

CIVIL GANG INJUNCTION EFFECTS: THE PERCEPTIONS OF RESIDENTS AND
NEIGHBORS OF THEIR SAFETY

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2022

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ABSTRACT

This hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to assess the general effectiveness of civil gang injunctions based on community members' perceptions of their safety in Los Angeles County, California. The theory that served as the foundation for this study was social disorganization, as interpreted by Shaw and McKay (1972). It helped to gauge how well community members understood their lived experiences and perceived the effects of injunctions on their safety. The following question guided this study: Do local citizens believe communities are safer and more secure when civil gang injunctions are used? Eight community members from two Los County cities were chosen using a purposeful criterion and snowball sampling. One-on-one semistructured interviews were used to collect the data, and the researcher maintained reflective memos in the data analysis. The answer to the research question was both yes and no, and the application of social disorganization theory was both confirmed and disconfirmed. Safer neighborhoods served as confirmation of the social disorganization theory. Disconfirming the theory was indicated by gangs involved internal and external disruption: disturbing gang relationships with the community and other gangs, and disrupting gang culture and family ties. The findings also revealed that CGIs should not have an unlimited term because people can change, and those placed on CGIs are hampered access to meaningful employment.

Keywords: civil gang injunctions, gang violence, intervention strategies, lived experiences, hermeneutic, phenomenology

Dedication

Mom, this is your dedication. Enjoy this moment, as I enjoyed our many hours of collaboration. Without you, this would not have been possible. #Momthebest. I also dedicate this study to those individuals negatively impacted by Civil Gang Injunctions. Thank you for letting me be a part of your voice.

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List of Abbreviations

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Civil Gang Injunctions (CGIs)

Court-appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

Gang Reduction Program (GRP)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)

National Gang Counsel (NGC)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program (OJJDP)

Strategy Against Gang Environments (SAGE)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Gang violence rates in the United States have increased dramatically in recent years, particularly in large cities. According to the Gang Reduction Program (2021), metropolitan cities were the home of 41.6% of all American gangs in 2020. The country had an estimated 2,000 gangs with over 95,000 members (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). In Los Angeles, there were 173 gang-related homicides reported in 1998 (Cromwell et al., 1992; Curry et al., 2001). Historically, gang associates have primarily engaged in minor theft and vandalism, but gang members have committed increasingly violent crimes in recent years (Gang Reduction Program, 2021). Lawmakers responded to the rise in gang violence by increasing penalties for gang activities. One such initiative was the creation of civil gang injunctions (CGIs). Criminal gang injunctions are court-ordered civil restraining orders used to supervise the everyday activities of accused gang associates in order to minimize criminality and eradicate public nuisances in districts infused with gang activity in safety zones (Swan & Bates, 2017). Safety zones are geographic areas formally identified by police and prosecutors where criminal gang activity is a persistent problem. Gang injunctions typically seek to prevent two kinds of behaviors: (a) those already designated as offenses under the law and (b) those defined as criminal conduct. Activities specified as criminal conduct under the law include possessing narcotics or firearms, drug dealing, destroying property, and intimidating witnesses. These actions are illegal in California, and individuals can be charged and arrested for them even without an injunctive order in place (Swan & Bates, 2017). Gang injunctions also prohibit behaviors that are otherwise legal, such as gathering in public, riding in a car with other gang members, congregating in communal areas of apartment buildings, and carrying spray paint.

Criminal justice officials have employed CGIs to reduce gang violence to offset increasing levels of gang violence since the 1990s (Bloch & Phillips, 2021; Ridgeway et al., 2019). Three distinct gangs—Dogtown, Primera Flats, and 62nd East Coast Crips—were subject to a temporary restraining order that was obtained by the Los Angeles City Attorney in July 1982 (Bloch & Phillips, 2021). At the end of the 2010s, Los Angeles had 46 active injunctions targeting approximately 72 gangs and their subjects (Bichler et al., 2019; Queally, 2020). With the addition of a successful lawsuit designating Los Angeles gangs—including the Big Top Locos, Crazys, Diamond Street Locos, Echo Park Locos, Frogtown Rifa, and Headhunters—as nuisances, the number of current gang injunctions rose once more in 2013 (Soriano, 2019). In 2005, the Los Angeles Police Department published a map of active CGIs within their jurisdiction. A copy of the map is incorporated in Figure 1. Each gang primarily consisted of Hispanic members who were deemed a nuisance and routinely committed acts of gang violence. The 2013 gang injunction mentioned above is included in Figure 2.



Figure 2

Civil Gang Injunction

1	CARMEN A. TRUTANICH, Los Angeles City Atty (86629x)	CONFORMED COPY OF ORIGINAL FILED Los Angeles Superior Court
2	MC Molitor, Chief, Safe Neighborhoods & Gang Division (82404)	JUN 11 2013
3	Anne Tremblay, Asst City Atty, Supervisor, Anti-Gang Section (180956)	James A. Clark, Executive Officer/Clerk BY <u>Victor Sino-Cruz</u> Deputy
4	James A. McDougal, Deputy City Attorney, Anti-Gang Section (140408) 200 N. Main Street, 966 City Hall East, Los Angeles, CA 90012 213-978-4088 office; 213-978-8717 fax	
5	Attorneys for Plaintiff, People of the State of California	
6	NO FEE REQUIRED (Gov't Code § 6103)	
7		
8	FOR THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA	
9	IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES (CENTRAL DISTRICT)	
10		BC 511444
11	PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA;	Case No.: (Unlimited Civil Case)
12	Plaintiff,	Complaint For Injunctive Relief To Abate A Public Nuisance Caused By The Conduct And Activities Of Six (6) Criminal Street Gangs Including Big Top, Crazy's, Diamond Street, Echo Park, Frogtown, and Head Hunters
13	vs.	
14	BIG TOP LOCOS aka BIG TOP aka BTLs;	
15	CRAZY'S aka CYS aka MAYBERRY aka MB;	
16	DIAMOND STREET LOCOS aka	
17	DIAMOND STREET aka DST;	
18	ECHO PARK LOCOS aka ECHO PARK	
19	aka ECHO PARQUE aka ExP aka EP;	
20	FROGTOWN RIFA aka FROGTOWN aka FTR;	
21	HEAD HUNTERS aka HHS;	
22	each of the above defendants is a criminal	
23	street gang sued as an unincorporated association;	
24	DOES 1 through 300, inclusive, as individuals; and	
25	DOES 301 through 310, inclusive, each as an	
26	unincorporated association or other entity,	
27	form presently unknown;	
28	Defendants.	
	Plaintiff, the People of the State of California, acting by and through the City Attorney for the	
	City of Los Angeles, is informed and believes, and based upon such information and belief, alleges:	
	1	
	Complaint for Injunction to Abate a Public Nuisance	

THE PARTIES

1. Plaintiff in this action is the People of the State of California, acting by and through the City Attorney for the City of Los Angeles, who is acting under authority of Code of Civil Procedure section 731 to represent the People of the State of California.

2. Each of defendants:

- a. Big Top Locos aka Big Top aka BTLS ("BTLS"),
- b. Crazys aka CYS aka Mayberry aka MB ("CYS"),
- c. Diamond Street Locos aka Diamond Street aka DST ("DST"),
- d. Echo Park Locos aka Echo Park aka Echo Parque aka ExP aka EP ("ExP"),
- e. Frogtown Rifa aka Frogtown aka FTR ("FTR"); and
- f. Head Hunters aka HHS ("HHS"),

is a criminal street gang within the meaning of Penal Code section 186.22(f), being an ongoing organization of three or more persons, having as one of its primary activities, murder, attempted murder, ADW (assault with a deadly weapon or by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury), robbery, GTA (grand theft auto), DWOC (driving a motor vehicle without the owner's consent), burglary, criminal threats, felony vandalism (gang graffiti), witness and victim intimidation, various gun violations including possession of a concealed and/or loaded firearm, narcotics trafficking (the illegal sales of controlled substances), and other specified criminal acts, having a common name, and common signs and symbols, and whose members individually or collectively have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity.

3. Each of BTLS, CYS, DST, ExP, FTR, and HHS (collectively, at times, the "Defendant Gangs") is a violent turf-based predominantly Hispanic criminal street gang. All six defendant gangs claim turf within a 3.8 square mile area more fully described in paragraph 11. All six gangs are hostile to each other. At least four significant ongoing feuds currently exist between these six gangs, resulting in extensive graffiti vandalism, aggravated assaults, shootings, attempted murders, and in some cases, murders, recently occurring, with more shootings, attempt murders and murders expected because all of these four feuds are escalating. Multiple gangs are enjoined in other civil nuisance abatement actions, also know as civil gang injunctions, including LAPD Rampart

1 Division's "10-Gang" injunction, BC332713, and LAPD Newton Division's "6-gang" injunction,
2 BC397522, as well as numerous 2-, 3-, and 4-gang civil gang injunctions.

3 4. Each of the Defendant Gangs is sued as an unincorporated association under Code of
4 Civil Procedure section 369.5. Each Defendant Gang shares a common name and purpose, and has
5 received benefits from holding itself out to the public as an entity. Each Defendant Gang functions
6 under circumstances where "fairness requires that the group be recognized as a legal entity,"¹
7 because members of each of the Defendant Gangs invoke their gang's name, BTLS, CYS, DST, ExP,
8 FTR, or HHS, as a sword to create fear and intimidation when committing their crimes, and invoke
9 their gang's name, BTLS, CYS, DST, ExP, FTR, or HHS, as a shield, to intimidate victims and
10 witnesses, in order to escape responsibility for their criminal and nuisance behavior.

11 5. Each of the Defendant Gangs also is an unincorporated association consisting of two
12 or more individuals, joined by mutual consent for allegedly common lawful purposes, including
13 social, recreational, and other purposes. Notwithstanding any common lawful purpose, each
14 Defendant Gang is committing criminal and nuisance behavior, and creating a public nuisance.

15 6. Each of the Defendant Gangs acts by and through its members, both individually and
16 collectively.

17 7. Each of the Defendant Gangs is responsible in some manner for the nuisance referred
18 to in this complaint, and each has operated in the "Safety Zone," as it is hereinafter defined, in the
19 City of Los Angeles, California.

20 8. Defendants Does 1 through 300, inclusive, are individuals, the true identities of whom
21 are presently unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore sues such Defendants by such fictitious names, and
22 may, at Plaintiff's sole discretion, amend this complaint to show their true names when ascertained.
23 Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the Defendants designated as Does 1 through 300,
24 inclusive, is an individual, is a member of BTLS, CYS, DST, ExP, FTR, or HHS, is responsible in
25 some manner for the nuisance referred to in this complaint, and has been in the "Safety Zone," as it is

26
27 ¹ *Barr v. United Methodist Church*, 90 Cal. App. 3rd 259, 267, *cert. denied*, 444 U.S. 973 (1979),
28 *quoted and followed with approval in People v. Colonia Chiques*, 156 Cal. App. 4th 31, 38-39 (2007)
(holding the criminal street gang "Colonia Chiques may be sued as an unincorporated association").

hereinafter defined, in the City of Los Angeles, California.

9. Defendants Does 301 through 310, inclusive, are unincorporated associations, or other entities, the true form and identities of whom are presently unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore sues such Defendants by such fictitious names, and may, at Plaintiff's sole discretion, amend this complaint to show their true names when ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the Defendants designated as Does 301 through 310, inclusive, is an unincorporated association, or other entity, and is responsible in some manner for the nuisance referred to in this complaint, and has operated in the "Safety Zone," as it is hereinafter defined, in the City of Los Angeles, California.

1st CAUSE OF ACTION FOR PUBLIC NUISANCE AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS

10. Plaintiff repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates herein by this reference each and every allegation contained in Paragraphs 1 through 9, inclusive.

11. By this action, Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief in a "Safety Zone," located in the City of Los Angeles, in the County of Los Angeles, in the State of California, starting where 1st Street exits west from under the Harbor/Pasadena (110) Freeway, west to the "First Street Bridge," west on Beverly Boulevard, north on North Coronado Street, east on West Temple Street, north again on North Coronado Street, west on West Sunset Boulevard, north and east on Silver Lake Boulevard, east on Duane Street, north on the Glendale (2) Freeway, east and south along the south bank of the Los Angeles River to where the river crosses under Interstate 5, north along Interstate 5 to where Riverside Drive crosses under Interstate 5, west on Riverside Drive to Stadium Way, south on Stadium Way, continuing straight in the direction of Stadium Way as it passes Chavez Ravine Place to the 110 Freeway, and south along the 110 Freeway to the starting point at 1st Street and the 110 Freeway, but not including the roadbeds of any of the Glendale (2) Freeway, Interstate 5, or the 101 or 110 Freeways. This Safety Zone contains approximately 3.8 square miles, contains over two miles of Sunset Boulevard, and contains the newly renovated Echo Park Lake in the City of Los Angeles.

12. The Safety Zone has been occupied by Defendants, who have caused and cause a public nuisance with their actions. Defendants, by virtue of their criminal and nuisance activities, threaten the freedom, health, safety, senses, and right to free use and enjoyment of property of the people who live, work, visit and pass through the Safety Zone. The behavior of Defendants is

1 injurious to the health, indecent and offensive to the senses, an obstruction to the free use of property,
2 so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property by the community in the Safety
3 Zone, constituting a public nuisance pursuant to Civil Code sections 3479 and 3480.

4 13. Defendants possess, sell and use illegal narcotics including methamphetamine,
5 cocaine, heroin, rock cocaine, PCP, and marijuana. Defendants have been arrested in the Safety Zone
6 for violating Health & Safety Code section 11350 (possession of a controlled substance), Health &
7 Safety Code section 11351 (possession for sale of a controlled substance), Health & Safety Code
8 section 11351.5 (possession of cocaine base for sale), Health & Safety Code section 11352
9 (transportation/sale of a controlled substance), Health & Safety Code section 11370.1 (possession of
10 certain controlled substances while armed with a firearm), Health & Safety Code section 11378
11 (possession of methamphetamine for sale), and Health & Safety Code section 11378 (transportation
12 of methamphetamine for sale). These activities are not only illegal and dangerous, but they are also
13 indecent and offensive to the senses. The "illegal sale of controlled substances" is explicitly declared
14 to be a nuisance pursuant to Civil Code section 3479. As such, Defendants' illegal sales of controlled
15 substances are a nuisance *per se*.

16 14. Defendants stake out and claim different parts of the Safety Zone as their "turf," by
17 among other things, shooting at other street gangs, defacing property throughout the Safety Zone
18 with gang graffiti, "throwing" their gang signs, and otherwise intimidating the community in the
19 Safety Zone. Defendants enforce their claim to control different parts of the Safety Zone by guns,
20 knives, and other weapons, and by fists and feet. Throughout the Safety Zone, Defendants shoot at
21 other street gangs, deface property with gang graffiti, and intimidate the community.

22 15. Defendants have brought and bring violence into the Safety Zone, creating a
23 threatening atmosphere in which residents must live and work. Defendants repeatedly arm
24 themselves with guns, knives, and other dangerous and deadly weapons, and engage in violent,
25 aggressive, and destructive behavior, which is injurious to the health and safety of the community in
26 the Safety Zone. Some residents are at times prisoners and victims of Defendants' wars against rival
27 gangs, and the foreseeable retaliation by rival gangs against Defendants.

28 16. Innocent young male Hispanics are targeted by Defendants, confronted, assaulted, and

1 even shot, simply because Defendants believe the innocent victims are members of a rival gang.
2 Innocent young male Hispanics are targeted by rivals to these Defendants, confronted, assaulted and
3 even shot, simply because the rival gang members believe the innocent victims are members of a
4 Defendant Gang.

5 17. Defendants demonstrate a blatant disregard for the lives and safety of innocent
6 victims, including children and senior citizens, who get caught in the crossfire. Bullets, shell casings
7 and loaded firearms have been found throughout the Safety Zone. Some residents hear shots fired in
8 the night. Some residents at times live in fear of shootings and random violence breaking out at any
9 moment on the streets, sidewalks and local parks in their neighborhood. The violent acts of these
10 gang members have endangered some residents' lives and reduced their sense of peace and security.

11 18. Defendants terrorize and intimidate the community in the Safety Zone by gathering in
12 groups, flaunting their gang tattoos, and brandishing their gang name as a sword to strike fear into
13 the heart of the community. This fear allows Defendants to commit their crimes unchecked. After
14 committing their crimes, Defendants again invoke their gang name as a shield behind which to hide
15 and avoid accountability for their actions. If any Defendant believes that a victim or witness has
16 reported a crime, the gang again invokes the gang name and retaliates against the person, home, car,
17 phone, business and other property of the witness or victim. Defendants often threaten victims of and
18 witnesses to their crimes, thus avoiding prosecution for their criminal conduct and ensuring that the
19 nuisance will continue unabated. Because of these actions, good people in the Safety Zone at times
20 rightly believe they are at risk if they report crime. Law enforcement is not able to function as it
21 should when victims and witnesses are too afraid of retaliation from Defendants to speak to police
22 and prosecutors. Defendants target undocumented persons, immigrants, to be victims of their crimes
23 believing that their gang's intimidation will be even more effective. Defendants' intimidation causes
24 a nuisance by depriving the community of their comfortable enjoyment of life and property, and by
25 creating an atmosphere that is injurious to the community's health, and indecent and offensive to the
26 senses.

27 19. Throughout the Safety Zone, Defendants at times loiter in groups of two or more,
28 selling and using drugs, drinking alcohol, urinating, littering, threatening, assaulting, and robbing

1 residents and passersby in streets and sidewalks, open to public view and in front of children, at
2 apartment complexes and on private property which they have forcefully usurped from lawful
3 residents. Defendants at times hang out on the sidewalks, the streets, stairwells, and residents' yards
4 in the Safety Zone, thereby obstructing the free use of property by the visitors and residents of the
5 Safety Zone. Some law abiding people believe they should stay indoors at night to avoid being
6 harassed by gang members and to avoid becoming a victim of, or a witness to, Defendants' criminal
7 and nuisance activities. The association together of Defendants and subsequent victimization of the
8 residents by Defendants is injurious to the health, offensive to the senses, and interferes with the
9 comfortable enjoyment of life and property in the Safety Zone.

10 20. Defendants at times confront some residents and those passing through the Safety
11 Zone with the classic turf-based street gang challenge: "Where you from?" and by flashing their gang
12 signs, flaunting their gang tattoos, and "mad-dogging" young males who might be rival gang
13 members. Defendants' victims are then harassed if they fail to respond with the "right" answer. The
14 only "right" answer to this gang challenge would be if the victim were from the challenger's gang or
15 from an allied gang. Defendants will not tolerate a rival gang member being in "turf" they claim as
16 their own. A gang member's presence in rival gang turf is considered an act of "disrespect" to that
17 rival gang, which is punishable by violence including death by these Defendants. Defendants' "turf-
18 based" conduct, challenging and aggressively confronting others, is injurious and offensive to the
19 senses, a deprivation of the comfortable enjoyment of life and property, and, all too often, injurious
20 or fatal to the health of the people challenged.

21 21. Defendants at times use the sidewalks, private walkways and residents' yards to
22 congregate, drink alcohol, use drugs and harass pedestrians. As Defendants continue to drink, they
23 become disorderly and dangerous. Fortified by alcohol and the support of their fellow gang members,
24 Defendants target and harass innocent members of the community in the Safety Zone. This behavior
25 constitutes a nuisance in that it is indecent and offensive to the senses, and interferes with the
26 comfortable enjoyment of life and property in the Safety Zone.

27 22. Defendants at times seek to proclaim their ownership of the Safety Zone, to bolster
28 the notoriety of their gang, and to physically degrade the Safety Zone, by the repeated painting of

1 their gang graffiti on walls of businesses and residences, on fences, telephone poles, fire hydrants,
2 and other private and public property within the Safety Zone. Defendants commit their graffiti
3 vandalism by using spray paint cans and felt tip markers, as well as other techniques and devices.
4 This visual blight acts as a constant reminder to the community, rival gang members, and anyone
5 venturing into the Safety Zone that this neighborhood is claimed by the Defendant Gang. "Cross
6 outs" and "187" (referring to Penal Code section 187, murder) and the use of the letter "k" (for killer)
7 after a rival's name send a stark message of threatened violence. The writings and etchings are meant
8 to intimidate and dissuade people from complaining to the police department or other city officials,
9 and to notify rival gangs and others that the marked area is Defendants' "turf" and that all other non-
10 allied gangs should "keep out." The property rights of the owners and their tenants are substantially
11 impaired and interfered with because they are forced to repeatedly expend time, labor, and money in
12 a vain attempt to eradicate Defendants' gang graffiti. Moreover, it is injurious to the health of the
13 residents, and their comfortable enjoyment of life and property are harmed, when Defendants' gang
14 graffiti attracts foreseeable and violent retaliation from rival street gangs.

15 23. Defendants commit even more of their criminal, nuisance and gang activity under the
16 cover of darkness. Nuisance activities ranging from illegal drug use and loud parties, reckless
17 driving, driving under the influence, and drinking in public, to robberies, beatings and shootings all
18 are more likely to occur in the late evening and early morning hours.

19 24. As a result of the behavior of Defendants, some community members in the Safety
20 Zone have suffered and suffer great emotional distress. Their days are filled with fear, intimidation,
21 anxiety, and quite often an invasion of privacy. Some residents are forced to stay inside their homes,
22 especially at night. When they do venture outside, some take alternate routes to avoid harassment,
23 intimidation and gang warfare. Some parents are afraid to allow their children to play outdoors
24 because of the criminal and nuisance activities of Defendants. Unless restrained by this Court,
25 Defendants will continue to maintain the nuisance, by participating in, and encouraging the criminal
26 and nuisance activities alleged herein.

27 25. Plaintiff has no plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law and will continue to suffer
28 irreparable damage, injury, and harm unless equitable relief is granted. Criminal prosecution has not

1 stopped Defendants' criminal and nuisance activities. Defendants at times threaten the victims and
 2 witnesses to their crimes, serving to reinforce their menacing reputation, avoid prosecution for their
 3 criminal conduct, and ensure that the nuisance will continue unabated.

4 26. Defendants' conduct will continue to cause great and irreparable injury to the people
 5 who live and work in the Safety Zone. Residents and visitors to the Safety Zone are victimized by
 6 Defendants' murders, shootings, robberies, assaults, witness intimidation, gang graffiti, vehicle theft,
 7 illegal sales of controlled substances, and other criminal, nuisance and gang related activity.

