of violence here... This violence and the constant threat to safety people feel as a result of it yet communities apart and between different communities fuel mistrust and further divisions (eg race and class divisions).

A respondent from another city described it as “Really open. I know all the people I work with and near. I live in [the city] and feel the same way about my home community. I know more people and say 'hi' more often than elsewhere I have lived/worked.” A different respondent from the same city described community members as “Impassioned... They're great at being warm, welcoming, and embracing the diversity of our community.”

Physical Space

Physical space was another theme that participants mentioned consistently. This theme includes the way geographical and physical space contributes to a community's atmosphere. When asked what else would be important to add to the conversation about community resilience one respondent summed it up: “Green spaces make all the difference.” A different respondent from the same city mentioned the city having “neighborhood meetings [to] help maintain the parks and the general safety within the area.” A participant from another city mentioned a non-profit “that does projects to make the city appear clean and safe. They hired a lighting artist to light an underpass that connects two parts of the city to improve the aesthetics.”

Client Support and Empowerment

A common theme related to how resilience is cultivated in clients was support and empowerment. Many respondents spoke to the approaches of their organizations and fellow staff

members in assisting clients and communities. One respondent talked about how his students are empowered,

By teaching its [the school's] young people to be good thinkers and good human beings on a holistic level, not just good test takers... Big focus on social emotional learning. Integration of Maslow's hierarchy of needs with Glasser's Choice Theory... Kids are given the vocabulary and space to express their needs so they can be addressed.

Another respondent who works with children in the same city described, “empowering them to feel they can succeed, working with them individually on behavior, emotional support and academics.”

Race

Many respondents also mentioned race. Racism was spoken to in many responses as was segregation. More than one participant talked about the racial history of these cities. One respondent mentioned, “our police force is fantastic- they all are friendly and fair. They put a huge emphasis on racial equality, which has helped soothe our somewhat sordid past.” Another respondent from the same city described the city as “going through a revival. Still dealing with its segregationist history.” A respondent working in a different city talked about current segregation: “Downtown is reasonably well-to-do, with a lot of mostly-white workers with office jobs, but nearby there are housing projects and run-down buildings that are often home to poor, usually black populations.” One participant described the city they work in as “racially divided.” Another respondent talked about the city he works in as, “Demographically it's one of the few poor neighborhoods in [the city] that's not racially segregated.”

Organizational and Community Interactions

Many participants talked about the ways in which their organization interacts with the

community it is meant to serve. One participant described their organization as such: “It reaches out to community members and shares both positive and negative information to community members.” A participant from a different city shared, “I work with organizations to plan step by step how to develop projects responsive to and involving communities and how to implement those.” Another person talked about their organization’s efforts:

The university that I work for does make attempts to become more involved with the community, but it has a bit of a mixed record. However, when there were rumors that the university was going to move out into the suburbs it decided not to, and to remain in the middle of the urban community, which I think does suggest at least a desire for engagement.

Summary

This chapter outlines the major themes found in participant responses. From more macro concepts of how organizations work to empower staff, clients, and communities to micro considerations such as the friendliness of community members a wide range of themes emerged. An emphasis on race, racism, poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunity became apparent along with the looming of violence even in a discussion of resilience.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

This study was conducted to get clearer data on communities that are often perceived and labeled in negative ways and understand how these communities cultivate strength and resilience. By surveying people who work in a range of private and non-profit organizations within cities across the country this research is meant to offer first-hand perspectives. The findings provide valuable insight into communities often presented primarily through lenses of danger, need, and deficit. This discussion section is meant to provide linkages between relevant literature described in the literature review and the raw analysis. This discussion will cover persistent themes that arose in analysis including: 1) the importance of community cohesiveness, 2) positive reframes for struggling cities, 3) violence, 4) collaboration in and across organizations, 5) and demographic factors. Also covered in this section will be limitations of the study in addition to implications and conclusions.

First, considering the demographics of respondents including their geography and what type of work they do is important. Baltimore had the highest responder turn out, which is unsurprising given that this researcher has several friends and colleagues who work in Baltimore and who offered to tap into their professional networks in that city. The majority of respondents work at non-profit organizations which is consistent with initial recruiting attempts in which only participants working at non-profit and educational institutions were recruited.