8 27. Unless restrained by this Court, Defendants will continue to maintain the nuisance and
 9 continue the acts complained of, and each act has been, and will be, without the consent, against the
 10 will, and in violation of the rights of Plaintiff.

11 28. Unless restrained by this Court, Defendants will continue to confront and intimidate
 12 their victims. They will dissuade victims and witnesses from reporting crimes and nuisance behavior
 13 to the police, from testifying after reports are made, and thereby evade responsibility for their
 14 criminal conduct. The public interest in tranquility and security, and basic public order, is threatened
 15 by Defendants' oppressive and widespread victim and witness intimidation.

16 29. The activities and conduct of Defendants, as alleged in this complaint, constitute an
 17 interference with the rights of the community at large in the Safety Zone, and as a result, constitute a
 18 public nuisance. Each of Defendants is a cause of the public nuisance that exists in the Safety Zone.

19 30. Code of Civil Procedure section 731 authorizes City Attorneys to enjoin public
 20 nuisances in the name of the People of the State of California.

21 31. Under these facts and Code of Civil Procedure section 526, injunctive relief is proper.

22 32. The peace, safety, and quiet enjoyment of the lives and property of the residents and
 23 other members of the community in the Safety Zone are being, and will continue to be, disturbed and
 24 threatened unless equitable relief in the form of an injunction as prayed for against Defendants is
 25 granted.

26 PRAYER FOR RELIEF

27 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered in favor of Plaintiff and against
 28 Defendants, and each of them, as follows:

1 1. For injunctive relief enjoining and restraining defendant BTLS, CYS, DST, ExP,
2 FTR, and HHS ("Defendant Gangs"), and any active member² of a Defendant Gang who participates
3 in or acts in concert³ with a Defendant Gang, from engaging in or performing, directly or indirectly,
4 any of the following activities in a "Safety Zone," as defined in paragraph 11 above:

5 a. **Do Not Associate:** Standing, sitting, walking, driving, gathering, or appearing,
6 anywhere in public view, in a public place, or any place accessible to the public, with any other
7 known member of a Defendant Gang.⁴ This prohibition shall not apply in any of the following
8 situations: (1) when an enjoined person is inside the premises of a licensed school attending class or
9 conducting school business, or (2) when an enjoined person is inside the premises of a church or
10 religious institution for purposes of worship, or (3) when an enjoined person is inside a place where
11 he/she is lawfully employed and is engaged in a lawful business, trade, profession, or occupation
12 which requires such presence. This prohibition against associating shall apply to all methods of travel
13 to and from any of the aforementioned permissible locations. For the purpose of this provision, and
14 every provision where it is mentioned, public place is defined as any place to which the public has
15 access, including but not limited to sidewalks, alleys, streets, highways, parks, hospitals, office
16 buildings, transport facilities, businesses, and the common areas of schools.

17 b. **Do Not Associate in Common Areas:** Standing, sitting, walking, driving, gathering,
18 or appearing, with any other known member of any Defendant Gang, in a common area, courtyard,
19

20 ² For the purpose of any injunctive relief granted, the following factors may be used to determine
21 whether an individual is an "active member" of a Defendant Gang: (1) whether the person admits to
22 being a member of a Defendant Gang, (2) whether the person has tattoos that are associated with a
23 Defendant Gang, (3) whether the person has been arrested while participating with active members
24 of a Defendant Gang, or (4) whether a reliable informant provides information that the person is an
25 active member of a Defendant Gang. Clothing, accessories, photographs and close association with
26 known gang members may also be relevant to whether a person is an active gang member, but these
27 factors alone are insufficient to validate a subject as an "active member" of a Defendant Gang for
28 purposes of this injunction. See *People v. Acuna*, 182 Cal. App. 4th 866, 883-884 (2010). "Part time"
and "weekend" gang members can be an "active member" for the purpose of this injunction if they
otherwise satisfy the above criteria. A person need not devote a majority of his or her time to gang
activities to be an "active member."

³ For the purpose of any injunctive relief granted, "the participation or acting in concert must be more
than nominal, passive, inactive or purely technical." *Colonia Chiques*, *supra*, 156 Cal. App. 4th at 49-
50. See also *People v. Englebrecht*, 88 Cal. App. 4th 1236, 1261 (2001).

⁴ *People v. Acuna*, 14 Cal. 4th 1090, 1110-1112, *cert. denied*, 521 U.S. 1121 (1997)

1 or carport of any apartment complex, condominium, or townhome;

2 c. **No Intimidation:** In any manner confronting, intimidating, annoying, harassing,
3 threatening, challenging, provoking, assaulting and/or battering any residents, patrons of, or visitors
4 to, the Safety Zone, or any other persons who are known to have complained about gang activities of
5 any Defendant Gang, including any persons who have provided information in support of this
6 Complaint and requests for injunctive relief;

7 d. **No Firearms, Imitation Firearms, Ammunition, Dangerous or Illegal Weapons:**
8 Possessing any firearm, imitation firearm, ammunition, fixed or folding knife, box cutter, ice pick,
9 or other illegal weapon, whether or not concealed, while in public view, in a public place, or any
10 place accessible to the public;

11 e. **No Trespassing:** Being present in or on the property of another person that is not
12 open to the general public, except (1) with the prior written consent of the owner, owner's agent, or
13 person in lawful possession of the property, or (2) in the presence of and with the voluntary consent
14 of the owner, owner's agent, or person in lawful possession of the property;

15 f. **No Graffiti or Vandalism Tools:** (a) Damaging, defacing, marking, painting, or
16 otherwise applying graffiti, to any public or private property, or (b) possessing any aerosol paint
17 container, felt tip marker, paint marker, spray paint tip, slap tag, or other item which can be used to
18 paint, spray paint, etch, mark, draw, or otherwise apply graffiti;

19 g. **No Drugs:** (a) Selling, transporting, possessing, or using any controlled substance
20 without a prescription, or (b) selling, transporting, possessing, or using marijuana without a
21 prescription, a physician's recommendation letter, or a medical marijuana card; and

22 h. **No Alcohol in Public:** Drinking or possessing an open container of an alcoholic
23 beverage in public view, in a public place, or any place accessible to the public, except when on
24 licensed premises where alcohol consumption is authorized;

25 2. That any injunctive relief granted in this action include a **Hardship Exemption**, by
26 which any member of any Defendant Gang may receive a specific exemption from portions of the
27 "Do Not Associate" and/or "Do Not Associate In Common Areas" provisions, pursuant to the
28 following process:

1 a. A written request for such exemption is to be made to the Los Angeles City
 2 Attorney's Office, c/o Gang Division Re: Hardship Exemption, 200 North Main Street, 966 City Hall
 3 East, Los Angeles, CA 90012;

4 b. The request must be specific in that it must request permission to associate with only
 5 individual(s) identified by name and date of birth, at specific times and in specific locations, when
 6 such association is reasonably necessary for some legitimate purpose. The legitimate purpose must
 7 be articulated in the request; and

8 c. If such request is made and not granted within ten (10) days after it is delivered or
 9 fifteen (15) days after it is mailed, the enjoined party may apply to this Court for such an exemption
 10 by noticed motion;

11 d. If such request is granted, written proof of the Hardship Exemption must be carried by
 12 the enjoined party and shall be presented to any peace officer upon request.

13 3. That any injunctive relief granted in this action, to include both provisional, if any,
 14 and permanent injunctions (hereinafter "Injunction") include an **Opt-Out Provision**,⁵ by which any
 15 member of any Defendant Gang or any person who has been served with such Injunction (hereinafter
 16 "Served Person") may move this Court under this Opt-Out Provision for an order that the Served
 17 Person is not subject to the Injunction. Plaintiff agrees not to object to Served Person's motion for
 18 such an Order, so long as the Order is to be without prejudice and shall not operate as a retraxit in
 19 any other action, with each side bearing its own costs and fees, and Served Person's motion satisfies
 20 each of the following requirements:

21 a. **Proper Notice:** A motion under this Opt-Out Provision shall be made on proper
 22 notice, properly served on Plaintiff's counsel, and shall not be made on shortened time;

23 b. **No Longer or Never a Gang Member:** Served Person must truthfully declare, under
 24 penalty of perjury, that he/she is no longer, or never was, a member of any Defendant Gang;

25 c. **Proof Required:** Served Person must truthfully declare, under penalty of perjury, that
 26 for the continuous period of three (3) years preceding the date of Served Person's motion, with the
 27

28 ⁵ *Colonia Chiques, supra*, 156 Cal. App. 4th at 51 (the "opt out" provision is valid).

1 starting date being no earlier than the date of entry of a permanent judgment, and excluding any time
 2 spent incarcerated, any time on supervised release (parole or probation), and/or any time spent
 3 outside the country after having been deported, all of the following are and have been true:

- 4 i. Served Person has not claimed membership in any gang;
- 5 ii. Served Person has not been documented by law enforcement associating with any
 6 known, active members of any Defendant Gang, other than immediate family members;
- 7 iii. Served Person has not been arrested for any felony or misdemeanor crime;
- 8 iv. Served Person has not obtained any new gang-related tattoos; and
- 9 v. Served Person, for a period of one year prior to the date of Served Person's motion,
 10 has been (a) consistently and gainfully employed or (b) enrolled in and attending school;

11 d. **No Effect in Other Proceedings:** Plaintiff shall not be bound by the criteria of this
 12 Opt-Out Provision in any action, civil or criminal, other than a motion brought under this Provision
 13 in this action;

14 e. **Judgment Not Admissible:** This Opt-Out Provision and any orders from it shall not
 15 be admissible in any civil or criminal action, and cannot be used for or against Served Person for any
 16 purpose whatsoever, other than in a civil or criminal contempt proceeding brought for a violation of
 17 this Order; and

18 f. **Dismissed Served Person Committing New Violation:** If subsequent to successfully
 19 obtaining an order granting a motion brought under this Opt-Out provision, Served Person violates
 20 any of subsections (i) through (iv) of 3(c) above (by claiming membership in a gang, associating with
 21 known gang members other than immediate family, being arrested for any felony or misdemeanor
 22 crime, or obtaining any gang-related tattoos), then Served Person may be re-served with whatever
 23 Injunction may be in effect at that time and will be required to comply with its terms and conditions.

24 4. That the following restraints apply to any injunctive relief granted:

25 a. **Non Gang Members & Former Gang Members Not Enjoined** No person shall be
 26 subject to such injunctive relief if they never were or are no longer an "active member of a Defendant
 27 Gang who participates in or acts in concert with a Defendant Gang";

28 b. **Injunction Not Effective Outside the Safety Zone** No person shall be subject to

1 such injunctive relief when they are not inside the Safety Zone, not to preclude civil or criminal
2 proceedings outside the Safety Zone for activities that occurred inside the Safety Zone; and

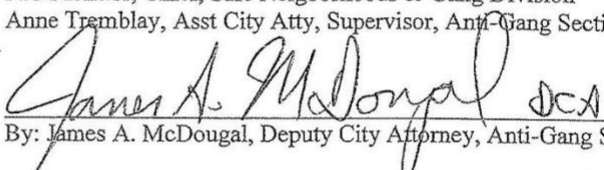
3 c. **Personal Service Required** Such injunctive relief shall only be enforceable after
4 personal service of an order or judgment granting such injunctive relief, on an individual subject
5 thereto, *i.e.*, an "active member of a Defendant Gang who participates in or acts in concert with a
6 Defendant Gang";

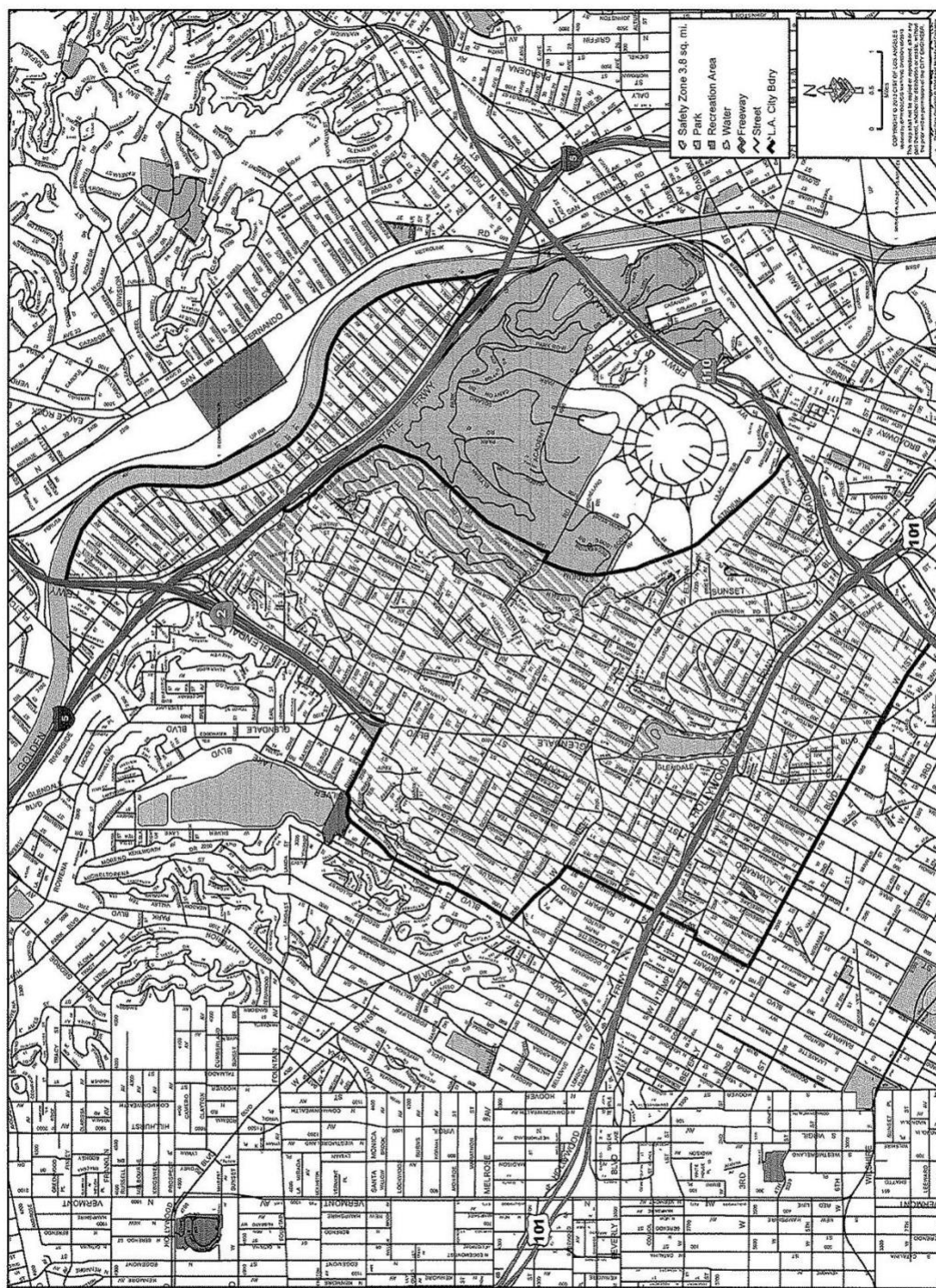
7 5. For costs of suit; and

8 6. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem proper.

9 DATED: June 11 2013 Respectfully Submitted,

10 CARMEN A. TRUTANICH, Los Angeles City Attorney
11 MC Molidor, Chief, Safe Neighborhoods & Gang Division
12 Anne Tremblay, Asst City Atty, Supervisor, Anti-Gang Section

13 
14 By: James A. McDougal, Deputy City Attorney, Anti-Gang Section
15 Attorneys for Plaintiff, People of the State of California
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Glendale Blvd Corridor Gang Injunction Project

Office of the City Attorney
City of Los Angeles



CGIs are legal mandates that restrict the access of associates of gang members to specific neighborhoods to prevent them from committing crimes. If a designated gang member violates the provisions of a gang injunction, they may face fines and jail time. Proponents of the implementation of CGIs have pointed to the impacts of gang violence on distressed communities as the recurrent theme to support permanent injunctions as an anti-gang strategy (Ridgeway et al., 2019).

A variety of factors create gangs. Poverty, low educational attainment, social unrest, a lack of decent jobs, and weaker family units all contribute to the formation and development of gangs—and, in turn, the harm gangs cause to a community. Even though the intent and focus of CGIs are to reduce gang activity in specific afflicted neighborhoods—which, in turn, allows police to tout the success of CGIs—little is known about the effectiveness of injunctions’ actual improvement of these distressed communities. The current researcher aimed to investigate the impact of CGIs on residents’ perceptions of their safety.

Background

One element of CGIs is the nonassociation clause prohibiting gang members from meeting within a safety zone (Ridgeway et al., 2019). Although gang injunctions have become a popular anti-gang strategy, the accepted usage remains controversial. This strategy involves police creating a list of individuals that they believe to be associated with documented gangs and banning gang associates from meeting or communicating with each other within a specific geographic area. This CGIs controversial provision is depicted below.

On a late evening in June 2009, Christian Rodriguez visited his girlfriend’s house at Mar-Vista Gardens, a City of Los Angeles Housing Project, with a CGI safety zone in effect (Bell, 2016). After spending time with his girlfriend, Christian Rodriguez left his girlfriend’s apartment to travel to his home. While walking through the housing complex, Rodriguez came upon a

childhood friend, Alberto Cazarez. As they met, Rodriguez and Cazarez were apprehended by patrolling Los Angeles Police Department officers, who cited the young men for interacting with an enjoined gang member and violating a gang injunction curfew within a safety zone.

Nonassociation Clause

In 1992, a gang injunction led to the controversial nonassociation clause becoming a mainstay in CGIs (Burnett, 2019). The CGI also included a clause in the requested gang injunction barring the Barrio Elmwood Rifa Gang from Burbank, California from appearing publicly with any other defendant within a safety zone. The Barrio Elmwood Rifa Gang injunction was the first CGI to use a nonassociation clause barring any gang member in the safety zone from assembling or being observed in public with any other gang associate (Finn & Hylton, 1994). Previous CGIs forbade members from trespassing, vandalizing, obstructing entry and/or exit, urinating and/or defecating in public, littering, and upsetting their neighbors. The Barrio Elmwood Rifa Gang injunction included these boilerplate sanctions and the newly formed nonassociation clause. The CGI against the Barrio Elmwood Rifa gang targeted 34 gang members in a safety zone that included an entire city block (Burnett, 2019; Street TV, 2020). The Los Angeles Police Department and the City Attorney pursued the injunction in response to a shooting of a woman after her car broke down on a motorway near a cul-de-sac where the gang frequented. Gang members opened fire on the vehicle, believing the female and her male passengers to be members of a rival sect, critically injuring the driver (Burnett, 2019).

Consequences of Enjoinment in a CGI

The legal team of Christian Rodriguez and Alberto Cazarez provided a vigorous defense to the charges that the youthful defendants violated specific provisions of a CGI. In preparation for their day in court, the defense team discovered that Christian Rodriguez was not a gang member. He routinely spent most of the day studying business and Mandarin at a local

community college, maintaining an A average (*Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles*, 2011).

Christian Rodriguez had been labeled a “gang associate” because of his older brother's gang affiliations. Christian Rodriguez and his family feared that Christian would be incarcerated if convicted. Labeling Christian as a gang member could also adversely affect the Rodriguez family, who resided in public housing. Individuals identified as gang associates that violated public housing tenant agreements could lead to eviction (*Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles*, 2011). Christian Rodriguez and Alberto Cazares’s civil proceedings were essential in deciding the guidance that the Los Angeles Police ultimately used to determine an individual's gang affiliation. In California, peace officers frequently used the 1988 STEP Act and CalGang to define and identify a gang member (both discussed below) or the defendant listed in any current injunction (Allan, 2002). In 2016, after a lengthy court process, the City of Los Angeles dropped the charges against Christian Rodriguez (*Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles*, 2011).

This matter raised several pressing questions, such as what sparked the interaction between Christian Rodriguez, Alberto Casarez, and the police; whether members of the community feel that CGIs increase safety and reduce danger by restricting gang members and their associate’s access to the said community; whether the local community perceives the arrest as fair, without bias, appropriate, and a means to protect the community against gang violence; and whether the residents of the enjoined neighborhood feel that the police response put other residents in the community at risk. To answer these and related questions, the current researcher collected and examined the perceptions of individuals living in or frequenting public spaces in a community impacted by CGIs to provide residents insights on how CGIs impact their safety.

The Popularity of Gang Injunctions

Data on the perceptions of community citizens of the effectiveness of CGIs are necessary because CGIs have increased in popularity nationally and internationally. The Barrio Elmwood

Rifa gang injunction marked the emergence of a continuous and increasing stream of annual injunction efforts in California. Later, yearly injunction efforts spread across the United States to include Austin, Texas; Shelby County, Tennessee; and Ogden, Utah, to combat violent gang activity (Allan, 2002; Orange County District Attorney, 2015; Shenefelt, 2021; Smith, 2016). CGIs are also used in the United Kingdom to curb gang violence, particularly in many homicides, knife crimes, and robberies (Zindulka, 2020).

Social Context

Before introducing CGIs into a neighborhood, the individuals who reside in a community where gang violence is prevalent are perhaps the most needed of government resources to overcome socio-economic challenges that make gang culture so inviting to young people (Maxson et al., 2005). Throughout the evolution of gang culture, several suppression strategies evolved to address gang violence in dysfunctional neighborhoods (Allan, 2002). CGIs are designed to serve as a suppression tactic for deterring gang violence; however, CGIs do not encourage social service interdictions; rather, they can serve to deter other social contexts. For example, other outcomes of CGIs affect residents' capacity to interact with others in the neighborhood, especially family members, and limit gang associates' ability to pursue educational and job possibilities, sometimes even housing and lodging (Swan & Bates, 2017). An individual's loss of connection to the community generally leads to a transformation rather than the elimination of gang activity. The transformation of gang activity often occurs when gang violence loosens the community cohesiveness, limits the upward mobility of the community, and leads to perceptions of systematic perceptions of injustice (Swan & Bates, 2017). The possibility that a gang injunction will harm community safety is linked to core group dynamics, as social identity and self-categorization theories stated. According to social psychologists, the more a person identifies with a group, the more committed to the group's

norms they will be, even when the norm is promoting violence (Tajfel et al., 1979). In one situation, when a person or gang is served and placed on notice by the court that they or their gang are under sanctions, the message communicates that law enforcement is targeting this membership. This claim has the power to strengthen gang social identity and foster camaraderie among members (Caldwell, 2010). Finally, these findings question the efficacy of suppression techniques as a sole method of reducing gang violence. Methods of suppressing gang activities alone fail to engage communities, give opportunities for families, and grant meaningful access to social services (Barajas, 2007; Muniz, 2012; Muniz & McGill, 2012). In disadvantaged communities, improvement in residents' quality of life requires a multipronged strategy that incorporates preventive intervention, along with suppression strategies. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a). From a social standpoint, it is vital to understand that, as initially conceived and applied, a CGI limits the behavior of gang members and associates indefinitely. Civil rights groups have described the procedure of removing oneself from a gang injunction as tough and time-consuming (Crawford, 2009). Gang members viewed the difficulty of being removed from a CGI as harmful and detrimental to achieving a stable home life (O'Deane, 2011); however, legislation passed in 2020 gave enjoined members a path of release from a gang injunction (Queally, 2020).

In 2011, the city of Long Beach, CA created Operation Opt-Out, an initiative intended to assist persons who want to be released from a gang injunction within some Los Angeles County locations (Brennan, 2015). Operation Opt-Out emphasizes four requirements before being removed from a CGI: (a) either going to school or obtaining full-time employment, (b) participating in community service; (c) demonstrating that they are no longer a gang member; and (d) presenting two sponsors from the community to show the former gang member is making

good life choices. While the city prosecutors contended that Operation Opt-Out is a reward for a successful transition from gang life, only five former gang members have successfully opted out from 2013 to 2015 (Brennan, 2015).

Theoretical Context - Social Disorganization Theory

The social disorganization theory was the theoretical basis for this research, as this theory has proven to be an efficient theory in explaining several types of violent crimes at the community level (Martinez et al., 2008). Social disorganization theory conceives individuals and groups interacting and establishing social relationships through cooperation and conflict (Grogger, 2002; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a; Maxson et al., 2005). According to the social disorganization theory, an individual's behavior is increasingly impacted by the nature of their social connections and immediate surroundings rather than by their capacity for reasoned cognition. The social disorganization theory also argues that criminal behavior is the outcome of logic and the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate decisions. Instead, the theory contends that there are strong links between a community's lack of social relationships and a rise in criminal propensity, which explains the uneven distribution of criminality throughout different neighborhoods.

As these social processes advanced, injunctive orders, including CGIs, have become part of the social norm in a community. CGIs alone do not address a neighbor's or a community's dysfunction (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a). Without providing a further remedy for unhealthy personal behaviors and social-economic deficiencies, the overall goal of CGIs to deter gang violence may not be possible. Through the current study, the researcher aimed to identify issues from the perspectives of individuals who resided in CGI safety zones designed to promote safe and functional communities to aid in identifying the specific needs of the community. The theory of social disorganization coincided

with the initial interests of researchers in studying gang culture. In 1927, Fredric Thrasher was among the first researchers to suggest the social disorganization theory as a framework for understanding gangs (Thrasher, 1927). Most relevant to this study is Sampson's (1993) perspective that a crucial predictor of social disorder was the community's ability to control gangs (Gagnon, 2018). In contrast, the community social disorganization perspective suggests that injunctions should improve patterns in community processes such as neighborhood relationships, community disorder, and informal social control.

Situation of Self

The current researcher lives in Los Angeles, the United States' gang capital (Queally, 2020) and also the first city to use CGIs to combat gang violence (Bloch & Phillips, 2021). The researcher regularly visited several of the city's most distressed communities socially and professionally as a court-appointed special advocate (CASA) and a volunteer at a local food bank, and routinely participated in grassroots activism in these same communities. His efforts included mobilizing community members with a passion for supporting social change. Often, the cause-to-effect changes were very personal because they took place within the researcher's community.

Many of the researcher's social contacts who share some of his specific interests are active gang members or have family members who routinely engage in gang associations. These observations include many people who struggle to achieve a quality of life consistent with their abilities. He knows people that shared their fear of gang members but also that many believe criminal injunctions will put them in greater danger. According to popular perception, gang members subjected to CGIs are inspired to attack others to boost their reputations. An empirical study backs this idea (Bichler et al., 2020). Others in enjoined neighborhoods believe networked gang violence increased after the imposition of an injunction. These observations, and the

researcher's desire to understand the perceptions of those closely impacted, sparked his curiosity and encouraged him to explore this subject. Through this study, the researcher sought to offer individuals affected by CGIs a voice in the hope of better understanding the lesser-known implications of these civil statutes.

A common finding was that gang injunctions criminalized the neighborhood's physical area by targeting communities and permitting noncriminal behavior to be a target of police scrutiny (Klein, 1996). Further, CGIs do not resolve gang violence, but rather move gangs into neighboring communities, spreading the conflict to other neighborhoods. Researchers also found that when creating injunctions, police frequently neglected to consult the populace (Miranda, 2007).

The three philosophical assumptions of ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions guided the current study. The notion that a phenomenon has numerous meanings was central to the researcher's ontological presupposition (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participant's views, the readers of this study, and the researcher's opinions may differ from reality. This qualitative study examined how respondents described their familiarities to understand their lived experiences (Moustkas, 1994). Regarding epistemology, the researcher operated intimately with the study participants to solicit their personal feelings freely to understand them as accurately as possible (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a result, the researcher drew closer to the participants by drawing on his previous professional experience living in an enjoined community. His position about the research environment pertained to the axiological assumption underpinning this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although neither the researcher's family members nor he were the subjects of personal experience with CGIs, he acknowledges

that academics must be conscious that “research is value-laden and that biases exist about their involvement in the study environment” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 20).

A significant influence in the researcher’s pursuit of this study occurred after learning of the tragic shooting death of two toddlers. In May 2019, Baltimore, Maryland's Mayor Jack Young and Police Commissioner Michael Harrison traveled to an inner-city neighborhood. The purpose of the visit was to plead for cooperation and witnesses to come forward in the homicide investigation of two children, aged 1 and 2 years old (Baltimore Sun, 2019). The request for the residents of the community to provide witness testimony fell on deaf ears. The reasons given by community members included fear of retribution by the assailants and a belief that the underlying conditions, which allowed such violence to occur, were not being addressed which contributed to violent incidents. The researcher looked to this story as a purpose and motivation to understand the reluctance of some to share their lived experiences and contribute to a solution when a community is impacted by gang violence.

Throughout the study, the researcher acknowledged troubling practices that impact these lived experiences and the perception of safety. These routines and procedures included how a gang member is defined, the overall bias within the gang injunction process, and the lack of relief for gang members and family members. These concerns often contributed to silence and feelings of despair in distressed communities. The researcher explored this obstacle in the context of CGIs by understanding whether the perceptions of individuals to goals of CGIs to create safer neighborhood holds was true from those most affected by obtaining honest responses and cooperation from the research participants to support the completion of this study.

Problem Statement

Throughout the late 20th century, Los Angeles routinely used CGIs as an anti-gang tactic (Ridgeway et al., 2019). CGIs are court-ordered civil restraining orders used to supervise the

everyday activities of accused gang associates to minimize criminality and eradicate public nuisances in districts infused with gang activity (Swan & Bates, 2017). In California, the legal debate regarding gang injunctions has centered on who should be subject to the injunction and the behaviors criminalized.

Empirical researchers studying CGIs have focused on their effectiveness in combating gang violence. Although important to the body of work, only a few studies looked at the viewpoints of community members. The findings of Hennigan and Sloane (2013b) and Swan and Bates (2017) were relevant to the current study. Hennigan and Sloane (2013b) investigated gang-involved teens' perceived danger of being detected and penalized for illegal conduct, the influence of gang injunctions on gang unity, and gang identification. They discovered that gang-involved youth in CGI areas exhibited a weaker social label and reported lower street cohesion among gang members than gang-involved youth in neighborhoods without injunctions. Swan and Bates (2017) interviewed San Diego County CGIs participants about their impressions of gang containment methods, particularly the underlying damages these procedures have on affected individuals. First, they discovered that respondents believed that gang suppression efforts limited their ability to integrate successfully into society. Second, injunctions prevented gang associates from pursuing traditional relationships with family members in safety zones. Participants in the Swan and Bates study also reported frequent harassment and intensive surveillance from police that prevented associations with nongang associates.

This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature by giving individuals residing in gang-injunction neighborhoods a voice to demonstrate how community residents associate the application of CGIs with a safer and more secure community. Even though the intent and focus of CGIs are to reduce gang activity in specific afflicted neighborhoods—which, in turn, allows

police to tout the success of CGIs—little is known about the perceived effectiveness of injunctions on distressed communities through the lens of community members. This research aimed to add to the body of work regarding how community members describe their experiences living in communities with CGIs.

Purpose Statement

Through this phenomenological study, the researcher sought to assess the general effectiveness of CGIs in light of community residents' experiences in order to spark discussions among stakeholders and decision-makers about potential directions for CGI improvement. This study employed the social disorganization theory, as interpreted by Shaw and McKay (1972), as the method to understand the lived experiences of community members and their perspectives on the impact of their safety. The disorganization theory yields an understanding of where the physical and social circumstances appear to be primarily responsible for the behavioral choices that a person makes (Gagnon, 2018). Physical decay, poverty, and a higher level of ethnic and cultural mixing are all concerns that Shaw and McKay identified in neighborhoods with the highest crime rates. The hypothesis of social disorder is a predictor of gang violence (Gagnon, 2018).

Significance of the Study

This researcher aimed to highlight the perspectives and experiences of people directly influenced by CGIs regarding their safety. Residents' perceptions in a documented region of recurring gang violence are part of a small collection of work among gang studies (Burnett, 2019; Swan & Bates, 2017). Viscarra-Estrada (2016) incorporated the perspectives of gang associates and nongang members in the study population; however, each non-gang-linked individual only served the community. None of the nongang participants in the Viscarra-Estrada (2016) study lived in the neighborhood and identified their understanding of CGIs' underlying

concerns. The current researcher intended to remind lawmakers that listening to the people they serve is just as crucial as making possibly detrimental regulations.

Research Questions

One research question guided this study to understand how residents in enjoined communities perceive the effects of CGIs on the safety and security of residents.

RQ1: Do community residents associate using Civil Gang Injunctions with safer communities?

Hermeneutic phenomenology stresses the researcher to search for themes and interpret the data to adequately comprehend the importance of lived experiences (Sloan & Bower, 2014). The researcher answered the study question through textual accounts of the participants' real-life experiences and structural interpretations of how respondents experienced the phenomenon. The researcher developed overarching and supporting themes to answer the study question successfully. The overarching theme, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, was based on comments that appeared to discount, disregard, overlook, or minimize the reality that gangs committed illegal offenses ranging from nuisance acts that annoyed citizens to criminal conduct that terrified or endangered them. The sole supporting theme was Shared Perspectives. Despite differences in experiences and exposure to gangs, all participants in the current study viewed some elements of CGIs through the same lens.

Definitions

CalGang is a statewide criminal intelligence system used by law enforcement organizations across the state. CalGang data contains information on alleged gang members, including their identities, any affiliations they may have with other gangs, and any circumstances that may have led law enforcement investigators to assume they were gang members (Allan, 2002).

Civil gang injunctions are restraining orders issued by American courts that prohibit gang members in particular localities from engaging in a list of predetermined behaviors (Bichler et al., 2020).

Enjoined is mentioned in the manuscript several times, referring to an enjoined gang member, criminal organization, or neighborhood. Enjoined indicates prohibiting someone or something from performing a specific act by issuing an injunction. *The gang member was enjoined from using the public space of Redondo Beach.* Two violent street gangs from the City of Placentia in Orange County, California were prohibited from harassing the neighborhood and creating a public nuisance by a CGI in 2015 (Orange County District Attorney, 2015).

A *gang* is an “interstitial group originally formed spontaneously and then integrated through conflict” (Thrasher, 1927, p. 46). Maxson et al. (1998) defined a gang as a group of young adults that identify as a collective and commit many crimes to cause police forces and significant neighborhood concerns.

Gang interventionists are specialized intervention counselors, and case managers mediate conflicts and keep the peace between local gangs. An interventionist also works to increase student safety and understanding of gang and youth violence and other wrongdoing. A gang interventionist's primary goal is to help schools and their communities construct a better and more secure environment by assisting them in taking a preventative approach to gang violence.

A *gang sweep* is an action of law enforcement, often in the form of several police agencies, to target gang activity and violent crime in a specific community. Gang sweeps usually result in several arrests of individuals suspected gang members who are suspected of engaging in criminal activity.

Gang violence mostly refers to violent crimes committed by gangs against civilians, other gangs, law enforcement officers, firefighters, or members of the armed forces (Allan, 2002).

Safety zones prohibit gang members and their affiliates from engaging in select activities within a particular geographic area (Ridgeway et al., 2019). The zones are geographic areas created during the implementation of a CGI. Identified by law enforcement, prosecutors, and occasionally concerned citizens, safety zone characteristics include a recurrent problem with gang violence.

The Step Act of 1998 is “any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more of the crimes, having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity” (Muniz & McGill, 2012, p. 2).

Summary

This chapter explained the current study as an exploration of the resident's perspectives on CGIs and how they impact their safety. Injunctions are court-ordered civil restraining orders used to supervise the everyday activities of accused gang associates to minimize criminality and eradicate public nuisances in districts infused with gang activity in safety zones (Swan & Bates, 2017). This chapter offered an overview of gangs and CGIs, recent history, and the theoretical context of social disorganization theory. The social disorganization theory was the theoretical basis for this research, as this theory has proven to be efficient in explaining several types of violent crimes at the community level (Martinez et al., 2008). Further, this chapter stated the research problem, objectives, significance, and definitions. One research question guided this study to understand how residents in enjoined communities perceive the effects of CGIs on the safety and security of residents: Do community residents associate Civil Gang Injunctions with

safer and more secure communities? Chapter Two contains a review of the relevant literature on CGIs and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Through this study, the researcher aimed to analyze the perceptions and lived experiences of individuals affected by criminal gang injunctions about their safety. A CGI is a civil lawsuit that seeks a permanent injunction against a group of individuals. CGIs designate the group's actions as a public nuisance and request the court restrict certain behaviors contributing to a community's dysfunction. The individuals enjoined by a CGI are subjected to considerable behavioral constraints and stipulated restrictions to certain behaviors within a safety zone (Bichler et al., 2019). CGIs occur almost exclusively in working-class neighborhoods of color, raising the perception that CGIs are unreasonable and unfairly based on racial boundaries (Swan & Bates, 2017).

This chapter is organized into three main sections: (a) a description of the literature search methods, (b) an outline of the theoretical framework for CGIs, and (c) an examination of published scholarship supporting the need for this qualitative study. The review complements previous studies on the efficacy of gang injunctions. It provided the groundwork for a study that included the voices of those most affected by a CGI for inclusion in future legislation and the implementation of new policing tactics. In this context, the literature review also examined 11 topics: gangs, gang activity, CGIs, types of gang response strategies, civil gang abatement efforts and public nuisance statutes, causal relationship between suppression reactions and gang growth, a historical perspective of CGIs, the empirical study of CGIs, CGI effectiveness, perception studies, and the role of CGIs in executing social mechanisms. Associated topics included discrimination, community involvement, and legal issues during the implementation and application.

Literature Search Methods

The current literature review was conducted by thoroughly searching the Liberty University Library's databases, empirical information systems, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, dissertation searches, and various legal journals and periodicals. Keyword searches that included the phrases of social disorganization theory, gang violence, California gang injunctions, public nuisance, civil abatement, and civil gang injunctions revealed relevant writings for this literary analysis. The literature review provides variations in approaches and methodologies by focusing on papers that studied the applicable theoretical framework and assumptions, resulting in links among social concerns and the efficacy of CGIs significant to the present study.

In most cases, social science theories explain, predict, and justify phenomena, while challenging and increasing current knowledge within the assumptions (Varpio et al., 2020). The literature review also revealed conflict among the creators of CGIs, criminal justice officials who implemented injunctions, and the theories intended to govern their application. In the following section, the researcher establishes the groundwork for the present research by revealing gaps in the literature that can be best filled by analyzing the perceptions of individuals most affected by CGIs and begins with the theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

Social disorganization theory is the theoretical framework selected in the current study for understanding affected citizens' perspectives of CGIs. The central tenets of the social disorganization theory illustrate how social processes unfold and apply to this research in providing an explanatory framework by which an injunctive order becomes part of the social norm in a community (Grogger, 2002; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a, 2013b; Maxson et al., 1998). Social theories are not part of disadvantaged neighborhoods' genesis; however, they may apply to communities by providing a framework to understand the human experience. When analyzing

the root causes of crime, researchers refer to the premise of the social disorganization theory.

According to Lynch and Boggess (2016), those who do not conform to societal norms are more likely to commit crimes. An individual's socioeconomic circumstances can also increase their likelihood of misbehaving.

The theory of social disorganization coincided with the researcher's initial interest in studying gangs. In 1927, Fredric Thrasher was among the first researchers to propose the social disorganization theory as a framework to understand why gangs attract young people (Thrasher, 1927). Thrasher (1927) proposed the social disorganization theory as evidence that gangs arose from adolescents' attempts to establish an independent social system from the rest of society:

A gang is an interstitial group, originally formed spontaneously and then integrated through conflict. The characteristics of a gang include meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. This collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, feelings of pride, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory. (p. 57)

Thrasher concerned himself with understanding the development and processes of gangs. Gangs increased as a social phenomenon in early 20th century Chicago, Illinois, where many recent European immigrant groups were settling. Thrasher contended that young people looked to gangs to cope with their sentiments of being disconnected from established social structures. The attractiveness of gangs came from their unique culture, which enticed many youths who felt disconnected and disillusioned. In this perspective, the allure of gang culture was not unique but rather a natural response to an unconventional situation in which gang members were not part of the mainstream and lacked the benefits others considered normal. Gagnon (2018) contended that individuals interested in joining a gang are frequently in lower social classes, abandoned, and rejected by society.

Shaw and McKay's (1972) Chicago school research further expanded the social disorganization theory into one of the most useful sociological approaches to studying crime and delinquency (Bernard et al., 2016). The idea of social disorganization evolved to define the difficulty of a community structure to fulfill its residents' shared values and maintain proper societal constraints (Gagnon, 2018). The theory held that reduced income levels, ethnic differences, and substandard housing caused the decline of community social organization, accounting for disparities in crime and delinquency across communities of different demographic characteristics.

Contemporary social scientists also use the social disorganization theory to explain why gang culture appeals to young people. According to this hypothesis, youths join gangs because they do not feel connected to established social organizations (Bernard et al., 2016). A crucial predictor of social disorder was the community's ability to control gangs (Sampson, 1993). High delinquency rates in areas where gangs proliferated suggested the presence of social and economic issues such as concentration of poverty, growth in single-parent households, increased dropout rates among high school students, and a decline in positive role models. Lippitt and Whyte (1943) emphasized the importance of concentrating on social and economic factors in urban areas. While neighborhood conditions and individual traits were crucial in Whyte's research of the City of Boston gangs, social processes were the most underlying causal reason for detrimental group dynamics (Decker et al., 2013).

Relevant to the current study of citizens' perceptions of CGIs, the notion of social disorganization lays the groundwork for influencing social change. Communities' involvement in developing and implementing CGIs can promote a community-wide effort to construct informal social control, human capital from social connections, and supporting coordination mechanisms

(Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). Even if people are not actively involved in the CGIs, lowering the fear of gang violence can help improve the community's quality of life by increasing collective efficacy (Sampson, 1993). As the acts of intimidation decline, a neighborhood may be able to mobilize and get involved in correcting the decay of their area's physical and social order, with the resulting consequences on gang violence and civic participation. Malcolm Klein (1996) defined a gang as an association that self-identifies as one and is acknowledged by the community as a gang committed to criminal activity. Implementing CGIs without positive reinforcements, such as community support and social resources, has negative results (Ridgeway et al., 2019). CGIs should be aligned with social services to make CGIs more effective in repairing a distressed community (Maxson et al., 2005).

Related Literature

This literature review examines 11 topics: gangs, gang activity, CGIs, types of gang response strategies, civil gang abatement efforts and public nuisance statutes, causal relationship between suppression reactions and gang growth, a historical perspective of CGIs, the empirical study of CGIs, CGI effectiveness, perception studies, and the role of CGIs in executing social mechanisms.

Gangs

Defining what constitutes a gang has been an ongoing debate amongst academics, policymakers, and stakeholders throughout the 20th century (Esbensen et al., 2001). These definitional challenges began during initial research on gangs and were among the first issues that gang researchers faced in determining what characterizes a gang. A standardized definition of a street gang has yet to obtain concurrence (Esbensen et al., 2001; Moore & Stuart, 2022). The lack of clarity surrounding a gang's purpose has significant implications for developing effective prevention and intervention. Regarding this study, the importance of a too-narrow or too-broad

definition of a gang member can adversely affect the quality of life for those who live near communities where gang injunctions are in place. Melde (2013) summarized the definitional paradigm of gang best as “you cannot manage what you cannot measure” (p. 160). According to several empirical studies, some social scientists and legal experts started searching for a gang definition using a conventional dictionary (Thompson & Bynum, 2016). The dictionary defines a gang as a group of inferior, disorganized individuals lacking a specific social purpose. Because there is no universally accepted meaning, authorities frequently create their definitions of gangs (Allan, 2002). The most well-known description of a gang is associated with urban violence.

Early researchers viewed gangs as innocuous associates from the same neighborhood who provided one another with social support and communal connection, typically through kinship (Esbensen et al., 2001). It is worth noting that 20th-century gang definitions did not include conduct that resulted in delinquent behavior (Thrasher, 1927). Contemporary gangs typically commit violent crimes against persons, drive-by shootings, robberies, carjacking, and killings within their neighborhoods. Stakeholders are particularly concerned about these instances because they increase residents' perceptions of fear and lack of safety and make it difficult for the community to implement informal social control mechanisms (Gang Reduction Program, 2021).

Element of Delinquency Added to Gang Definition 1970s

Thrasher's understanding of gangs influenced future scholars' quest to define a gang. Malcolm Klein and Desmond Cartwright were two of these scholars. In 1971, Klein (1996) expanded on Thrasher's teachings by including the aspect of delinquency in the definition of a gang (Kinnear, 2009). According to Malcolm Klein (1996), a gang is a group that self-identifies as a gang, and the community recognizes the association as a gang devoted to criminality. Both

Klein and Cartwright posited delinquency as an essential element of the gang phenomenon (Allan, 2002).