Importance of Community Cohesiveness. Many respondents reaffirmed the findings of Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008, that resilience is activated through a variety of interactions within a person's environment. Participants in this study described dynamic community

involvement, outreach, and opportunities for development, all of which require interaction with the environment in some way. The extent and variety of this interaction was interesting as it ranged from accessing services, attending community events, and being part of beautifying efforts. Realizing through responses that “environment” can include specific geographical features such as green space and lighting to a more abstract notion of culture offered insight into the range of these influences on resilience. The idea of environment was also mentioned in terms of gentrification. While gentrification is often portrayed as either good or bad, respondents demonstrated the complexity of gentrification. Many talked about the gentrifying of cities as offering positive community support, resources, and activities but also taking over communities from community members. Universities were talked about most often by respondents as being responsible for gentrification efforts.

The literature also suggests that resilience is a process that occurs over time and one that becomes more complex at a mezzo level (Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Jain & Cohen, 2013; Luthar, 2003; Masten et al., 1999; Sousa et al., 2013). This idea was confirmed in my study as many participants described shifts in communities which therefore shift resiliency factors. The financial and judicial changes along with changes in crime and violence demonstrate how environments and responses to environments are in flux, influencing the crafting, maintaining, and measuring of resilience. The notion that Ahmen, et al., 2004, present that cohesion, hope, and community structures are significant in community resilience again was consistent with my findings as participants highlighted a sense of purpose, unity, organization, and care within communities. Many participants described family loyalty, pride, and neighbors looking out for each other as foundations in these cities. Noticing how positive dynamics that are intangible and harder to measure were repeated throughout responses showcased that these

factors are critical to consider while further studying community resilience. While a few participants mentioned support groups as helping build resilience, other concrete therapeutic or programmatic interventions did not come up. Large organizations were not mentioned as widely as grassroots efforts utilizing resources already in communities.

Norris et al.'s 2008 discussion that information and communication are important in community resilience was reflected in participants' answers that described popular education approaches and other ways that organizations communicate with and engage community members. As Norris et al.'s research regarded natural disasters it was particularly interesting to see how information and communication can take on different applications and meaning in the context of community violence and resilience.

Positive in Communities. As Jain and Cohen, 2013, found that “most youth exposed to community violence demonstrate positive adaptation or resilience over time” through individual, familial, school, and community protective and resiliency factors, respondents also found positive outcomes in the face of difficulty. The fact that most responses discussed dedication to rebuilding communities instead of leaving or not believing in them was promising. It is possible that resiliency comes in part from “collective efficacy” (Jain & Cohen, 2013, p. 656), and community cohesion in the face of violence which participants described in terms of an inherent sense of community, resilience, and respect within communities and the fact that individuals, groups, and organizations are coming together to make change. It would be interesting to further study what factors need to be in place and how these factors interact for a community to experience resiliency building in response to violence rather than being destroyed by it. As Norris, et al., 2008, found narratives are very important in creating “shared meaning and purpose”. One respondent describing how the external narratives of the media create an image

of her community that conflicts with the way she experiences her community, echoes this theme. Respondents describing the strength, passion, and unity inherent in the cities in which they work demonstrates Norris' notion of both meaning and purpose simply through talking about community dynamics.

Violence. Aisenberg and Herrenkohl (2008) found an over-reporting of violence. This runs both counter and in line with the variety of survey responses. While some participants led with descriptions of violence just in describing their community, others talked about not experiencing violence in the areas in which they work and live, while others discussed shifts in violence and community efforts to eradicate violence. Much of the literature also pointed to violence leading to substance abuse, defiance, and aggression (DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergast, Slavens & Linder, 1994; Jain & Cohen, 2013; Kliwer et al., 2004; Osofsky, 2003; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). This was certainly echoed by many participants who surmised that violence in schools was a result of students witnessing violence in the home or community. Further exploring the interaction and impact of the home environment on community and school environments and vice versa would be important. There was also thought that school violence emerges from the glorification of violence at community and societal levels such as through videos on the Internet. Lynch's 2003 outlining of poverty and scarcity of community resources as risk factors to violence was a consistent theme in responses as many participants described communities as dealing with poverty, racism, inequality, and a lack of jobs and other opportunities.