The gang issue is not a recent phenomenon in California. Gang violence has been a problem since the 1970s when the rival gangs of the Crips and the Bloods emerged and became immediate rivals in Los Angeles (Crawford, 2009; Vaught, 2021); however, it was not until the 1980s that gang violence reached new heights. By the end of the 20th century, an estimated 70,000 gang members resided in Los Angeles out of 120,636 reported by municipalities surveyed nationally (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). As gang violence surged, public outrage grew.

The Characteristics of Criminality Was Added to Gang Definition in the 1980s

In the 1980s, scholars began to examine the correlation between criminal activity and gang membership in gang studies (Kinnear, 2009; Laverso & Matsueda, 2019). Miller (1980) defined a gang as

a self-formed association of peers united by common interests, with identifiable leadership, well-defined lines of authority, and other organizational characteristics, which act cooperatively to accomplish a specific goal or goals, which typically include illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility, or type of property. (p. 121)

Walter Miller's gang research of multicity gang problem studies undertaken in the late 1970s and early 1980s resulted in the federal government's recognition of gang violence as a national problem (Howell, 1998). Miller's actions established the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program (OJJDP) and led to new federally funded gang studies and programs. Adding the words 'offending' to describe gang members' behavior, the scholar was consistent with policies that often looked to suppression rather than the prevention or treatment to deal with street gangs. Gardner (1983) further expanded the definition of gangs to include the variables of territory and delinquency as characteristics of gang association:

An organization of young people, usually in their early teens to early twenties with a name claims territory or neighborhood as its own, holds regular meetings with its members and has identifiable leadership. The primary feature distinguishing a gang from other youth organizations is delinquency: its members regularly engage in illegal acts. (p. 5)

Contemporary Gang Definitions

Although there is no widespread meaning of a gang, the National Gang Center has established criteria for federal agencies to classify entities as gangs (Gang Reduction Program, 2021). The group includes three or more members between the ages of 12 and 24 years, and members share an identity aligned with the gang's name and other symbols. As the gang participates in violent activities, gangs become more stable and well-organized. According to Knox (1998), identifying a gang requires that individual associations provide members exclusive benefits for participating in ongoing illegal activities. Like Miller (1980), Knox held that the organization must also have a criminal intent as a defining feature. Korem and Korem (1994) also studied the emerging phenomenon of gangs from the suburban perspective, and his findings indicated that inner-city and rural gangs exhibited similar traits. Like their contemporaries, rural gangs were groups of young people who had come together for a specific purpose, such as criminal activity. Adults may or may not be members of suburban gangs, but their population comprises a small percentage of their membership. Depending on the geographical location of a gang and its features, a gang is defined differently.

Federal, State, and Local Governments Define Gangs

Due to the lack of unanimity on the characteristics of a gang, state and municipal governments are free to create their definitions. According to Chan and Viliere (1998), a gang is a group associating individuals with identifiable leadership and organizational structure. The social learning hypothesis claims that when acting as a group, gang members usually feel less accountable for their acts and less culpable (Jeffery, 1995; Nicholson & Higgins, 2017). The

gang “either claims control over particular territory in the community or exercises control over an illegal enterprise and engages in violent acts or participate in criminally severe behavior collectively or as individuals” (Chan & Viliere, 1998, pp. 3–4).

For the sake of this study, the researcher followed the interpretation of the term gang provided by the National Gang Counsel (United States Department of Justice, 2020; Yoo, 1994). It is important to note that the National Gang Counsel’s (NGC) definition conflates the phrases street gang, juvenile gang, a criminal street gang together. In today’s research, the widely used phrase ‘criminal street gangs’ occurs in state and federal statutes to describe the characteristic of illegal activity for gangs (Gang Reduction Program, 2021). Many state and federal statutes also incorporated the word ‘criminal’ to include past and current CGI cases, which raises concerns among many community members and legislators. Promoting fear and the erosion of the community’s informal social control structures may have a causal relationship to defining and identifying gangs (Allan, 2002). The National Gang Center also established criteria for classifying formations as gangs (Gang Reduction Program, 2021). A gang contains three or more individuals, generally between 12 and 24 years old. Each member shares an identity, typically related to a name and other symbols, and members often self-identify as gang members. Gangs host a consistent leadership strategy, particularly in their hierarchical structure. Street gangs are also well-organized and routinely engage in criminal behavior.

CalGang Database

Many police departments operating in gang activity communities implemented suppression programs to quell violence (Howell, 2019). Sworn officers patrol the neighborhood and work for school district police departments, regularly sending identifying information about accused gang members to CalGang, the State of California’s official gang database. Most persons in the database have never been prosecuted or charged with a crime. Active criminal

investigations occasionally included data on people suspected of gang involvement. When officers fill out Field Identification Cards during everyday police encounters or stop-and-frisks, police add the bulk of collected information into the CalGang database. The CalGang rolls of 2012 included approximately 201,000 individuals (Muniz, 2014). Many individuals, 95%, were men (190,562), over 20% were African American (39,785), and 66% were Latino (133,410). These figures indicate racial discrimination or a membership imbalance towards minorities. The Calgang database does not reflect racial proportions in the population. According to 2011 U.S. Census data, 7% of California citizens were African American, 38% percent were Latino, and 40% were White non-Latino (Muniz & McGill, 2012). The CalGang Database lists 10.6 percent of all African Americans in Los Angeles County between the ages of 20 and 24 (6,786) as gang members.

The constitutional issues raised by CalGang were identified by Muniz and McGill (2012). In 2016, the California state auditor completed a review of the CalGang information system (CalGang Criminal Intelligence System, 2016). CalGang's efficacy as a resource for combating gang-related violence was hampered by its inability to ensure the data entered by police agencies were correct and suitable. Furthermore, erroneous information within the CalGang data system infringed on the privacy rights of persons whose report appears in the CalGang record system. CalGang supporters argued that the information identifying an individual as a member of a California gang had little influence on individuals' social standing because CalGang only refers to source materials and was not used by employers to assess eligibility or suitability for military service. The audit revealed that three California police agencies routinely provided searches of the CalGang data for a job or military-related screening (CalGang Criminal Intelligence

System, 2016). These examples demonstrate how being a member of CalGang may significantly impact a person's life.

Types of Gang Violence

Most modern gang definitions incorporate several important aspects as these terms have evolved. Gangs exhibit similar demographic characteristics and organizational structure but distinct leadership. Gangs generally use symbolism, as well as encourage long-term membership. Finally, participants must engage in illegal activities for a group to be classified as a gang (Gardner, 1983). Most gangs utilize graffiti to identify their territory, communicate with other gangs, and share a dress code incorporating a specific hue as a component of their identity. They have organizational rules of conduct and a spoken and written approach to identifying other gang members. Gang crimes increased dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s (Kinnear, 2009). Violence rose in many American cities as evidenced by several significant occurrences around the country (Kinnear, 2009). Most police departments report that gang violence substantially contributed to homicide rates (Gang Reduction Program, 2021).

Gang Activity

Most experts agree that gang activity skyrocketed in the 1980s and 1990s and continued spreading across the United States into the 21st century (Ridgeway et al., 2019). Following a significant decrease from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, the incidence rate of gang crime surged again between 2001 and 2005 and has stayed relatively stable since then (Gang Reduction Program, 2021). Between 2008 and 2012, larger metropolitan areas reported higher frequencies of gang-related problems. Ninety-two percent of reporting precincts indicated no issues with gang activity, and 79 percent said they regularly encounter gang violence problems (Gang Reduction Program, 2021). The association of street gangs and disorder is consistent across time, geography, and among the criteria of contemporary definitions of street gangs (Dong & Krohn,

2016). Pyrooz et al. (2013) found a link between street gang participation and increased criminal activity, particularly major and violent offenses. Researchers have cited that several factors contribute to gang members' increasingly aggressive behavior. The most critical factors are guns, territory, and drugs (Allan, 2002).

Guns

According to Miller (1980), gangs started using guns regularly in the 1970s. Stretesky and Pogrebin (2007) contended that “guns often help gang members project their violent identities” (p. 2), while Kubrin (2005) found that “the gun becomes a symbol of power and a remedy for disputes” (p. 363). Gang members also believe that maintaining a gun improves their power and manliness (Allan, 2002). Modern gang associates believe their gang opponents also carry firearms, and consequently perceive that it is imperative to arm themselves (Delaney, 2006). One gang member fires a gun at a gang rival, and members of that gang retaliate, and so on. “The growing use of firearms in gang assaults is a major contributor to the growth of gang murders” (Howell, 1998, p. 212). Firearms are a common occurrence in gang violence in Los Angeles County (Queally, 2020). Securing a gun is not difficult, as gang associates acquire firearms legitimately, from gun stores or e-commerce, and illegally, by stealing them during burglaries or having someone else purchase one.

Territory

Attaining territory is vital for the survival of modern street gangs. While the central emphasis of gangs was the battle for and control of their domain, that concentration has evolved. Inner-city gangs prioritized material possessions more than earlier criminal groups (Moore & Stuart, 2022). Modern adolescent gangs are less concerned with territorial preservation than prior gangs (Esbensen et al., 2001). In 1969, young African Americans formed California's Crips and Bloods street gangs (Vigil, 2003). These individuals began as a territorial war in which

neighborhood adolescents felt compelled to band together for safety from rival youths. At the end of the 20th century, law enforcement officials in California and other states began reporting the extensive effort of Crips and Bloods gang members from the Los Angeles area into the bulk of the country's large urban centers (Decker & van Winkle, 1996). Allan (2002) contended that protecting gang turf is a sustaining component in raising gang members' popularity and assuring a gang's success. Gang violence is also strongly tied to territory defense, with opponents generally emerging from surrounding marginal areas (Vigil, 2003). The competition for territory is significant in the lives of many gangs because it has greater explanatory power than most other unintentional features of different human behaviors that result in gang violence. A gang's neighborhood orientation strengthens gang members' interpersonal relationships by improving their loyalty to a common symbol, thereby raising the chance of gang members committing violence against rivals (Vigil, 2003). Today, law enforcement officials in California and other states report the extensive movement of Crips and Bloods gang members from the Los Angeles area into the bulk of the country's large urban centers.

Drugs

In contrast to urban lore, evidence has not proven a link between street gangs and illegal drugs (Allan, 2002). According to Klein and Maxson (2010) and Spergel (1995), gang organization is unfavorable to organized drug trafficking. Gang members' unpredictable, high emotional traits are not conducive to efficient drug distribution and sales networks (Spergel, 1995). According to Klein and Maxson (2010), the gang drug nexus was overestimated and not a societal issue. During the 1980s, some gang members observed the growing demand for crack cocaine as a financial opportunity; however, nongang youths did as well, making crack cocaine sales a win-win situation for both gangs and nongang entities (Fagan, 1989). Economic prospects from drug sales encouraged some young people to stay in gangs, as gang membership was an

ideal way to generate revenue (Howell & Decker, 1999; Sanders, 2021). An examination of Los Angeles gang activity, narcotics, and murders, however, discovered no link between drug dealing and gang homicides (Klein & Maxson, 2010). Gang activity eventually led to the formation of criminal gang injunctions.

Stop Snitching

Stop snitching is not a novel concept. For several generations and throughout the United States, exposing wrongdoing by contemporaries has been criticized (Police Executive Research Forum, 2009). Students are chastised for being “tattletales.” Medical professionals, attorneys, legislators, and other professionals are frequently hesitant to disclose wrongdoing by their peers. Those who assist police are often referred to as rats or narcs in the realm of organized crime. In Los Angeles County, criminal justice professionals are actively combating the stop snitching lore (Police Executive Research Forum, 2009).

Communities and law enforcement in these neighborhoods are deeply distrustful of one another because of the slow pace of the criminal justice system. In Los Angeles, prosecuting a gang associate for a violent crime might take months or years (Lewis, 2021). The speed of the criminal justice system gives the perception that local authorities are not doing enough to keep violent gang members off the streets, which motivates some citizens to take matters into their own hands. In contrast, the delays in the criminal justice system allowed gang associates to hamper prosecution by threatening or physically assaulting key witnesses. These circumstances create a favorable environment for the anti-snitching message. Locals are disincentivized to argue when the police cannot protect people and the gangs can exact vengeance.

CGIs

CGIs are court-ordered restraining orders used to monitor the everyday activities of suspected gang associates, reduce crime, and eliminate public nuisances in gang-infested areas of

a city. The concept of gang injunctions is that setting restrictions on gang members in specific areas will prevent them from committing crimes. Indeed, gang injunctions may reduce crime by acting as a targeted disincentive to individual gang members (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Nagin, 2013). Suppose evidence shows that identifiable gang participation has been a public nuisance in a specific location; in that case, CGIs may also identify gang associates, resulting in a strong message that enforcement agencies are watching gang activities closely. Injunctions against gangs may be helpful as a targeted deterrence in these cases. Individuals identified as gang members face preventative actions that may result in stricter restrictions on individual civil liberties than traditional law enforcement methods (Ridgeway et al., 2019). A CGI is issued the same way a civil restraining order is granted in a civil court and contains a list of prohibited actions. A violation of an injunction can result in criminal prosecution for misdemeanor contempt of court violation, punishable by up to 6 months in jail or a \$1,000 fine, comparable to a restraining order (Ridgeway et al., 2019). CGIs work under the assumption that limiting gang affiliation in particular areas will deter gang activity and lower crime. According to some academics, gang injunctions may aid in reducing crime because they serve as a targeted deterrent to specific gang members (Ridgeway et al., 2019).

Injunctions against gangs may be effective as a type of targeted deterrence. Some scholars have contended that research on problem-oriented policing revealed that focusing police activities on the people, places, and circumstances that cause the problem is the most effective (Hinkle et al., 2020). As a result, targeted-deterrent tactics attempt to concentrate attention on offenders who cause issues in specific areas. Historically, targeted-deterrent tactics used to combat gang and group-related violence had some success in fighting gun violence in Boston,

Massachusetts (Kennedy, et al., 2001). Whether CGIs are effective in the eyes of local citizens remains to be determined.

Types of Gang Response Strategies

Studies of gang culture reveal that gang members engage in violent crime in groups rather than operating alone as lone wolves (Brantingham et al., 2021; Decker & van Winkle, 1996; Klein, 1996; Thrasher, 1927). These scholars have suggested that a gang member's motivation to act in concert with fellow gang members is due to the gang member's belief that gang crime is more menacing than criminality at the hands of a single offender. Throughout the study of gang culture, four strategies evolved to address and counteract gang violence: grassroots organization and recruitment, social services interventions, employment and education resources, and suppression (Allan, 2002).

In the 1970s, as gang violence increased, the federal government focused on helping local and state agencies curb delinquency and strengthen the juvenile justice system (Robles-Ramamurthy & Watson, 2019). This interest prompted Congress to pass the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, which established a corresponding office to aid state and local governments in a supportive role. The Comprehensive Gang Model was developed by the OJJDP using Allan's (2002) research to identify anti-gang approaches to explain the most viable gang response strategies (Miller, 1980; Swan & Bates, 2017). The Comprehensive Gang Model's programs promoted community mobilization by enlisting ex-gang members to help with cross-agency initiatives, social intervention projects involving local community groups, agencies, and organizations, and education, training, and job programs. In order to maximize the use of currently and potentially available resources, the Comprehensive Gang Model also promoted the employment of formal and informal suppression tactics, such as gang-involved juvenile supervision and monitoring, organizational transformation, and growth. While the OJJDP's

concept is multi-faceted, the Gang Model foci are prevention, intervention, and suppression programs (Brady & Peck, 2021; Swan & Bates, 2017).

The suppression anti-gang strategy fostered the framework of CGIs; however, the key to this developing gang strategy was the combination of suppression tactics with prevention and intervention methods and the participation of interested organizations and institutions. The Comprehensive Gang Model also actively sought to include residents to discourage gang participation and developed plans with community-based organizations' participation. Anti-gang programs housed in the local areas were considered the most successful in combating street gang violence (Kinnear, 2009).

Prevention

Gang prevention programs were the first technique to counter gang crimes (Kinnear, 2009). These initiatives attempted to keep young people from associating with gangs by focusing on community-based interventions that addressed sociological, demographic, economic, and cultural variables along with social instability and lack of economic opportunities. The Gang Reduction Program (GRP) was a 5-year (2003–2008) project in a select number of American communities launched to minimize crimes and violence associated with juvenile street gangs (Gang Reduction Program, 2021). The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model was integrated into the GRP to formulate a meaningful strategy for gang control. The approach assessed young people's needs and provided tailored support services by incorporating their relatives, community organizations, and residents.

Intervention

Across the offering of alternative opportunities and rehabilitative choices, intervention programs encourage youth to leave gangs and those participating in gang activity to limit or eliminate their unlawful behavior. Outreach programs, crisis response, vocational training, and

psychosocial assistance are standard components of intervention programs. The stakeholders did not design such programs to prevent gangs from emerging. Young people with limited gang associations do not obtain social services to lure them from gang activity as part of intervention programs. In contrast, the more violent gangs are targeted and rehabilitated through law enforcement suppression techniques and intensive assistance. CGIs are one of several solutions proposed by criminal justice agencies to combat gang violence. Based on over 20 years of gang research, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012) developed the Comprehensive Gang Model to identify promising gang response techniques. The mobilization of the community in programs that integrate law enforcement and social support agencies supports the intervention process. Also incorporated into this model are education, training, employment programs, and social assistance, in which community groups, agencies, and organizations, including the police, approach gang associates and their families and assist them in accessing vital services and social support agencies supports the intervention process.

Suppression

Suppression programs generally employ legal tactics to deter or eradicate gangs by removing individual gang members from their neighborhoods. Suppression tactics include police intervention, arrest, and imprisonment (Bichler et al., 2020). Several jurisdictions have used classic suppression techniques such as anti-loitering, public nuisance, curfew, and parental responsibility to prosecute gang members (Kinnear, 2009). Although scholars found suppression efforts to be the most used to regulate gang activity, suppression tactics alone are the least effective at controlling gang behavior (Kinnear, 2009; Klein, 1996). It is important to note that CGIs are a widespread gang suppression technique used to combat gang violence, and the relevant statutes are applied evenly to all individuals and localities (Ridgeway et al., 2019). CGIs are a suppression tactic designed to disrupt the conduct that promotes gang violence and

intimidation of citizens in the community (Bichler et al., 2020). This suppression tactic, when implemented alone, is unsuccessful in repairing dysfunctional communities. The cornerstone of this suppression strategy is collaborating with social programs with input from interested individuals who appreciate their needs and perceptions about how and where suppression strategies are employed.

CGIs are focused deterrence techniques directed at minimizing gang violence and crafted to interrupt conduct that supports gang conflicts and neighborhood intimidation. During suppression strategies, the role of the community is essential (Swan & Bates, 2017). Relegating local individuals and community groups to the function of informants often occurs under suppression techniques. Alternatively, local citizens typically reject requests from law enforcement to inform on the activities of gang members. The overall perception by residents in a distressed community is that cooperating with the police does not heighten safety and security concerns for law-abiding residents.

Civil Gang Abatement Efforts and Public Nuisance Statutes

Civil gang abatement is an anti-gang tactic that blends public nuisance law and the civil recourse of a preventative injunction that gives local authorities a mechanism to effectively minimize gangs' detrimental effects on disadvantaged neighborhoods (Bloch & Phillips, 2021). Applying the public nuisance standard to counter gangs was pioneering because it prohibited otherwise legal behavior based on civil remedies instead of criminal law. There is no requirement to establish facts beyond a reasonable doubt, furnish defendants with a jury trial, or provide disadvantaged offenders with representation before the anti-gang injunction enforcement. Thus, CGIs became a more popular way for cities to deal with crime and public disorder issues (Ridgeway et al., 2019).

By imposing a civil abatement order in the form of a gang injunction, a court can impose restrictions on the behavior of gang members. The sanctioned behavior occurs in a given location when a local authority decides by a preponderance of the evidence that it is a public nuisance. The Broken Windows theory and current gang theory are used in an approach termed civil gang abatement (Stewart, 1998). A neighborhood becomes increasingly vulnerable to criminal intrusions as physical and social abnormalities proliferate there. The breakdown of informal social control and a surge in crime are caused by unattended physical disorder, antisocial behavior, and frequent small-time offenses. Due to these perceptions, residents who fear rising crime tend to shun public spaces and local involvement. This defensive reaction reduces the community's ability to regulate behavior informally. Individuals considering criminality see visible physical and social disorder as a sign that they can get away with perpetrating felonious crimes.

Abatement tactics are experimentally validated through community action to remove gang activity that negatively impacts a neighborhood by evolving into a public nuisance. Sections 3479 and 3480 of the California Civil Code are the regulatory frameworks utilized in California to determine that gang activities are a public nuisance (Bichler et al., 2020; Kinnear, 2009). The conduct of identified individuals or gangs in a safety zone may result in incarceration or fine. Applying the public nuisance principle to combat gang violence was groundbreaking because it restricts otherwise legal activities on individuals using the civil procedure. State prosecutors, district attorneys, and law enforcement agencies implemented public nuisance statutes historically to prevent gang violence. In California, authorities moved to expel gang members from public streets and parks in a rising group of selected neighborhoods (Bichler et al., 2020; Kinnear, 2009). Civil abatement and CGIs to deter gang have also been implemented

in other states, including Texas, Utah, Minnesota, and Tennessee, to combat gang activity in their distressed communities (O'Deane & Morreale, 2011).

Causal Relationship Between Suppression Reactions and Gang Growth

Distinct from deteriorated neighborhood conditions, suppressive responses to gang violence have often exacerbated the extent and severity of the situation, implying that suppressive responses unrelated to community conditions may be causally related to gang growth, spread, and development (Klein, 1996; Spergel, 1995). Klein (1996) questioned the appropriateness of using problem-oriented treatments to address street gang issues, claiming that focusing on a specific pattern of problems in a particular region does not give a generic answer to the community-level conditions that generate gangs. According to Klein, problem-oriented interventions were a scarce, enforcement-driven version of crime prevention, with decisions made by law enforcement officials instead of an intense form of community policing. The systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime are made jointly by the community and the police.

Before using CGIs to counter gang proliferation, deterrence-based tactics in gang suppression and anti-gang programs were implemented (Maxson et al., 2005). In 1992, Chicago passed an anti-loitering ordinance similar to a CGI, but it was ruled unlawful (Strosnider, 2002). Anti-gang policies and practices have evidenced several deterrence-based tactics. Police agencies have developed special gang units to combat gang activity through various investigative tactics. Prosecutors have adopted vertical prosecution techniques, in which appointed specific prosecutors or groups manage gang-related offenders' criminal proceedings from arraignment and charge to final ruling. State lawmakers have also established criminal statutes that enhance sentences for gang-related felony convictions (Melde, 2013).

Other anti-gang tactics implemented to quell gang violence include organizing police methods and the formation of special gang prosecution squads; however, there is evidence indicating that these strategies have not been particularly effective (Bichler et al., 2020; Spergel, 1995). One initiative also found to be ineffective and somewhat dangerous to residents of a dysfunctional neighborhood was the Gang Homicide and Felony Gang Assault Reward Program. The Santa Ana Police Department (CA) offered monetary rewards from \$100 to \$50,000 for information leading to the arrest of gang homicide or felony gang assault (Santa Ana Police Department, 2021). Urban lore dictated that individuals cooperating with local law enforcement are enemies of the community. The request for suppression strategies to work with law enforcement without adequately assessing the consequences to the local citizen needs further study.

California towns and counties have implemented gang injunctions throughout the last 3 decades to lessen gang-related crimes (Ridgeway et al., 2019). Klein (1996) referred to gang injunctions as “the most current toy” of the Los Angeles gang suppression paradigm (p. 81). The scholar held that programs that fail to address community conditions lead to further gang activity. Community conditions that lead to gang activity include the segregation of minorities, a lack of opportunities for minors, a lack of parental authority, and reduced social services. Klein claimed that CGIs were ineffective against street gangs and would increase their cohesion in the long term. As a better answer to gang problems, Klein recommended a robust version of community policing in which the community belongs to its members rather than the police (Klein, 1996). As with the earlier studies to determine the effectiveness of suppression-based programs to quell gang activity, the need is to learn from those most affected by gang activity in the decision-making process. Spergel (1995) argued for a “Community Gang Problem Policing”

paradigm to improve community problem-solving. This initiative called for investigating the perceptions of residents most affected by CGIs.

To combat unconnected behaviors that are detrimental to the quality of life in CGI-affected neighborhoods, Spergel (1995) proposed a community problem-solving paradigm that identifies the broader, more complicated societal issues to provide more answers than those indicated by suppression methods' law-and-order rhetoric. This strategy highlights the significance of community engagement, combined with social interventions, opportunities creation, suppression, and organization by suitable authorities. The model is dubbed "Community Gang Problem Policing, a rational social control and community solidarity, a social-institution-building method that seeks [sic] for the prevention and control of the gang problem based on a comprehensive analysis of community and situational elements" (Spergel, 1995, p. 200). To avoid gang violence, district attorneys and police departments across the country look to public nuisance statutes to quell gang violence. These statutes indicate that any conduct that infringes on the community's liberties is a public nuisance. Because there are considerable differences in defining a public nuisance, each state's civil and criminal statutes make distinctions.

A Historical Perspective of CGIs

CGIs were developed without taking all the necessary information into account. For example, many of the first CGIs were produced without the benefit of theoretical explanations or research supported by a theoretical foundation. Although it is essential to provide theoretical explanations of gang behavior in legal discussions regarding the use of gang injunctions, they have mostly been disregarded (Allan, 2002). The application of gang injunction case law during this time was also disregarded. The absence of empirical studies and failure to include gang injunction case law permitted the collateral growth in law enforcement authorities' ability to

circumvent criminal law's constitutional limits. Researchers have been slow to add social science research and theory to study the constitutional issues raised by injunctions. The discussion of CGIs continues in the next section reviewing the body of research as it developed and influenced the advancement of CGIs.

Advancement of CGIs

In the first reported efforts to suppress gang activity using public nuisance laws, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office achieved three separate injunctions in Pomona between 1981 and 1986 (Allan, 2002). The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office and the Los Angeles City Attorney collaborated on the initial injunction, which targeted 12 identifiable gang members and a landowner who permitted the gang members to assemble on his property. The judge denied the attorney's request to sanction the gang members but did cite the landowner.

The second effort targeted five Alwood street ladies of West Covina, California, prohibiting them from congregating, drinking, or throwing noisy, raucous parties at a particular residence. The owners of a crack house were the focus of the East Los Angeles injunction of the final reporting of holding gang members responsible for violating public nuisance statutes. In each case, police and lawmakers claimed that each civil abatement successfully neutralized gang activity; however, no empirical research supported this claim (Yuille, 2018).

In 1980, the city of Santa Ana used public nuisance law for the first time against a gang shelter that was the source of gang violence in the neighborhood (Allan, 2002). Although the judge rejected a preliminary injunction, they resolved the matter by a temporary restraining order prohibiting known gang members from assembling and drinking at the location. Generally, public nuisance statutes have been ineffective in deterring gang violence (Ridgeway et al., 2019). As a result of this transition, law enforcement officials are increasingly relying on civil remedies to counter anti-social behavior when criminal remedies have failed. Law enforcement agencies

are shifting their attention to CGIs, moving from a reactive to a proactive operational strategy, including CGI.

Although the first reported use of CGIs occurred in the 1980s by Los Angeles County prosecutors, they became more widely used in the 1990s (Ridgeway et al., 2019), particularly in high-crime areas where levels of street gang violence were historically a problem in Los Angeles (Martinez-Navarro, 2018). The problem-oriented approach, which encompasses problem-oriented policing's innovative techniques, promotes this aggressive CGI mentality. The “problem-oriented policing” model is mainly responsible for the problem-oriented perspective. Scholar Herman Goldstein established this concept in 1990 to guide traditional policing duties away from a reactive, incident-driven emphasis and toward a proactive, problem-solving objective (Schnobrich-Davis et al., 2020). This model was a prototype for community problem-solving in various criminal justice agencies and the existing CGI application. How law enforcement responds to an issue is essential to problem-oriented policing. According to the problem-oriented model, partnerships across multiple governmental entities, business groups, and individual stakeholders sought to raise the chance of durable and more successful responses. Collaboration also justifies the chosen approach in the public's eye, which is especially important in low-income areas with widespread disorder and distrust of the police and government intervention (Allan, 2002; Caldwell, 2010; Schnobrich-Davis et al., 2020).

In 1987, city attorneys brought a case against accused members of the Playboy Gangster Crips; this is primarily acknowledged as the start of the Los Angeles City Attorney's present use of gang injunctions (Martinez-Navarro, 2018). The Los Angeles City Attorney obtained the first gang injunction in 1987. Prosecutors issued the injunction to address drug sales and violence in the Cadillac/Coming area of Los Angeles at the hands of gang members. Throughout the hearing,

the judge queried the city attorneys why an abatement action was imposed for what appeared to be prosecutable conduct. Most of the identified gang members had been convicted of criminal offenses and had repeatedly failed to comply with probation requirements before this action (Martinez-Navarro, 2018). The judge found many of the prosecutors' suggested prohibitions, including gathering in groups, lingering in public streets, and having extended visitation in their homes, to breach essential constitutional freedoms.

The Playboy Gangster Crips' 12 named associates were forbidden from trespassing, destroying property, blocking free ingress and egress, urinating, and defecating in public, littering, and harassing residents. Incidentally, the law explicitly prohibited this conduct (Astvasadoorian, 1998). After 5 years, legislators attempted to file a second civil injunction against a Los Angeles, street gang. This long delay, however, would soon end. Justice officials in California requested gang injunctions in seven cases between October 1992 and July 1994 (Ridgeway et al., 2019). Los Angeles experimented with a range of gang suppression tactics, including civil gang injunctions, during endemic violent crime rates in the 1990s. Unfortunately, collaboration among various community bodies may differ vastly from the identified problem. Often, the only source of information is police reports and crime rates. Assistance in identifying solutions to gang problems is rarely sought, sometimes due to safety concerns for residents or doubt of residents participating in the problem-oriented methodology. Generally, quantitative examinations use crime statistics to determine how a program, such as CGI, affects the neighborhood. Prior studies of gang injunctions neglected the voice of gang members, their families, and those who live in the community (Swan & Bates, 2017).

Another milestone in developing CGIs was establishing the Strategy Against Gang Environments (SAGE) program in December 1993 (Vertinsky, 2019). SAGE arose from setting

up a unit inside the Los Angeles County Attorney's office to pursue injunctions in Los Angeles County, combined with other grassroots methods to quell gang activity. The SAGE framework was the concept of community-based policing, which encourages residents to collaborate with officers and attorneys to prevent gang activity; however, little empirical evidence supports that requirement (Vertinsky, 2019). Residents were systematically excluded from the decision-making process or the implementation of CGIs. The lack of community involvement created distrust for law enforcement and different fears for their safety and security. Although the program asks for community outreach, gang member tracking, and various treatments customized to the community's needs, the program's cornerstone is injunctive abatement. Since its inception, the SAGE program has participated in fourteen injunctive initiatives (Ridgeway et al., 2019). In the injunction procedure, attorneys from SAGE have trained or supported prosecutors from other agencies, notably San Diego and San Bernardino Counties and the cities of Salinas and Redondo Beach.

With Los Angeles credited for establishing the practice, the use of gang injunctions has gained national prominence (Ridgeway et al., 2019). The nationwide attention also sparked several court challenges about the constitutionality and fairness of CGIS. Injunctions against gangs became more common in California counties. Other states, including Texas, Utah, Minnesota, and Tennessee, followed suit, implementing their CGIs to deal with gang violence in their communities (O'Deane & Morreale, 2011). Injunctions became more common because of a lack of focus on social science studies to determine whether certain factors increase or decrease gang involvement. Concerns about civil liberties and lack of community support reduced the use of CGIs in 2000 and 2001, with two other CGIs passed each year. At the turn of the century,

politicians were particularly interested in gang injunctions, which increased their use (Caldwell, 2010).

The Empirical Study of CGIs

Historically, CGI research has received little attention from social scientists. Much of the study of CGIs was completed in legal reviews to assess whether CGIs were constitutional, with few questioning the CGI impact and efficacy (Grogger, 2002; Ridgeway et al., 2019). When scholars did initiate the body of work on CGIs, most extant studies on injunctions concentrated on their effectiveness and legality, with little consideration paid to their contextual peculiarities of CGIs. Limited researchers have focused on the role of CGIs in executing social control mechanisms that hinder urban areas from flourishing (Barajas, 2007; Wang, 2007). There have been few thorough studies to support the claims made by politicians and law enforcement regarding the effectiveness of gang injunctions in reducing gang activity. After justice officials implemented gang injunctions in a number of communities in Los Angeles, initial research examining changes in crime statistics in enjoined areas found mixed results regarding the usefulness of the injunctions. The outcomes of past studies were diverse. Some studies found evidence that CGIs positively impact a neighborhood by reducing violent crime (Burnett, 2019; Grogger, 2002). Early research into the effectiveness of CGIs, however, relied extensively on police reports comparing enjoined areas to control areas (Grogger, 2002) or nearby places without injunctions (California Legislative information, n.d.; Goulka et al., 2009). These research studies revealed links between CGIs and decreased violence or severe crime (Grogger, 2002; *Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles*, 2011). Additional research revealed that CGIs increased violent crimes in bordered areas (Goulka et al., 2009). Other researchers (Maxson et al., 2005; O'Deane & Morreale, 2011) claimed that the usefulness of CGIs is transient, but this contrasts

lawmakers' and law enforcement officials' extolling of the virtues of gang injunctions in reducing gang activity.

ACLU Study

In 1993, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California thoroughly investigated the implications of the Blythe Street (Panorama City, CA) gang injunction to determine the injunction's effectiveness. The first study, titled "False Premise False Promise: The Blythe Street Gang Injunction and Its Aftermath," was funded by the ACLU, an outspoken opponent of gang injunctions. Its purpose was to determine how the 1993 injunction against the Blythe Street gang in the Panorama City neighborhood of Los Angeles affected the impact on and displacement of the gang from the area (Yoo, 1994). The study is relevant because it is often cited as evidence that gang injunctions have little influence on violence in safety zones and have a significant displacement impact. The analysis was based exclusively on monthly aggregates of violent offenses, calls for service, and felony drug offenses in the Los Angeles Police Department's 19 reporting districts, including the heart of the Blythe Street injunction target area, as well as neighboring and nearby regions. Although the research data covered the 6 years from 1991 to 1996, researchers graphically displayed only data for a much shorter time. Because monthly totals varied so widely, visual interpretation was challenging at best (Maxson et al., 2005; Pyrooz et al., 2020). According to the analysis, the Blythe Street injunction did not affect violence or drug sales. The study also revealed that the injunction increased crime in an area near the injunction's effect. When compared to the rest of Los Angeles, the reporting districts near the Blythe Street injunction exhibited far more pronounced spikes in crime.

These findings contradicted information from law enforcement outlets that was publicized before the ACLU-funded study, and which had garnered extensive media attention and widespread acclaim for the reported decrease in gang violence (Bloch, 2020). Upon

subsequent critical analysis, the research methods did not stand up to (Ridgeway et al., 2019). Social scientists who attempted to model the ACLU study's research design expressed concern about how this study was conducted—and, as a result, about its conclusions (Maxson et al., 2005)—noted that the results were presented as a series of graphs depicting the monthly totals of each outcome variable for each reporting district. Rather than a statistical study, scholars examined each reporting district's monthly patterns for the outcome variables. Later commentators who looked at the validity of the ACLU study also challenged those variations in the collected monthly totals.

Scholars cited several severe flaws that hampered its validity (Allan, 2002; Maxson et al., 2005; O'Deane, 2011; Pyrooz et al., 2020). The first flaw was in the research design. The research design lacked comparable control districts against which the methods could conduct relevant comparisons (Allan, 2002). Control districts could have revealed if external factors to the injunction's operation affected the reporting districts. A second flaw was the lack of effort to evaluate or control competing hypotheses explaining the information variations (Maxson et al., 2004; O'Deane, 2011). Even though there may have been false variables, the difference was attributed solely to the influence of CGIs within the reporting districts. Third, the study contained discrepancies between the specific data presented and the conclusions reached. The fourth and most glaring flaw was that the study almost completely ignored information from reporting sections that contradicted the findings (O'Deane, 2011). Historically, the study has not stood up to empirical review and was criticized for weak research design and bias (Maxson et al., 2005).

Grogger Study

In the wake of the ACLU study's unfavorable findings, Grogger (2002) conducted the most painstakingly constructed analyses. He examined 14 CGIs that were established around Los Angeles County between 1993 and 1998, including the Blythe Street CGI, with the aim of

determining whether CGIs were helpful at lowering crime. The first scientific research on the effects of CGI on crime was on what happened to crime in designated safety zones (Allan, 2002; Grogger, 2002). In comparison to analogous communities without injunctions, Grogger (2002) noted that the neighborhoods with CGIs reported a 5 to 10 percent decrease in violent crime the year after implementation, with no evidence of gang migration to neighboring towns.

Gang Migration

Research findings have revealed that crime migrated to other Los Angeles areas where CGIs were ineffective (Goulka et al., 2009). While previous research has produced conflicting results, there is agreement that gang members become transient when CGIs are implemented (Maxson et al., 2005; O'Deane & Morreale, 2011). Gang migration to communities beyond the safety zone harmed socio-familial relationships and created a sense of mistreatment and discriminatory practices.

CGI Effectiveness

The first studies of CGIs gathered data focused on the impact of gang injunctions on crime, with a near-exclusive focus on the influence of CGIs on crime in designated safety zones (Bloch, 2020; Grogger, 2002). Although politicians and law enforcement officials sometimes voiced the effectiveness of gang injunctions in reducing gang activity, there have been few systematic studies to back up these assertions. Initial studies that compared changes in crime statistics in enjoined areas before and after CGI implementation in various Los Angeles communities found mixed results on their usefulness. Some CGIs had encouraging—albeit short-term—impacts, such as reducing violent crime (Burnett, 2019; Grogger, 2002). Other CGIs had discouraging impacts, such as increasing gang activity by exacerbating the social conditions that exacerbate gang presence and activity (Bichler et al., 2019; Grogger, 2002).

Caldwell Study

Caldwell (2010) investigated the unexpected repercussions of gang injunctions. This investigation was motivated by the emergence of political debates over gang injunctions that frequently centered on law enforcement officials arguing their success without referencing research on the actual effects of CGI in the enforced neighborhoods or the elements that fuel gang activity. Caldwell interviewed the individuals subjected to CGIs to determine how gang injunctions have impacted them. By combining these case studies with a theoretical analysis, Caldwell concluded that gang injunctions might fail to reduce gang activity in the long run.

Other studies have disconfirmed Caldwell's findings. Ridgeway et al. (2019) challenged the data suggesting that CGIs reduce crime, charging that the data are ambiguous. Hernandez et al. (2013) concluded that CGIs place the community at a significant safety risk by severing family connections. According to Hernandez et al., the impacts of gang injunctions are diluted by familial fractures and a slew of other possible unintended repercussions.

Allan Study

The initial investigation on the CGI process' acquisition stage was done by Allan in 2002. A case file for a CGI, a poll of the prosecutors involved in each occurrence, and press reports regarding CGIs from October 26, 1987 to June 30, 2000 were all studied in this exploratory study. The findings offered adequate proof that CGIs are adaptable remedies for neighborhood gang issues, with the most notable degree of variability happening in determining the kind of criminal issues and the preferred CGI remedy. According to Allan (2002), flexibility and community involvement are the two components that make up the problem-oriented policing attribute of CGIs. The term flexibility refers to the ability to adjust CGIs to address the specific characteristics of local gangs, which is necessary to address the wide range of anti-social behaviors and criminal acts that each group engages in (Thrasher, 1927). If a CGI lacks variety,

it will fail to acknowledge the specific circumstances and problems of a local community, according to Allan (2002). Although the proposed objective of framing a CGI was to give the community a voice in the usage of CGIs, community participation in the decision-making process was primarily lacking. The community's lack of ownership reduces confidence in CGIs and raises conflicts with law enforcement agencies (Ridgeway et al., 2019).

O'Deane & Morreale Study

O'Deane and Morreale (2011) concluded that CGIs were associated with decreases in gang activity and improved quality of life, and gang injunctions positively influenced the communities involved. The authors of this study used the number of calls for a police response as a direct proxy for criminal activity (i.e., fewer calls indicated lowered crime rates) and compared the number of calls for police response in two areas in San Diego, CA with similar levels of gang violence. One area had 25 enjoined gangs (under CGIs with established safety zones). The second area had gangs not under CGIs that served as a control. O'Deane and Morreale measured variations in calls for a police response 1 year before justice officials implemented a CGI. According to the results, calls for a police response for violent crimes in the area with enjoined gangs dropped drastically. The researchers concluded that “a decrease in calls means less gang violence and improved quality of life in the areas in which gang injunctions are implemented” (O'Deane & Morreale, 2011, p. 20). O'Deane and Morreale also contended that CGIs promoted a social transformation and better living circumstances for citizens in the safety zones. Later studies on perceptions of those affected by CGIs would contradict these findings.

O'Deane Study

In 2011, O'Deane completed a follow-up investigation on the efficiency of CGIs. This scholar looked at six gangs that have been the target of many gang injunctions in San Diego County. In order to determine whether the people included in the first injunction had been

punished for later illegal behavior and whether they had been mentioned in a subsequent injunction as alleged gang members 5–7 years later, the researcher examined police data. He found that 27% of the people listed in the first injunction were also listed in the second one and were charged with gang-related public nuisances.

Ridgeway et al. Study

Ridgeway et al. (2019) extended previous research on CGIs in Los Angeles by evaluating gang injunctions' short- and long-term effects on reported violence in the city. The researchers used the LACA's listing of all gang injunctions during 2018 to obtain data for this study. Researchers examined the location and timing of 46 gang injunctions granted between 1993 and 2013 and quarterly offenses recorded by the Los Angeles Police Department from 1988 to 2014 using difference-in-differences methodologies that take into consideration spatial and temporal connection (Ridgeway et al., 2019). This examination consisted of approximately 30 years of crime data from the Los Angeles Police Department. Results indicated that CGIs demonstrated short- and long-term impacts in lowering violent crime, particularly assaults. Overall, the extent of the crime reductions was considerable, with total offenses falling by an estimated 5 percent in the short-term model and 18 percent in the long-term model (Ridgeway et al., 2019).

Perception Studies

As suggested by the reviews of research above, most studies on gang injunctions look at reported crimes to see how effective CGIs were (Swan & Bates, 2017). Social scientists slowly added qualitative analyses of the perceptions of gang members, law enforcement, and justice officials to the literature; however, rarely—if ever—were family members, neighbors, and other interested/affected parties included as CGIs research participants. The few studies of affected persons' perceptions of gang injunctions focused on self-reported community assessments on the standard of living markers or how perspectives of youths residing in injunction zones differ from

those who do not (Hennigan & Sloane, 2013b; Maxson et al., 2005). The next section of this literature review describes studies of the perceptions of persons affected by CGIs.

Maxson et al. Study and Hennigan & Sloane Studies

Researchers examining the impact of gang injunctions in diverse neighborhoods, where various means of ethnic diversity, have concluded that CGIs exert different effects on different communities. The study's research design was to assess shifts in inhabitants' attitudes before and after the injunction in three geographic areas. Specifically, Maxson et al. (2005) polled two cross-sectional panels of about 1,200 people from a core target location, adjacent neighborhoods, and a control community for their study. Comparisons across communities in Inglewood, CA showed that the CGI did not impact crime, given that crime rates were comparable in the three areas. The influence of injunctions was also examined in San Bernardino, CA, studying community members' feelings to test a hypothesis based on social disorganization theory that injunctions improved individual citizens' feelings of safety and allowed the community to grow in cohesiveness and cultural connections. Residents in injunction-targeted communities may experience excellent community stability and experienced gains in social control. The researchers also contended that CGIs contributed to an increase in collective and neighborhood social efficacy, increased willingness to contact the police in threatening situations, and enhanced attitudes toward police powers.

Specifically, the researchers of this study explored the influence of CGI gang culture from the perspective of those subject to CGIs. The persons studied included gang associates and teenagers who did not self-identify as gang members but were affected by the conditions imposed by the CGI (Maxson et al., 2005). The results showed that despite a short-term improvement in residents' views of gang activity, residents' long-term perceptions of safety did not change significantly. The significance of the San Bernardino study was that it was qualitative

research that emphasized the importance of considering how persons subject to gang injunctions view CGIs. Information gleaned from residents provides extra information about the influence of gang injunctions that is excluded from analyses based solely on numeric crime data.

The focus of Hennigan and Sloane's (2013b) research was also on how CGI affects specific people. By interviewing young people who were most prone to join gangs, the researchers looked into how gang-involved youth perceived the risk of getting caught and penalized for criminal behavior as well as the impact of CGI on group cohesion and identity. They discovered that gang-involved youths in CGI neighborhoods were less likely to identify with their gang and spend less street time together than in non-CGIs areas. The findings demonstrated the importance of including views in CGI research because if the only research strategy assessing CGI effectiveness used numeric crime data, the conclusions drawn from human perceptions could not be confirmed.