Collaboration In And Across Organizations. Respondents focused on collaboration in and across organizations and how this can empower both staff and clients. Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008, highlighted the concept of organization being protective in response to

community violence, a theme that was mentioned by respondents in terms of community members being organized around improving their cities. I had expected to find the organization of services and programs improving resilience but was surprised to see most participants emphasizing the organization and collaboration amongst service providers and community groups as critical. Seeing the importance many respondents placed on collaboration between staff and an organization's mission or the empowering relationships formed between staff and clients was significant. Continuing to understand the many forms of organization Aisenberg and Herrenkohl describe: "social, economic, and structural" encourages further investigation of how organization can be most effective at various community levels. The literature also describes social service organizations as a mezzo protective factor and most respondents extensively described the many positive impacts of social service organizations in communities (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003). However, another interesting theme that arose was some participants' ambiguity regarding the presence of their organizations in communities. While many discussed how helpful having services available for communities is, there were concerns regarding gentrification and community members being forced out.

Clients Demographic Makeup. Demographic information proved complicated as many respondents reported not knowing the religious backgrounds of clients and staff alike and other respondents provided caveats about guessing the ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds of both staff and clients. However, several respondents did include community descriptors that were race or socioeconomic status based such as "communities of color", "predominantly African-American", or "low-income" to describe the communities in which they work. Other respondents described racism and segregation both historically and presently as extremely

important to understanding dynamics in communities. These responses add to the literature's findings that there is correlation between exposure to violence in urban areas with class and race (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008; Foy & Goguen, 1998; Garbarino, Hammond, Mercy, & Yung, 2004; Hill & Madhere, 1996). As the literature found that identity characteristics including socioeconomic status, race, immigration status, and culture impact risk and protective aspects (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008, p. 304; Resnick et al., 1997; Turner, Norman, & Zunz, 1995), these findings would be important to explore further in future research to better understand how demographic data impacts resilience more specifically at the mezzo level. Having so many respondents notice and speak to the impact of inequality, poverty, racism, and historic and current segregation demonstrate the power of these influences on communities, violence, and resilience. The fact that these forces were described so consistently as being responsible for violence expands the conversation and need for further exploration of how these dynamics can be understood and factored into cultivating resilience.

Limitations

The limitation that proved to be most challenging in my study was data collection. While I was fortunate to have a wide response from my personal and professional networks, I found that collecting data in regions I had fewer contacts, limited my ability to collect relevant information. In researching potential organizations to contact in Stockton, for instance, I found that many non-profits and churches communicated in Spanish predominantly and as I only speak English, I found that having a survey that was written in English limited potential responses. As my survey was focused exclusively on people who work in these cities, not necessarily on people who live in these cities or receive services in these cities, the data could be quite different if I had included more populations.

Implications and Conclusion

The implications of this study are vast. The need for collecting data about these communities was stated frequently in the literature (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Jain & Cohen, 2013) and being able to contribute qualitative data to increase the realm of knowledge about these topics was very meaningful for me. My findings that violence is mentioned extensively even while seeking out information about resilience, that community cohesiveness and organizational collaboration seem paramount in cultivating resilience at many levels, and that people who work in these communities have nuanced, dynamic, and diverse ways of describing their cities demonstrate that there is much more to learn about strengths specific to these communities and more globally in understanding community resilience.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Agreement

I want to know the strengths you notice in the community in which you work. From news reports to statistics, communities in need are often only portrayed through the lens of deficit. What I am trying to do through my thesis at Smith College's School for Social Work is create a new conversation about communities facing pervasive violence, a dialogue that includes your observations of strength and resilience, hope and change. I am earning my masters in social work at Smith College and would like you to be part of my thesis research. Participation will entail you completing an online survey which will offer space for you to describe your experiences, reflections, and ideas about the work you are doing, perspectives you hold, and innovation you can offer. Please consider adding your voice particularly to those open-ended questions about what you notice in the community of your organization. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at: mschmermund@smith.edu.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA

.....

Title of Study: Community Resilience in the Face of Community Violence
Investigator: Mary Kate Schmermund, School for Social Work, mschmermund@smith.edu

.....

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study about community responses to pervasive community violence.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you work or intern in a city that is said to experience violence.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is to understand communities from a strengths-based perspective and the innovative ways community organizations cultivate resilience.
- This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my Masters in Social Work degree.
- Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey on surveymonkey.com which should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The study has the following risks. You may experience distress while describing potential

violent situations that exist in the community in which you work. Disclosing criminal activity may be another risk of participating in this study so maintaining confidentiality of clients and not giving specific details about violent acts is important.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The benefits of participation are having an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss your work experiences and focus on the strengths of the community you work in.
- The benefits to social work and society are creating a more nuanced conversation about communities that has a strength-based lens. Your input may provide critical information about how organizations can utilize and cultivate resilience in the communities and clients they serve.