Swan & Bates Study

Swan and Bates (2017) questioned CGI participants in San Diego County about their perceptions of gang suppression efforts, particularly the unseen effects such programs cause on people documented in CGIs. In San Diego County, between 2009 and 2014, these researchers interviewed people affected by CGIs and their counselors about the collective and individual effects of CGIs. They discovered that participants believed gang suppression measures hampered their capacity to get sufficient housing, further their education, and find work. Respondents admitted that without decent housing, education, and employment, they doubted their ability to integrate into society successfully. Survey participants also stated that CGI prevented their community from seeking established relationships with siblings and friends (Swan & Bates, 2017).

Second, injunctions prevented them from pursuing supportive relationships with family members in the enforcement of safety zones because frequent harassment and intensive police monitoring prohibited mingling with people who do not participate in gang culture. Finally, participants believed CGI did not have the anticipated effect on gang violence. Instead, gang members would go to neighboring communities with no gangs or vie for power with rival gangs from another community. CGIs exacerbated long-standing tensions, consistent with network gang violence (Barrows & Huff, 2009). CGIs sever ties between gang members and their communities, leaving remaining residents with feelings CGIs result in injustice—and, in some circumstances, a source of migration of others to participate in further gang violence.

Other Perception Studies

Two studies of individual perceptions of the effectiveness of CGIs were limited (Burnett, 2019) and included one gang member's perceptions in their sample. Based on the viewpoints of documented gang members, Burnett questioned the usefulness of CGIs. This study focused on one enjoined gang member's account of how he became a documented gang member in the CalGang database as a youngster. The detrimental consequences of being labeled as a gang member were addressed in the study. The participant claimed that he and several others had been wrongly classified as gang members and were not involved in the gang's actions (Burnett, 2019). Hernandez et al. later claimed that the injunction's limitation on association harmed the recorded gang members' ability to be with other family members who might have been included in the injunction as well—an example of how injunctions disrupt socio-familial relationships.

The Viscarra-Estrada (2016) study involved the opinions of both gang members and nongang members; however, each non-gang-affiliated individual identified in the population was limited to providing services (social worker, law enforcement) to the community. In the Viscarra-Estrada study, none of the nongang participants resided in the neighborhood and knew

the CGIs' underlying concerns. The relative scarcity of perception studies and the limitations of extant perception studies indicate a gap in research that the current study aims to fill. The following section on the execution of social mechanisms is the final section of this literature review.

Role of CGIs in Executing Social Mechanisms

Researchers have suggested that CGIs execute social control mechanisms that hinder urban areas from flourishing, but that research is scant (Barajas, 2007; *Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles*, 2011; Swan & Bates, 2017; Wang, 2007). Barajas (2007) used a qualitative research design that included engagement in neighborhood groups, municipal council sessions, and activism connections and drew two conclusions. One, residents of a safety zone banded together to oppose CGI enforcement in their Oxnard, CA town. Two, the community rallied behind the opposition to challenge the validity of a CGI. Wang (2007) argued that the true purpose of the CGIs was to preserve the economic interests of “elites in the revitalization of the city's downtown district,” rather than to reduce gang violence (p. 3). Wang also contended that the constitutional safeguards to protect individual civil rights and freedoms were either significantly lacking or unfairly applied in gang injunction cases. CGIs have a harmful influence on impoverished adolescents and their families by prohibiting lawful behavior. Despite the consensus among scholars that short-term reductions in reported crime and short-term improvements in citizens' sense of security occur during the implementation of safety zones, it was uncertain whether there were extended decreases in criminality or improvements in community members' sense of safety (Swan & Bates, 2017). No studies were identified that show quality of life improvements after the first year of an imposed CGI.

Constitutionality

The constitutionality of gang injunctions was challenged in California on January 30, 1997 (Caldwell, 2010). The California Supreme Court maintained the validity of two sections of a gang injunction from the Rocksprings neighborhood of *San Jose in People ex rel. Gallo v. Acuna*. The court addressed two provisions of restricting association among gang members and prohibiting the intimidation or harassment of community residents. The court held that San Jose might enact a civil gang injunction that prohibits noncriminal behavior by accused gang members in a particular neighborhood. The court reasoned that gang connections did not fall under the First Amendment's protection and that the prohibition on association was not overly vague, given that the injunction only applied to named defendants who were gang members (Caldwell, 2010).

A small body of work revealed the unwanted consequence of violations of the civil rights of community members in safety zones (Crawford, 2009; Muniz, 2014). Crawford (2009) contended that cities that use gang injunctions have a constitutional and moral need to establish a clearly defined and legally valid leave process for inactive gang members. Until recently, there was no straightforward process for gang members to protest or seek relief from being mentioned in a gang injunction (Queally, 2020). As previously indicated, the process of being labeled as a gang member or an associate of a gang member is devoid of protections for the individual.

CGI and Communities

Robert Sampson (1993) defined community effectiveness in CGI as a community's ability to control public settings. Gang injunctions with community engagement and control of parks and other shared resources may be more effective (Rukus et al., 2018). Gangs that solely operate for financial benefit and are removed from turf and territorial issues are often unsuitable for gang injunctions (Finn & Hylton, 1994). These gangs look to a community as a source of

operations, with many gang members residing elsewhere. The use of technology best deters these highly mobile gangs, and CCTV surveillance and undercover operations work best for mobile violence. To varying degrees, communities are concerned about gang problems in their area (Swan & Bates, 2017). Many residents are worried about their neighborhood's gang problem but do not know what actions to take, while others are unconcerned. Horowitz (1987) claimed that a neighborhood's indifference was a significant factor in gang violence, rather than a part of the solution.

Anti-gang injunctions became a permanent fixture in the battle against gangs and crime in the aftermath of Acuna, at least in California. Despite civil rights activists' complaints and neighborhood residents' reservations about the injunctions' efficiency, law enforcement continued to be used as a gang violence control technique. In 2021, the district attorney's office in San Diego, CA withdrew all civil gang injunctions in the county (Associated Press, 2021). The injunctions, according to a spokesman of the District Attorney's office, were mostly issued more than 10 years ago and caused more harm than benefit. Black and Latino people are disproportionately targeted by injunctions against gang members because they frequently have little chance to prove that they were not members.

Summary

In the current study, the researcher examined how those most impacted by criminal gang injunctions perceived and experienced these injunctions concerning their safety. A theoretical framework for CGIs, a description of the literature search strategies, and an analysis of published research demonstrating the demand for this qualitative study make up the three main elements of the literature review. The examination of earlier research on the effectiveness of gang injunctions laid the framework for the current analysis that will add the perspectives of individuals most impacted by a CGI to inform new laws and policing strategies and add to this body of work.

Academics, decision-makers, and stakeholders have debated the definition of a gang throughout the 20th century (Esbensen et al., 2001). The difficulty of affirmatively defining the traits of a gang was a persistent gap in earlier studies. These differences in terminology impacted the evolution and creation of suppression methods. Planners found that earlier treatment and prevention methods had little effect in defending communities from danger, regardless of the definition that they adopted. According to most experts, gang activity exploded in the 1980s and 1990s and has since significantly impacted American communities' safety and security throughout the 21st century (Ridgeway et al., 2019). As a result, a fresh approach to gang violence prevention, CGIs, was needed. Social scientists have historically paid little attention to CGI research. Few people questioned the impact and efficacy of CGIs during the CGI research, primarily performed in legal assessments to determine whether CGIs were constitutional (Grogger, 2002; Maxson et al., 2005; Ridgeway et al., 2019). When researchers first started studying CGIs, they mainly focused on how successful and legitimate they were, giving little thought to the context-specific features of CGIs. There has been little research on using CGIs to implement social control mechanisms that prevent urban areas from developing (Barajas, 2007; Wang, 2007).

Researchers have found that civil gang injunctions were a cornerstone in reducing gang violence in afflicted communities in Los Angeles County in the later decades of the 21st century (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Nagin, 2013). In gang-infested city districts, CGIs were court-ordered restraining orders used to monitor the regular activities of suspected gang members, lessen crime, and remove public nuisances. Injunctions against gangs are widely seen as a successfully targeted focus deterrence. Studies on problem-oriented policing showed that concentrating police efforts on the individuals, locations, and circumstances that produce the problem is the most

effective strategy (Hinkle et al., 2020). During the endemic violent crime rates of the 1990s, Los Angeles police departments and prosecutors experimented with various gang suppression techniques, including civil gang injunctions. Unfortunately, cooperation between various community organizations may not even remotely relate to the issue. The only sources of information are frequently crime statistics and police reports. Rarely are solutions to gang issues sought, possibly because residents are afraid for their safety or are unsure about using the problem-oriented methodology. Crime statistics were typically utilized in quantitative analyses to see how a program like CGI affected the community. Prior research on gang injunctions disregarded the opinions of gang members, their families, and residents (Swan & Bates, 2017).

The initial research on CGIs collected information on the effect of gang injunctions on crime, with an almost sole focus on the impact of CGIs on crime in designated safety zones (Bloch, 2020; Grogger, 2002). There have not been many thorough studies to support the claims made by politicians and law enforcement authorities regarding the effectiveness of gang injunctions in curbing gang activity.

Prior studies also suggested that community involvement was crucial to the success of CGI (Swan & Bates, 2017); nevertheless, residents frequently refused requests from law enforcement to provide information on the gang members' whereabouts. Residents of a distressed neighborhood believe that working with the police to implement CGI raises concerns about law-abiding citizens' safety and security and negatively affects how the community members perceive their safety. Residents were generally excluded from participation in decision-making and CGI implementation. Law enforcement was not well-supported by the community, which led to various anxieties for their safety and security.

Most research on gang injunctions examined recorded offenses to determine the efficacy of CGIs (Swan & Bates, 2017). The body of scholarship by social scientists gradually expanded to include qualitative examinations of the perspectives of gang members, police enforcement, and justice officials. Family members, neighbors, and other interested or impacted parties were, however, hardly, if at all, included as CGI research participants. The few studies that examined how gang injunctions affected people's perceptions concentrated on self-reported community assessments. Prior research revealed indicators of a high standard of living or how young people's attitudes differed between those who lived in injunction zones and those who did not (Hennigan & Sloane, 2013b; Maxson et al., 2005).

Two investigations evaluating people's restricted opinions on the efficacy of CGIs (Burnett, 2019) included the views of one gang member in their sample. Citing the perspectives of known gang members, Burnett questioned the value of CGIs. The study of Viscarra-Estrada (2016) included the opinions of gang members and nongang members, but failed to disclose their lived experiences regarding the participants' safety.

The literature review concluded that CGIs were created without considering all pertinent data. Many of the earliest CGIs were crafted without the benefit of theoretical justifications or theoretically grounded research (Allan, 2002). Although it is crucial to incorporate theoretical descriptions of gang behavior in legal discussions regarding the use of gang injunctions, they were frequently disregarded. The social disorganization theory was chosen as the current study's theoretical framework to understand how affected citizens perceive CGIs. The core ideas of the social disorganization theory explain how social processes develop and are relevant to this research because they offer a framework for understanding how an injunctive order becomes the social norm in a community (Grogger, 2002; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a, 2013b; Maxson et al.,

1998). The social disorganization theory was further developed by Shaw and McKay's (1972) research in Chicago schools, making it one of the most fruitful sociological methods for examining crime and delinquency (Bernard et al., 2016). The concept of social disorganization emerged to describe how difficult it is for a community structure to uphold its shared values and appropriate societal restraints (Gagnon, 2018).

The prior literature showed that CGIs experienced numerous growing pains after analyzing an expansion of theoretical frameworks, the legal development, and the chronological progression of CGIS advancement of this anti-gang tactic. The usefulness of CGI and its effects on the community were frequently disputed in legal disputes and academic investigations. Lawmakers continued to utilize them despite research that revealed conflicting results. Typically, the residents of enjoined communities—those most impacted by CGIs—were not consulted until legal authorities and politicians finalized their rulings. As mentioned above, the gaps noted in the literature analysis lend credence to the idea that further research is necessary to ascertain whether people believe CGIs improve their safety, security, and quality of life. In Chapter Three, the researcher presents the current study's research approach to achieve a data-rich inquiry into the lived experiences of people affected by CGIs, along with the required data-gathering techniques and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Through this phenomenological qualitative study, the researcher aimed to understand community residents' perceptions regarding CGIs and their effectiveness in promoting safer communities. A hermeneutic phenomenological research approach was the most appropriate design because the researcher intended to represent the shared challenges of the friends, family members, and neighbors affected by CGIs. The chapter includes a complete discussion of the research design and sample approach used in this investigation. This section concludes with data-gathering methods, analysis strategies, and the researcher's role, as well as a discussion of the study's credibility and ethical considerations.

Design

This phenomenological qualitative study determined how residents felt about CGIs and their efficacy in fostering safer communities. Merriam (2019) described qualitative researchers as scholars interested in understanding how individuals interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and what meaning they can attribute to their experiences. Qualitative research focuses on obtaining the reasons, motives, actions, and opinions to gain insight and allows researchers to delve deeply into a topic. Qualitative research is primarily exploratory research used to understand underlying reasons, beliefs, and motivations (Heigham & Croker, 2009). This exploratory technique, which includes discussions, interviews, and open-ended responses, is best suited to understand why a given problem exists (Walls, 2017).

Several scholars have contended that most research studying criminal justice issues uses quantitative research methods (Jacobsen, 1993; Tewksbury, 2009). The quantitative approach, however, was not appropriate for this investigation because the design of these studies aimed to quantify the problem by generating numerical or transformed data into usable statistics.

Quantitative studies quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables. The results of these computations are generalized to demonstrate similar results for a larger population (Creswell, 2013). Translating knowledge into numeric values using select data collection methods can limit the research's possible outcomes constricting the participant's opportunity to share a more detailed explanation of the topic (Tewksbury, 2009).

The research design required a qualitative approach to learn how community residents associate the application of CGIs with a safer community (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach provided a comprehensive and descriptive explanation of the respondents' experiences of the shared phenomenon, CGIs. In contrast to quantitative design, the human experience is at the center of qualitative research, as is how the researcher makes sense of it (Bhattacharya, 2017). Information that aims to describe a topic, rather than measure it, is collected using qualitative data. When comparing quantitative research to qualitative studies, the information obtained in the latter tends to be more informative, richer, and offers an enhanced understanding (Tewksbury, 2009). Qualitative studies also favor context over generality. To find explanations for human behavior in a particular context, qualitative researchers look for examples of conduct, explain study participants' ideas and feelings, and examine participants' views of the phenomena of interest (Carminati, 2018).

Phenomenology is the study of how worldly phenomena influence individuals' physical discernment and consciousness, as observed in the first person (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). It is also a means of investigating an idea or concept with a shared meaning for a limited number of individuals. Cohen and Crabtree (2008) described phenomenology as a "theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and one which sees behavior as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically

described reality” (p. 7) The approach's primary purpose is to arrive at a description of the nature of the occurrence in question (Creswell, 2013). Interviews include a group of persons with direct knowledge of the topic, event, or experience in question (Moustakas, 1994). The participant is asked two essential questions: (a) What has been your experience with the phenomenon? and (b) What events or situations have shifted your perspective on the phenomenon? (Creswell, 2013). Researchers apply this method to deduce the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experience and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Edward Husserl, a 19th-century philosopher, is widely regarded as the creator of phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Husserl, phenomenology is the discipline of the heart of consciousness, focused on the key of intentional and working directly in the first person (Williams, 2021). He contended that phenomenology enables the examination of phenomena by an individual's awareness. This tradition of phenomenology is vital for establishing themes in the information collected (Williams, 2021).

The two most common approaches to conducting phenomenological research are hermeneutic and transcendental (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Edmund Husserl constructed transcendental phenomenology, which evolved through the work of his mentee, Martin Heidegger, into hermeneutic phenomenology (Suddick et al., 2020). Although these forms are not opposed, the hermeneutic methodology is foundationalist in that it seeks a proper response, and a legitimate explanation of texts separate from interpreter influences. In contrast, hermeneutic phenomenology is anti-foundationalist, focusing on the reason that emerges from the interpretive encounter between previously produced writings and the audience. Foundationalism holds that fundamental beliefs are the foundation for all other acceptance beliefs (Suddick et al., 2020). The theory comes from the idea that other ideas must support

views. Foundationalism leads to a regression issue, as each concept used as an explanation must, be justified (Suddick et al., 2020). Anti-foundationalists also argue that no fundamental belief or principle explains the factual basis or foundation.

Transcendental phenomenology aims to grasp a phenomenon's meaning while excluding outside influences (Lavery, 2003). Dailey (2012) described transcendental phenomenology as the lived experience in a manner as independent of philosophical and societal constraints as achievable. The concept of bracketing is a central idea that distinguishes Husserl's phenomenological approach from his contemporaries. Bracketing is the process by which the researcher identifies and sets aside any personal experience with the studied phenomena (Tufford & Newman, 2012; Tuffour, 2017). Bracketing is used in qualitative research to reduce the adverse effects of assumptions that could impair the study.

The evolution of phenomenology philosophical roots of Husserl continued through the work of Martin Heidegger. In contrast to Husserl's transcendental views of phenomenology, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology argued that a linkage between cognition and conscious thinking exists that interprets and draws meanings from existence (Giorgi, 2012). Because phenomenology entails more than just definition, the researcher must assess the essence of the lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The hermeneutic phenomenological approach was appropriate for the current study due to the researcher's goal of describing and interpreting community residents' everyday experiences with CGIs in terms of their safety and security because phenomenology comprises more than merely a definition, which necessitated an evaluation of the essence of the lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the current study, the researcher combined first-hand reports and community members' perceptions to increase the

comprehension of the respondents' interactions with CGIs regarding their safety and security (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Research Question

One research question guided this study to understand how residents in enjoined communities perceived the social effects of CGIs:

RQ1: How do community residents perceive the use of civil gang injunctions (CGIs) and their effectiveness in promoting safer and more secure communities?

Setting

Los Angeles County, California served as the study's setting. This location was appealing because of its proximity to gang injunction hotspots and the researcher's knowledge of enjoined neighborhoods. As stated in Chapter One, as a court-appointed special advocate (CASA) and a local food bank volunteer, the researcher regularly visits some of the country's most impoverished neighborhoods. The researcher encountered many people involved in gangs and others struggling to reach a quality of life that promotes health and a positive future. Because media outlets and scholars refer to Los Angeles as America's gang capital (Queally, 2020), it was ideal to investigate how people perceive their safety and security as influenced by CGIs.

Although reporting gang populations was difficult to ascertain due to the lack of agreement on defining a gang, a study was completed in 2000 by the United States Department of Justice. This study indicated that Los Angeles County had more than 1,300 gangs with more than 150,000 members (Allan, 2002; Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles, 2011). In 2020, more than 46 civil court orders enjoined 79 gangs or factions in Los Angeles County, concluding the choice of Los Angeles County for the setting of this study rich in potential participants for the current study (Queally, 2020).

The researcher's work as a volunteer and a CASA confirmed that Redondo Beach and

San Pedro were two of the neighborhoods in Los Angeles County that were most adversely affected by gang violence and the subsequent adoption of CGIs. The renowned North Side Redondo (NSR) gang claimed Redondo Beach as its territory. By the end of 1995, North Redondo Beach's Perry Park, the gang's infamous core, was being overrun by gang activities, according to concerned locals. Perry Park is a public leisure area. Intimidation, intoxicated gatherings, drug trafficking, and shooting at all night hours were some examples of nuisance and criminal activity. A criminal gang injunction was implemented in late 1995, making Perry Park and the 24-block area around it a safety zone.

The Rancho San Pedro gang, popularly known as “RSP,” is a Mexican American street gang founded in the 1970s. RSP was the target of a significant law enforcement operation in 2011, known as “Operation Pirate Town,” in which 1,300 law enforcement officers from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) and the Los Angeles Police (LAPD) detained 80 alleged RSP members and associates. The police actions, filed in federal and state courts, alleged a variety of offenses, including violent conduct, the possession of firearms, and the trafficking of drugs.

Law enforcement in both Redondo Beach and San Pedro viewed the implementation of CGIs as a success in reducing gang violence. Police and prosecutors expended little effort to learn how CGIs affect residents' perceptions of their safety (Queally, 2020). The researcher's knowledge of the two cities and the history of gang violence resulted in the logical selection criteria limiting participants to Redondo Beach and San Pedro, CA. Individuals who resided in other areas of Los Angeles County were excluded from the current study.

Participants

After receiving IRB approval, the researcher developed a recruitment flyer (see Appendix B). Two of the researcher's acquaintances received the fliers after being asked to distribute them

to others. The two associates, who work as gang interventionists, assisted the researcher in identifying people who were familiar with past events of gang violence and crime that affected Redondo Beach and San Pedro. The potential participants also frequented both cities' public areas after the CGIs' implementation. Both gang interventionists had acquaintances impacted by gang violence and CGIs hosted in Los Angeles County. Once the gang interventionist agreed to assist in the current study, the researcher used snowball sampling to select additional participants in the present study. Snowball sampling was appropriate for the current research because the design of this study aimed to obtain a broad respondent pool of neighborhood residents who have encountered the same phenomena (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Snowball sampling was also implemented in the current study because it is a popular method for identifying and selecting data-rich participants in qualitative research (Palinkas et al., 2015). After potential participants were identified, they were provided a copy of the Recruitment Flyer (see Appendix B) by email or in person, including the required conditions for partaking in the current study. Potential participants were required to acknowledge they were between 18 and 75 years old and resided in and frequented public spaces of San Pedro or Redondo Beach, CA. The participants then signed the required consent form for the current study.

In total, the snowball sampling technique used in the current study's research design resulted in the limited inclusion of eight participants. As planned, each contributor resided in Redondo Beach or San Pedro areas before injunctions and lived there after injunctions were in effect. More important than the exact number of respondents in the current study was obtaining detailed, rich data from interviews with the same small sample of participants (Morse, 2000). Although there are no hard and fast rules for choosing an adequate sample size in qualitative research, Morse (2000) recommended six to eight participants in phenomenological studies.

The research design also included purposeful criterion sampling for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Purposeful criterion sampling creates a complete picture of all the research that meets pre-determined criteria. All participants were between 18 and 75 years old and resided in and frequented public spaces of San Pedro or Redondo Beach, CA. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is commonly employed to identify and choose information-rich examples linked to the relevant topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). The fundamental tenet of purposeful sampling is that information is readily available, and the researcher's job is to determine which subset of the population can supply it (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As stated above, the researcher chose the participants for this study from snowball sampling to provide an unexpected and rich information source. This purposeful sampling also allowed the researcher to collect accurate information about the research question. Each participant was chosen because they indicated their interest in the study and general knowledge of CGIs, as indicated by their unique and personal experiences with this research. Each interview opened with the introductory script (Appendix E) to refresh each participant's information about CGIs and to put them on more of an even playing field, so to speak, across interviews to confirm purposeful sampling was met. Purposeful sampling was crucial because it allowed the researcher to get the correct informants and rich data (Palinkas et al., 2015). It was also significant because obtaining in-depth information from participants is more straightforward because the researcher identifies and picks the correct audience from a population.

Procedures

Before any data were collected, an application for approval was made to Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants were provided a consent form (Appendix C) with additional information about the current study and confirm their eligibility for the current study. Each participant read and signed the consent form before the interview. The

signing of the consent form and the subsequent in-person interview were scheduled at the participants' convenience. Copies of the consent form were secured in a locked container at the researcher's residence to protect the participants' anonymity.

The researcher used an interview guide (Appendix D), refined with his dissertation chair's assistance, to conduct the semistructured interviews. The researcher used a digital voice recorder to record the interviews and voice-to-text and automation to transcribe the interviews. The collected data from these interviews and open-ended questions were manually analyzed.

The Researcher's Role

Context is the focus of qualitative research in determining how individuals make sense of what is happening, as qualitative researchers are more interested in the approach than in the results of an investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The researcher is an excellent component of information gathering in qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The information transmitted through the scholar conveys a richer source than checklists, surveys, or computers alone.

Data Collection

Research integrity requires proper data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection is a logical practice of gathering and analyzing information on factors of the study in response to inquiries, seeking to answer a research question or hypothesis, testing theories, and assessing outcomes. This hermeneutic phenomenological study's objective was to evaluate the general efficacy of civil gang injunctions in Los Angeles County, California based on community members' assessments of their level of safety.

The researcher in the current study started recruiting people with a recruitment flyer after getting IRB approval (see Appendix B). The two professional contacts assisted in identifying participants for this study. The two associates, who were gang interventionists, assisted in

locating persons knowledgeable about gang-related crimes and violence that impacted Redondo Beach and San Pedro and the impact of the implementation of CGIs in these enjoined areas.

Using a deliberate criterion and snowball sampling, eight community members from two Los County cities that met the inclusion criteria were recruited. The current study gathered data via semistructured one-on-one interviews, using reflective notes for data analysis.

Qualitative data analysis includes identifying, examining, and comprehending concepts and trends in textual information and how these patterns and themes help to answer the current research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Sifting through many transcripts for similarities and differences, detecting themes, and creating categories are all parts of analyzing qualitative data. Generally speaking, qualitative data analysis is not a complex, iterative process. As a result, it is common for researchers to avoid outlining an analytical process step by step. The type of analysis carried out depends on the methodology, study objectives, and data collection strategy (Glesne, 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Researchers can utilize theory in qualitative research to characterize behavior and beliefs using variables, concepts, and hypotheses (Creswell, 2013). A *theme* is an overall organizational concept that centers on a recurring pattern that commonly emerges throughout a dataset. The patterning of the issue across the dataset can be highlighted by using a theme to reflect different ways the same idea has been conveyed. In qualitative research, theoretical frameworks offer a broad framework for examining underserved groups (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through this lens, the study subjects are presented from an activist viewpoint that promotes action.

While most data processing in qualitative studies occurred after completing all the data collection, Stake (2013) argued that there is no set time for data analysis. As a result, the researcher employed memoing to examine the data continuously throughout the data analysis

process, starting with the first data collecting point (Lester et al., 2020).

During analysis, word selection, phrasing, and personal expressions were viewed as another representation of how participants interpreted their actual experiences (although excessive reliance on verbal crutches was modified when paraphrasing evidentiary quotes in this chapter to make them easier to read). Narrative data were collected during in-person interviews conducted from June to July 2022 as per participants' availability. Each participant was identified with a pseudonym, based on the recommendations of Gerrard (2021).

The researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews using the Otter Artificial Intelligence (AI) application. This speech-to-text tool allowed him to record and transcribe voices using a mobile phone application (Otter.ai, 2022). Before transcription, the researcher listened to the recordings to double-check their clarity and accuracy. Transcripts were converted into text and Microsoft Word documents, checked again for transcription accuracy, and stored securely using this application on a password-protected laptop.

Interviews

According to the type of study, different primary data collection methods are available to the researcher. Although observations are the most common method of collecting relevant data in quantitative studies, interviews are commonly utilized in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews allow a more in-depth understanding of the circumstance, phenomenon, or individual. When contrasted with observation, interviews reveal more reliable data.

Interviews assist a researcher in explaining, better understanding, and exploring participants' viewpoints, experiences, and phenomena. Semistructured interviews were the primary source for data collection in this study. Many interview questions in qualitative research design are semistructured and open-ended, allowing the researcher to gather detailed information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews also provide a vehicle to gain a thorough and vivid

description of the study participants' daily experiences in their natural environment.

The researcher strictly followed the data-gathering procedures outlined in Chapter Three of this dissertation. Protecting the participant's anonymity was paramount in the current study as the research design limited the gathering of the gender of participants' demographic data to protect their confidentiality. This study included the use of aliases for the respondents because anonymity and privacy are emphasized in ethical conventions and studies (Gerrard, 2021). As qualitative research aims to accurately depict the respondent's story while keeping the human element in mind, researchers typically use pseudonyms to guarantee a high level of confidentiality for participants in qualitative studies (Gerrard, 2021). An alias is a made-up name given to someone, a group, or a location to conceal their identity. Anonymity is a qualitative research concept that entails “removing or hiding the identities of participants or study sites, and not including information that could lead to individuals or research sites being identified” (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2001, p. 198). Many ethical guidelines stress the need for anonymity and confidentiality, and researchers regularly use aliases to achieve these objectives. Researchers should utilize gender, culture, and region nicknames to stimulate participants' perspectives and concerns (Allen & Wiles, 2016).

The researcher received and validated their signed informed consent. The research design also called upon each contributor to be open and honest and to ask clarifying questions. Participants were instructed to skip any questions that made them uncomfortable and to take breaks as required. Each interview began when the researcher appreciated the participants' significant input into this study.

Research Data Source – Interviews

When the researcher intends to gather qualitative, open-ended data, explore participant ideas, feelings, and views about a particular topic, and delve deeply into personal and often

sensitive matters, semistructured interviews are an excellent data collection strategy (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The investigator of this study used an interview guide (Appendix D) to standardize the semistructured and open-ended questions to increase focus and simplicity in understanding CGIs and how they affected their safety (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). A semistructured interview is a qualitative data-gathering approach in which the researcher asks informants a sequence of open-ended questions that the researcher predefines. Participants selected for this investigation were asked similar questions in person; however, the researcher also posed additional questions depending on the responses. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour to assess and analyze the collected data. Interview locations varied from the participants' private offices, participants' residences, or meeting spaces in the local library.

The researcher read each interview question aloud to each participant to maintain consistency in delivery and inflection throughout the interviews. At the beginning of the in-person interview, the researcher clearly defined CGIs to the respondents. This explanation included the purpose of CGIs and how they are enforced in Los Angeles County. Elucidating CGIs at the beginning of the interview confirmed that the respondents fully understood the nature of the research. The researcher conducted semistructured interviews using an interview guide (Appendix D). During the semistructured interview, the researcher asked the participants open-ended questions. Similar questions were posed to all participants, but the researcher also asked additional follow-up questions based on their answers.

The use of semistructured questions adhered to a predetermined methodology (Appendix D). This questioning stimulated participants' responses to generate further unscripted inquiries (Maxfield & Babbie, 2017). Open-ended queries do not present participants with a fixed set of possible answers, enabling them to reply in their language. In qualitative research

methodologies, open-ended questions are utilized frequently (Allen, 2017; Neuert et al., 2021). Most of the interview questions were open-ended (see Appendix D). To obtain meaningful employee insights, the researcher gave each interviewee space to respond without excessive interruption or urging. The nonprobing policy was also used as part of the hermeneutic process to let each participant speak freely and to recognize and appreciate the potential emotional sensitivity of recalling personal experiences with gang violence. The researcher repeatedly paraphrased to ensure that he understood a participant's meaning correctly (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Transcription

Because interviews collect qualitative data, it is not easy to record and replicate. The recorded information is typically unstructured and must be processed and arranged before researchers can make sense of it (Oliver et al., 2005). In qualitative research, respondent interviews are frequently transcribed and reported word for word as transcription converts spoken words into a written report. Transcription transforms any audio or video recording into a text-based version and is considered an excellent place marker to start when it comes to organizing and evaluating your data (Oliver et al., 2005). Transcriptions linked with analytic memos and notes or coded yield convenient categories and summaries. The researcher transcribed the interviews using the Otter AI application. This speech-to-text tool allows for recording and transcribing voices using a mobile phone application (Otter.ai, 2022). Before using Otter AI, the researcher listened to the recordings and double-checked their accuracy to complete the necessary revisions. Transcripts were converted into text and Microsoft Word documents and stored securely using this application on a password-protected laptop.

Naïve Reading

Naïve reading enables scholars to gain a basic understanding of the text and determine its overall meaning (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004; Simonj et al., 2018). A naïve reading resulted in a simplistic comprehension of the collected data. The information was then broken down into meaning units that were compressed and abstracted to generate an overarching theme and a sole supporting theme. The overarching theme, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, was based on comments that appeared to discount, disregard, overlook, or minimize the reality that gangs committed illegal offenses ranging from nuisance acts that annoyed citizens to criminal conduct that terrified or endangered them. The sole supporting theme was Shared Perspectives. Despite differences in experiences and exposure to gangs, all participants in the current study viewed some elements of CGIs through the same lens.

The researcher approached the material with an open mind, noticing their initial responses that piqued interest. Naïve reading is essential for hermeneutic phenomenological investigations because it permits the researcher to move throughout the material until it is thoroughly grasped (Gellweiler et al., 2018). A naïve reading results in a simplistic comprehension of the collected data. The information is then broken down into meaning units that are compressed and abstracted to generate subthemes, themes, and main themes. These themes are then checked for validity by being compared to the reader's naïve understanding. Finally, after reading the book, thorough knowledge is formed by considering the themes and naïve understanding considering the literature on the meaning of lived experience.

Narrative data were collected during in-person interviews conducted in June and July 2022 as per participants' availability. Each participant was identified with a pseudonym, and the researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews using the Otter AI application. This speech-to-text tool allowed him to record and transcribe voices using a mobile phone application

(Otter.ai, 2022). Before transcription, the researcher listened to the recordings to double-check their clarity and accuracy. Transcripts were converted into text and Microsoft Word documents, checked again for transcription accuracy, and stored securely using this application on a password-protected laptop.

Naïve reading aims to gain a basic understanding of the text and determine its overall meaning (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004; Simoný et al., 2018). A naïve reading in the present study resulted in a simplistic comprehension of the collected data. The information was then broken down into meaning units that were compressed and abstracted to generate an overarching theme and a sole supporting theme. The overarching theme, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, was based on comments that appeared to discount, disregard, overlook, or minimize the reality that gangs committed illegal offenses ranging from nuisance acts that annoyed citizens to criminal conduct that terrified or endangered them. The sole supporting theme was Shared Perspectives. Despite differences in experiences and exposure to gangs, all participants in the current study viewed some elements of CGIs through the same lens.

Memoing

Memoing is the recording of reflective notes from information learned by the researcher from the data gathered throughout the data collection process. Memoing helps the researcher make conceptual leaps, from preliminary reports to concepts that explain the studied phenomena (Birks et al., 2008). This method of data analysis enables the creation of fresh insights and ideas (Glesne, 2016). Memoing also aids the researcher's recognition of preliminary classifications (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Depending on the availability of the participants, in-person interviews were performed in June–July 2022 and lasted roughly 45–60 minutes. Following the recommendations of Gerrard (2021), each participant was assigned a pseudonym. The researcher then used the Otter AI

application. This speech-to-text tool abled the recording and transcribing of voices using a mobile phone application to record and transcribe interviews (Otter.ai, 2022). Before transcribing, the researcher listened to the recordings to ensure they were accurate and precise. The tool was used to transform transcripts into text and Microsoft Word documents, recheck them for transcription accuracy, and store them safely on a password-protected laptop.

As a result, the researcher employed memoing to examine the data continuously throughout the data analysis process, starting with the first data collecting point (Lester et al., 2020). Stake (2013) claimed that there is no predetermined time when data analysis must begin, even if the majority of data processing in qualitative investigations took place after all the data had been collected. As a result, starting with the first data collection point, the researcher used memoing to regularly review the data throughout the data analysis process (Lester et al., 2020). Throughout the analysis, word choice, phrasing, and individual expressions illustrated how participants understood their actual experiences. The researcher entered the acquired data into a system organized by filename to make it easier to retrieve the information later (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Retention of the file system was in an electronic folder, as was the collected interview data.

First-Cycle Coding

In qualitative research, coding uses a word or a short phrase that provides the researcher with a method to complete a reflective, analytical, and rigorous analysis from data collected from various sources, including semistructured interviews (Leavy, 2014). Qualitative coding encourages the development of meaningful hypotheses by interpreting, organizing, and organizing one's observations and interpretations. The first coding cycle is generally straightforward, containing a preliminary code designed to reacquaint the researcher with the collected information (Glesne, 2016). In the first-cycle coding, the researcher found words or brief

phrases that signaled the beginning of organizing and interpreting the participants' observations and the meanings or interpretations they assigned to their observations (Leavy, 2014). Loss of freedom, confinement, restricted movement, anxiety, feelings of safety, security, unease, direct threat, indirect threat, injunction breach, various forms of aggression, euphemisms, dispassion, etc., are a few examples of first-cycle codes.

Second-Cycle Coding

Researchers frequently rearrange and examine the data collected during the second coding cycle. The initial information is restructured and simplified into a structured achievement. The researcher can also add an interpretive lens to the second coding cycle by renaming and merging codes, establishing patterns, and constructing ideas and notions (Humble & Radina, 2018). The research used pattern coding to complete the second coding cycle. Two-pattern coding was the main emphasis of second-cycle coding. Similar portions of narrative material are grouped into fewer subjects or structures through pattern coding, which also involves merging codes, renaming codes, adding interpretative lenses, and creating preliminary patterns (Humble & Radina, 2018; Punch, 2013). The researcher formed introductory links between codes to form groupings of related codes by merging first- and second-cycle codes. For instance, the mix of restricted movement, subliminal threats, intimidation, and terror revealed how gangs imprisoned citizens by restricting their freedom of movement throughout the city or in their area. Pattern coding divides the summaries of the data into a smaller number of topics or structures and is helpful for grouping together more detailed and fewer complex identifiers (Punch, 2013).

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis process that examines transcripts or other data sets created from in-depth interviews to reveal themes and patterns. Thematic analysis is an automatic method that employs the researcher's subjective experience to draw meaning

from facts by categorizing them with a word or a brief phrase that the researcher uses to apply language-based or visual data elements (Saldaña, 2016).

Babbie (2020) described a theory as a well-organized interpretation used to conclude a particular field of study. Theory clarifies and gives meaning to known facts by assigning generality and implications to terms, assumptions, methodologies, and variables in social science research. The five complex tasks involved in text analysis are identifying the central theme and any supporting themes, describing the main themes, creating hierarchies of themes, implementing themes—tying themes to narrative passages—and connecting themes into theoretical models (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

The thematic analysis used the researcher's subjective impressions of the participants' larger experiential units to connect clusters of related themes and deduce the meaning that participants assigned to their experiences (Saldaña, 2016). For instance, participants who lived in the included neighborhoods and whose stories revealed Insider knowledge of gangs presented a wide range of data supporting the main topic, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality.

The primary theme, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, was based on claims that gave the impression that gangs were engaged in criminal activity that ranged from minor offenses that angered locals to severe crimes that worried or threatened them. Each participant offered evidence to support this dismissal theme. There were several methods to be let go. Minor instances included derogatory terms like “associates” or “just as guys in the region” when referring to gang members. Modest variations included blaming the police for annoying locals and disobeying warning signs of rampant crime in an area that had chained items to deter theft, guarded windows, pervasive burglar alarms, and extensive burglary. Stronger language was used to defend violence, such as yanking a woman's hair out because “it's the way of this hood” or

condemning a “snitch” who alerted law enforcement to the presence of gangs in a neighborhood. Insiders and Outsiders, two significant motifs related to one of the two subgroups of research participants, created the central theme of Dismissal. According to the Outsiders' perspectives, they had only sporadic direct or intimate interactions with gang members and just a passing familiarity with their dynamics. By emphasizing how CGIs impacted their local communities and neighborhoods, they portrayed CGIs as Outsiders. The Insiders' perspectives, however, made it clear that they had direct and personal contact with gang members and, as a result, had substantial knowledge of gang culture. They used how CGIs impact gangs to position them as Insiders. The two teams provided incredible, contrasting viewpoints on how CGIs impact people's perception of safety. The sole additional topic was Shared Perspectives. Despite having diverse origins and levels of exposure to gangs, Insiders and Outsiders saw distinct features of CGIs through the same lens.

Synthesis

Data synthesis joins information from several research sources to create a body of evidence (Moustakas, 1994). This synthesis explored research findings to examine the study's characteristics. The researcher must assess data and provide meanings and essences of the experience to assess people's views of their safety and security, establishing CGIs (Moustakas, 1994). These data sources were combined by triangulating survey responses, interviews, and reflexive memos, to interpret the participants' experiences of the phenomena. In addition, this synthesis will represent and visualize the results. Visual representations of data during analysis contribute to establishing connections and patterns that would otherwise be difficult to spot (Verdinelli & Scagnoli, 2013).

The foundation of qualitative analysis is the epoché method, which has a lengthy history dating back to the early cultivation of skepticism and philosophy (Simonyi et al., 2018). To focus

on the verbatim appearance of the narratives during the qualitative data analysis, the researcher practiced epoché by suspending his knowledge about and beliefs about CGIs to focus on them (Saldaña, 2013). The researcher has extensive knowledge and experience with court proceedings, gangs, and CGIs; therefore, this noninvolved perspective was crucial to the qualitative study. The researcher could better understand what CGIs meant to his subjects by suspending his reality of CGIs using epoché. Epoché began with bracketing, identifying, and removing the researcher's assumptions that may taint the research process, to the extent that was humanly possible. Due to his personal experiences with CGIs, it was essential for the researcher to put aside all preconceptions to neutralize personal bias and stay sensitive to the participants' experiences without affecting the study's conclusions. The researcher, a guardian *ad litem* volunteer in the Los Angeles County community, has regularly participated in the defense of children who had witnessed or interacted with people subject to gang injunctions.

One-on-one semistructured interviews were used to collect the data, and the current study used reflective memos in the data analysis. The main topic, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, was based on statements that seemed to dismiss, disregard, overlook, or diminish the fact that gangs committed illegal activities ranging from petty misdemeanors that irritated residents to violent crimes that alarmed or threatened them. All the participants provided proof of this dismissal theme. There were various ways to get fired. Minor examples included euphemistically calling gang members “associates” or “simply as guys in the area.” Moderate versions included blaming the police for bothering residents and ignoring warning indications of unrestrained crime in a neighborhood that contained chained things to prevent theft, secured windows, ubiquitous burglar alarms, and widespread robbery. Stronger language was used to

justify violence, such as pulling off a woman's hair because “it is the way of this hood” or condemning a “snitch” who told the authorities about the gangs infesting an area.

Two central motifs, *Insiders* and *Outsiders*, each alluded to one of the two categories of study participants, and together they formed the overarching subject of *Dismissal*. The viewpoints on the *Outsiders* revealed that they had an indirect understanding of gang dynamics and little to no direct or personal contact with gang members. They depicted CGIs as *Outsiders* by focusing on how CGIs affected their local communities and neighborhoods. The *Insiders'* viewpoints, however, revealed that they evidently, had extensive deep information about gang culture from direct and personal exposure to gang members. They presented CGIs as *Insiders* by considering how they affect gangs. Together, the two groups offered startling—but opposing—perspectives on how CGIs affect a person's perception of their safety.

Shared Perspectives served as the lone supplemental topic. The *Insiders* and *Outsiders* perceived various aspects of CGIs through the same lens, despite having different backgrounds and amounts of exposure to gangs. While most data processing in qualitative studies occurred after completing all the data collection, Stake (2013) argued that there is no set time for data analysis. As a result, the researcher employed memoing to examine the data continuously throughout the data analysis process, starting with the first data collecting point (Lester et al., 2020).

During analysis, word selection, phrasing, and personal expressions were viewed as another representation of how participants interpreted their actual experiences. Excessive reliance on verbal crutches was modified when paraphrasing evidentiary quotes in this chapter to make them easier to read. Narrative data were collected during in-person interviews conducted in June–July 2022 as per participants' availability. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym,

following the recommendations of Gerrard (2021). The researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews using the Otter AI application. This speech-to-text tool allowed the researcher to record and transcribe voices using a mobile phone application (Otter.ai, 2022). Before transcription, the researcher listened to the recordings to double-check their clarity and accuracy. Transcripts were converted into text and Microsoft Word documents, checked again for transcription accuracy, and stored securely using this application on a password-protected laptop.

Although the researcher selected the participants so that each brought unique and personal experiences to this research, he opened each interview with an introductory script to refresh each participant's information about CGIs and put them on more of an even playing field speak across interviews. The initial script used in the current study is Appendix E. The interview guide (Appendix D) included semistructured and open-ended questions to increase focus and simplicity in understanding CGIs and how they affected their safety (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). When a researcher intends to gather qualitative, open-ended data, explore participants' ideas, feelings, and views about a particular topic, and delve deeply into personal and often sensitive matters, semistructured interviews are an excellent data collection strategy (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The use of semistructured questions adhered to a predetermined methodology (Appendix D). This questioning stimulated participants' responses to generate further unscripted inquiries (Maxfield & Babbie, 2017). Open-ended queries do not present participants with a fixed set of possible answers, enabling them to reply in their language. In qualitative research methodologies, open-ended questions are utilized frequently (Allen, 2017; Neuert et al., 2021).