Confidentiality

This study is anonymous. We will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity. However, you do have the option to provide your contact information. If you choose to provide your contact information, your responses will no longer be anonymous or confidential. All research materials including recordings, transcriptions, analyses and consent/assent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments/gift

- You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time (up to the date noted below) without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely up to the point noted below. If you choose to withdraw, I will not use any of your information collected for this study. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by March 15, 2014. After that date, your information will be part of the thesis, dissertation or final report.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Mary Kate Schmermund, at mschmermund@smith.edu. If you would like a summary of the study results, one will be sent to you once the study is completed. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Consent

- Your participating in this survey indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Signature of Researcher: Mary Kate Schmermund Date: 1/14/2014

Appendix B

Survey

- 1) What type of organization do you work for?
- 2) What city is your organization located in?
- 3) What is the size of your organization?
- 4) What services does your organization provide? Please Check All That Apply.

Mental Health Services Financial Assistance Programs for Children & Adolescents
 Health Clinic Case Management Homeless Shelter Support groups
 Workshops Education/Training
 Other. Please describe:

- 5) How does your organization receive funding? Check All That Apply.

Federal Government State Government Clients Private grants
 Other. Please describe:

- 6) How are services paid for?

Clients Federal Government State Government
 Other. Please describe:

- 7) What is your role in the organization?

- 8) How long have you been working at the organization?

less than 6 months 6 months – 1 year 1-3 years 3-5 years 5-8 years
 8-10 years 10-15 years 15-20 years 20-25 years 25-30 years 30+

- 9) What is your educational background?

Some high school High school diploma or GED some college Associate's Degree
 Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctorate

Field of Study:

- 10) Do you live in the community in which you work? Yes No

- 11) Approximately what percentage of staff live in the community?

0-10% 10-20% 20-30% 30-40% 40-50% 50-60%
 60-70% 70-80% 80-90% 90-100%

- 12) How would you describe the community you work in?

- 13) What strengths do you notice in the community?

- 14) What, if any, violence do you notice in the community? Please keep the confidentiality of your clients in mind while responding.

- 15) What, if any, kinds of violence do your clients experience? Please keep the confidentiality of your clients in mind while responding.

- 16) How does your organization cultivate resilience in **staff**?

- 17) How does your organization cultivate resilience in the **community**?

- 18) How does your organization cultivate resilience in **clients**?

19) Are there people or projects coming together to help strengthen the community? Please describe some of these efforts.

20) Is your organization engaged in these activities? How?

21) What percentages of clients are from the following racial and ethnic backgrounds?

 African American/Black African Bi-or Multi-racial Caucasian/White
 East Asian Hispanic/Latino Middle Eastern Native American
South Asian Other. Please describe:

22) What percentages of staff are from the following racial and ethnic backgrounds?

 African American/Black African Bi-or Multi-racial Caucasian/White
 East Asian Hispanic/Latino Middle Eastern Native American
South Asian Other. Please describe:

23) How do you identify your racial/ethnic background?

24) How do you identify your gender?

25) What percentages of clients are from the following religious or spiritual backgrounds?

 Agnostic Atheist Buddhist Christian: Protestant Christian: Catholic
 Christian: Evangelical Jewish Hindu Muslim Sikh I don't know
Other. Please describe:

26) What percentages of staff are from the following religious or spiritual backgrounds?

 Agnostic Atheist Buddhist Christian: Protestant Christian: Catholic
 Christian: Evangelical Jewish Hindu Muslim Sikh I don't know
Other. Please describe:

27) What is the age range of the population your organization works with directly? Please check all that apply.

 0-3 years 3-10 years 10-12 years 13-17years 18-21years 22-25
years 26-34 years 35-45 years
 46-54 years 55-64 years 65-72 years 72+ years

28) Is there anything else you think is important to add to the conversation about community resilience?

This survey was created with your anonymity and confidentiality in mind. However, there is opportunity to continue the conversation. If you are willing to be identified and have this survey **no longer remain anonymous or confidential**, please provide your contact information and/or the name of your organization.

Appendix C
HSR Approval Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

January 4, 2014

Mary Kate Schmermund

Dear Mary Kate,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Congratulations and our best wishes on your interesting study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Hannah Karpman, Research Advisor

Appendix D

HSR Protocol Change Approval



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

February 15, 2014

Mary Kate Schmermund

Dear Mary Kate,

I have reviewed your amendments and they look fine. The amendments to your study are therefore approved. Thank you and best of luck with your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Hannah Karpman, Research Advisor