This study included the use of aliases for the respondents because anonymity and privacy are emphasized in ethical conventions and studies (Gerrard, 2021). As qualitative research aims

to accurately depict the respondent's story while keeping the human element in mind, researchers typically use pseudonyms to guarantee a high level of confidentiality for participants in qualitative studies (Gerrard, 2021). An alias is a made-up name given to someone, a group, or a location to conceal their identity.

Anonymity is a qualitative research concept that entails “removing or hiding the identities of participants or study sites, and not including information that could lead to individuals or research sites being identified” (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2001, p. 198). Many ethical guidelines stress the need for anonymity and confidentiality, and researchers regularly use aliases to achieve these objectives. Researchers should utilize gender, culture, and region nicknames to stimulate participants' perspectives and concerns (Allen & Wiles, 2016).

Asking the appropriate questions was essential to effective research, as it was the only method to guarantee that the data gathered from respondents would help answer the study's research question (Bichler et al., 2020). With the assistance of the dissertation chairperson, the interview guide (Appendix D) was refined to develop, identify, and, ideally, remedy problems in the respondents' understanding of civil gang injunctions and aided in the discussion of the lived experiences.

Transcription

Because surveys, observations, or interviews collect qualitative data, it is difficult to record and replicate. The recorded information is typically unstructured and must be processed and arranged before researchers can make sense of it (Oliver et al., 2005). In qualitative research, respondent interviews are frequently transcribed and reported word for word to convert spoken words into a written report. Transcription transforms any audio or video recording into a text-based version and is considered an excellent place marker to start when it comes to organizing and evaluating your data (Oliver et al., 2005). Transcriptions linked with analytic memos and

notes or coded yield convenient categories and summaries. The researcher transcribed the interviews using the Otter AI application. This speech-to-text tool allows for recording and transcribing voices using a mobile phone application (Otter.ai, 2022). Before using Otter AI, the researcher listened to the recordings and double-checked their accuracy to complete the necessary revisions. Transcripts were converted into text and Microsoft Word documents and stored securely using this application on a password-protected laptop.

Memoing

Before transcribing, the researcher listened to the recordings to ensure they were accurate and precise. The tool was used to transform transcripts into text and Microsoft Word documents, recheck them for transcription accuracy, and store them safely on a password-

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis process that examines transcripts or other data sets created from in-depth interviews to reveal themes and patterns. Thematic analysis is an automatic method that employs the researcher's subjective experience to draw meaning from facts by categorizing them with a word or a brief phrase that the researcher uses to apply language-based or visual data elements (Saldaña, 2016). The present study used the following procedures to evaluate the data from individual interviews following Van Manen's (2017) unbound thematic analysis method.

1. Used the Sony ICD-UX570 Recorder to document audio of the one-on-one interviews. Participants were contacted by voice call of acceptance following their submission of consent forms, which requested the days and times they would be available to participate in an in-person interview.
2. Used Otter AI application transcription software to convert audio-video recordings of individual interviews into text.

3. Uploaded each transcription of each interview. To organize experience data, the researcher highlighted participants' answers to each question and then dragged and dropped the data under the corresponding node.
4. Documented the developing meaning of each contributor's experience.
5. Grouped sentences into themes.
6. Restated the themes (i.e., description of the textures of the experience).
7. Developed textural descriptions—a description of the underlying frameworks of one's own experiences.
8. Created complex, textured experiencing structures that explained the meanings of their individual experiences.
9. Repeated the previous actions for every participant.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an integral part of the research process. Amankwaa (2016) contended that in qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the level of assurance in the information, interpretations, and procedures used to assure the study's integrity. Researchers should define the methods for an analysis worthy of readers' attention in each study. For a researcher to establish a dependable examination of reliability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the research truthfully replicates the genuineness of the lived experience and the participants studied. Completing the four benchmarks of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are required to demonstrate trustworthiness (Houghton et al., 2013).

Credibility

Credibility conveys whether the research reflects the respondents' views (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). To establish trust in the accuracy of the research study's findings, the researcher utilized triangulation and journaling to demonstrate that the research conclusions were credible.

To achieve triangulation, the researcher plans to use several methods combining data from several sources to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomena (Carter et al., 2014). The current study used purposeful sampling, detailed description, and detailed information to achieve credibility. A direct result of triangulation contributed to the present study's use of an interview guide that included semistructured and open-ended questions to increase focus and simplicity in understanding CGIs and how they affected their safety (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Dependability

The extent to which data collection techniques are chronicled, enabling others outside the study to observe, examine, and evaluate the research process, is called dependability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). To improve the current study's level of dependability, the researcher focused on constantly comparing data collected through interviews. Two central motifs, Insiders and Outsiders, each alluded to one of the two categories of study participants, and together they formed the overarching subject of Dismissal. The Insiders' viewpoints revealed that they evidently had extensive deep information about gang culture from direct and personal exposure to gang members. They presented CGIs as Insiders by considering how they affect gangs. Together, the two groups offered startling but opposing perspectives on how CGIs affect a person's perception of their safety. Viewpoints on the Outsiders revealed that they had an indirect understanding of gang dynamics and little to no direct or personal contact with gang members. They depicted CGIs as Outsiders by focusing on how CGIs affected their towns and localities.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the amount to which others agree with the researcher's analyses and findings. This criterion is a counterpart to objectivity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Confirmability was met when the study included an explanation of the facts and evidence, enabling others to verify the study's integrity when research can explain a negative instance.

The social disorganization theory was applied in the current study and was both validated and disproven by data from participant interviews. Outsider participants contended that CGIs make communities safer and more secure. Hence, the answer among them was yes. The answer, however, was no among Insider participants because they were primarily concerned with the disruptive effects of the CGI on the gang itself and gave only passing thought to the impact on locals who were not members of gangs. When the current researcher took the evidence into account in terms of the theoretical framework of social disorganization theory, this disparity of viewpoints revealed unexpected revelations.

Confirmability also helps researchers recognize attitudes that influence the perception of evidence. Inconsistencies in the data can lead to unanticipated discoveries that ultimately support the theory. To bolster their claims, qualitative researchers actively seek “negative cases” (Hsiung, 2010). A “negative case” is when the experiences or opinions of the respondents diverge from the bulk of the evidence.

Transferability

Because of the individuality of qualitative research and the unique inclusion of random sampling methods, qualitative studies do not focus on generalizing their findings (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative researchers utilize transferability to ensure future researchers can successfully convey a study’s results to different places or contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The current research improved transferability by offering detailed descriptions of the research background and the key hypotheses.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers of any empirical research often face ethical difficulties (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These issues can arise at any point during the research process; nonetheless, researchers are obliged to limit any potential harm to participants associated with the study (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2018). The researcher sought approval from the IRB before beginning the study to ensure the well-being of the participants. Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the researcher acquired informed consent from the participants, including information regarding the study's voluntary nature, their choice to withdraw at any study stage, and how the researcher intended to maintain confidentiality and privacy. The goal of the IRB review is to ensure that sufficient measures are installed to protect the rights and welfare of those participating as research subjects, both in advance and through periodic evaluation. IRBs assess research procedures and related materials, such as informed consent forms, to ensure that the rights and welfare of research participants are protected.

One of the most influential studies on ethics and medical research is the Belmont Report (Sims, 2010). Protecting subjects and participants in clinical trials and other research investigations is its primary goal. The Belmont Report proposes three principles necessary for the moral conduct of research involving humans, with the primary purpose of protecting subjects and participants in clinical trials or research projects. According to the Belmont Report, respect for people entails acknowledging each individual's autonomy and personal dignity and providing extra protection from compromise (Sims, 2010). The eight participants in this study had moved to the Redondo Beach or Rancho San Pedro areas before injunctions and lived there after injunctions were implemented. The only demographic data gathered related to participants' gender; this limitation in scope was done to protect their confidentiality and protect individuals from harm.

Pseudonyms were implemented in the current study to protect participants from harm during the data-gathering process. Details from observations and interviews were kept private and not shared with Outsiders to protect privacy and confidentiality (Glesne, 2016). The research

design's efforts prevented unauthorized access, use, disclosure, alteration, loss, or theft of the obtained data because data protection is critical to maintaining a high ethical standard for the current research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). To safeguard the collected information, a pseudonyms codebook was constructed and stored on a computer unique from the computer used to store the collected data to protect the participants' identities from being revealed. The acquired study materials were held on password-protected computers within the researcher's home.

Assumptions and Delimitations

Assumptions

The researcher's preconceptions about the techniques employed in qualitative research are called methodological assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to comprehend how residents felt about CGI usage and how well they worked to create safer neighborhoods. Through this study, the researcher aimed to depict the everyday struggles of the friends, family, and neighbors affected by CGIs. Hence a hermeneutic phenomenological research approach was appropriate.

Merriam (2019) defined qualitative researchers as academics concerned with learning how people construct their environments, interpret their experiences, and give those experiences meaning. Researchers can delve deeper into a subject thanks to qualitative research, which gathers the reasons, intentions, actions, and opinions to generate insight. Qualitative research is primarily exploratory to explore underlying causes, assumptions, and motivations (Heigham & Croker, 2009). The best way to determine why a particular problem exists is to use this exploratory method, which includes interviews and open-ended responses (Walls, 2017). Hermeneutic phenomenology stresses the researcher to search for themes and interpret the data in order to adequately comprehend the importance of lived experiences (Sloan & Bower, 2014). The researcher answered the study question through textual accounts of the participants' real-life

experiences and structural interpretations of how respondents experienced the phenomenon.

Delimitations

The social disorganization theory and the research question, *Do locals believe that communities are safer and more secure when civil gang injunctions are used?*, were closely associated with the current research delimitations. Delimitations in qualitative research are possible deficiencies in your study that are mostly beyond the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). In the present study, a delimitation occurred that restricted the analysis and impacted the research design and outcomes of the study that could not be rationally rejected. Only study participants who met those criteria were included, ranging in age from 18 to 75 years. The present study was limited by excluding study participants from different populations, such as those from towns other than San Pedro and Redondo Beach, California.

Throughout the study, this researcher acknowledged troubling practices that impact these lived experiences and the perception of safety. These routines and procedures included how a gang member is defined, the overall bias within the gang injunction process, and the lack of relief for gang members and family members. These concerns often contributed to silence and feelings of despair in distressed communities. The researcher explored this obstacle in the context of CGIs by understanding whether the perceptions of individuals to goals of CGIs to create safer neighborhood holds was true from those most affected. The researcher sought to obtain honest responses and cooperation from the research participants to support the completion of this study.

Limitations

Limitations are events beyond the researcher's control that limit or restrict the investigation's scope (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Like previous studies, this one had some restrictions. Residents of CGI-made safety zones freely took part in this study. The participants

were chosen because they were close to areas severely affected by gang violence and later suppression tactics used by local police enforcement. The study's location and the event description are exclusive to Los Angeles County. The popularity of CGIs presented problems because of the 1980s gang prevention culture, which commonly used injunctions against gangs to stop gang violence. The increasing use of CGIs exacerbated community resistance to their use. Other states, like Texas, Utah, Minnesota, and Tennessee, have also implemented CGIs to reduce gang violence in their local areas, but at a lower scale and with fewer citizen worries regarding their objectivity (O'Deane & Morreale, 2011).

Researchers who conduct empirical studies often encounter ethical challenges (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These problems may develop at any time during the research process, but researchers are still required to minimize any potential harm to study participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). To protect the welfare of the participants, the researcher requested IRB permission before starting the study. After receiving IRB approval, the researcher obtained informed consent from the participants by explaining the study's voluntary nature, their option to discontinue participation at any time during the study, and the researcher's plans to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Qualitative studies do not emphasize generalizing their conclusions due to the unique inclusion of random sampling methods and the individuality of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). *Transferability* is a tool used by qualitative researchers to ensure that future researchers can successfully translate a study's findings into various settings or situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The current study enhanced transferability by thoroughly explaining the study's history and main hypotheses. The current researcher also offered evidence that the study's conclusions

might apply to stakeholders in other communities where CGIs are frequently used to reduce gang violence.

Summary

The chapter included a complete discussion of the selected hermeneutic phenomenology qualitative approach, which the current researcher employed to learn how community residents associate the application of CGIs with a safer community (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study focused on the reason that emerges from the interpretive encounter between previously produced writings and the audience. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach was appropriate in the current study for describing and interpreting community residents' everyday experiences with CGIs in terms of their safety and security because phenomenology comprises more than merely a definition; it necessitates the researcher's evaluation of the essence of the lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the current study, the researcher combined first-hand reports of community members' perceptions to increase the comprehension of the respondent's interactions with CGIs regarding their safety and security (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Los Angeles County, California served as the study's setting. This location was appealing because of its proximity to gang injunction hotspots and the researcher's knowledge of enjoined neighborhoods. The research design and literature review identified two communities in Los Angeles County, Redondo Beach and San Pedro, CA, that were adversely affected by gang violence and the subsequent adoption of CGIs. Two of the researcher's acquaintances assisted in distributing the recruitment flyer to others. The two associates, who work as gang interventionists, identified people familiar with past gang violence and crime events that affected Redondo Beach and San Pedro. During analysis, word selection, phrasing, and personal expressions were viewed as another representation of how participants interpreted their actual experiences. This section concluded with data-gathering methods, analysis strategies, and the researcher's role while

discussing the study's credibility and ethical considerations. The disruption and violence caused by the North Side Redondo Gang and the Rancho San Pedro Gang, which led to the criminal gang injunctions, are summarized in Chapter Four, and discussed by study participants. The fourth chapter begins with a brief restatement of the goal of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The absence of winter weather in Southern California allows generation after generation of gangs to infuse, or as participant LaBrea put it, to “infest” neighborhoods and communities year-round, generating recurring wakes of chaos and fear. This chapter presents the results of a hermeneutic phenomenology of the lived experiences of people exposed to criminal gang injunctions resulting from gang violence. This overview begins with synopses of the disruption and violence wrought by two notorious gangs, the North Side Redondo Gang and the Rancho San Pedro Gang, that resulted in the criminal gang injunctions discussed by the participants of this study. These synopses are followed by a brief restatement of the study’s purpose and a brief overview of the chapter’s contents and organization.

North Side Redondo (NSR) Gang, Perry Park, Redondo Beach, California

The entire beautiful beach community of Redondo Beach was claimed as the turf of the notorious North Side Redondo (NSR) Gang, also known as the Redondo 13, as early as the 1970’s (Redondo Gangs, n.d.). By its third generation of membership in the 1990s, the NSR gang had become notorious for its ferocity. Members were primarily Mexican and Latino, although the gang has also included Caucasians, African Americans, and Asians from time to time. Members ranged in age from 14-year-old teenagers to adults well into their 40s, although the average age was about 24 years old. The total NSR membership has been estimated at approximately 180 gangsters. At any given point in time, its active membership is estimated at around 40 members.

By late 1995, terrified residents reported rampant gang activity in and around the gang's infamous epicenter of Perry Park, a public recreational area in North Redondo Beach. Nuisance and criminal conduct included intimidation, drunken gatherings, drug dealing, and gunfire at all hours of the night. In late 1995, a criminal gang injunction went into effect, turning Perry Park and the surrounding 24-block area into a safety zone. The injunction legally restricted gang members from congregating, associating, planning, or perpetuating nuisance and criminal acts, riding together in cars, assembling in common areas, living in specific housing complexes, carrying spray paint, and wearing gang colors. Any two gang members seen walking down a street together in a safety zone were subject to the penalties of the civil gang injunction under its nonassociation clause.

Rancho San Pedro Gang, Rancho San Pedro, California

The Rancho San Pedro gang, otherwise known as "RSP," also originated in the 1970s and is a Mexican American street gang (Rancho San Pedro, n.d.). In 2011, 15 years after the CGI turned Perry Park into a safety zone, RSP was the target of a massive law enforcement operation, "Operation Pirate Town," in which 1,300 law enforcement officers from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) and the Los Angeles Police (LAPD) arrested 80 alleged RSP members and associates. Ultimately, over 230 persons were named in federal and state court documents that alleged various crimes, from violent acts to firearms and narcotics trafficking. "Operation Pirate Town" was based on 2.5 years of criminal investigations as a joint ATF-LAPD investigation to reduce violent crime and make the port district of San Pedro safe.

Purpose Statement

Through this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher aimed to determine the overall efficacy of CGIs in the eyes of community residents who had been exposed to them. The study had two aims. One aim was to examine whether CGIs worked as intended by identifying their advantages and disadvantages from resident'' perspectives, or as gang members call them, “civilians” living in CGI safety zones. Safety zones are areas in neighborhoods that restrict the congregations and activities of gang members. They are designed to promote safe and functional communities. The other aim of this study was to use those findings to generate conversations among stakeholders and decision-makers to explore avenues for improving CGIs. The theoretical framework of this study was social disorganization theory, interpreted by Shaw and McKay (1972) as the context to understand community residents’ lived experiences of the impacts of CGIs on their personal feelings of safety and the security of their neighborhoods.

Brief Overview of the Chapter’s Contents and Organization

This chapter is divided into six sections and a summary. The first section, Thematic Schematic, summarizes and illustrates the significant premises behind participant perspectives that readers will encounter throughout the rest of the chapter. The second section, Interview Protocol, describes data collection and analysis. The third section, Participants, introduces study subjects as gang “Insiders” or “Outsiders” in three parts (Fundamental Differences in Outlook, Participants’ Familiarity with Criminal Gang Injunctions, and Participants’ Descriptions of their Neighborhood before CGI Enjoinment). The fourth section, Results, presents the evidence in three parts (Theme Development, Research Question, and Research Question Responses). Research Question Responses present evidence for and against applying social disorganization theory in two subsections (Injunctions Make Neighborhoods Safer and Injunctions Make Neighborhoods More Dangerous). The fifth section, CGIs as Brands that Last Forever, shows

Insiders' and Outsiders' common ground. The sixth section, Closing Statements, ends the chapter with a compelling observation, followed by a summary of Chapter Four.

Thematic Schematic

This section gives readers an aerial view of the emergent themes, shown in Table 2, evidence of which is threaded throughout this chapter. A theme captures a common, recurring pattern across a dataset clustered around a central organizing concept. A theme can describe various manifestations of a single notion which highlights the themes patterning throughout the dataset. Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research offer a broad foundation for investigating underserved communities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). With this lens, the research questions are framed from an advocating standpoint that promotes action. Researchers can utilize theory with variables, conceptions, and hypotheses to comprehensively describe behavior and beliefs in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013).

The eight participants in this study either moved to the Redondo Beach or Rancho San Pedro regions after the injunctions took effect or arrived there before they did. The current study gathered only the gender of participants' demographic data to protect their confidentiality. Every interview started the same, with the researcher appreciating the participants' significant input into this study. Their signed informed permission was received and validated by the researcher through email. He reminded each participant that the interview would be recorded and inquired if they had secured a discreet location to conduct it without being overheard. Every interviewee was urged to be open and honest, to ask any questions that came up, to feel free to skip any questions that made them uncomfortable and to take breaks as required.

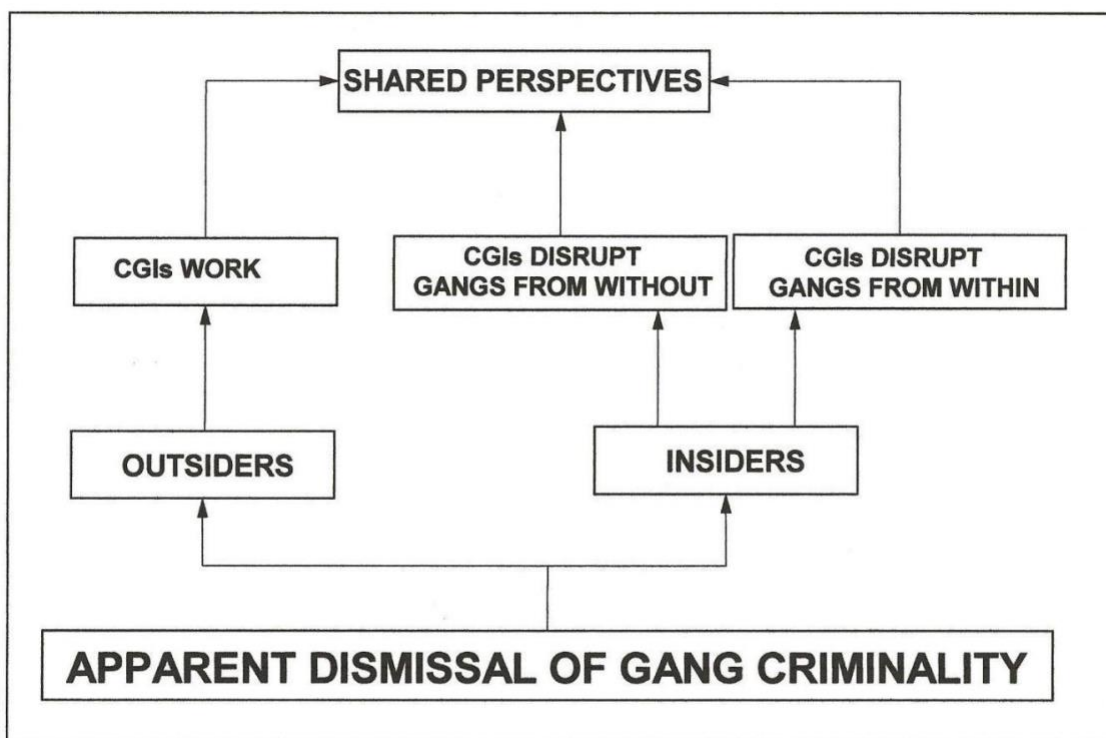
The overarching theme, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, was based on comments that appeared to discount, disregard, overlook, or minimize the reality that gangs

committed illegal offenses ranging from nuisance acts that annoyed citizens to criminal conduct that terrified or endangered them. Evidence of this Dismissal theme emerged from all the participants. The dismissal took several forms. Minor forms included referring to gang members euphemistically as ‘associates’ or “just as guys in the neighborhood.” Moderate forms included accusing *police* of pestering citizens and rejecting signs of unchecked crime in an area that ranged from locked windows and items chained to ward off theft, omnipresent burglar alarms, and rampant robbery. More potent expressions included blaming a “snitch” who advised the police about gangs *infesting* a neighborhood and excusing violence because it was used to *maintain order*, including ripping out a woman’s hair because “it is the way of this hood.”

The overarching theme of Dismissal was bound by two main concepts, Insiders and Outsiders, which referred to one of two types of participants in this study. The perspectives of Outsiders Casey, Englebert and Greene suggested that they had—at best—remote knowledge of the inner workings of gangs and little to no direct or personal exposure to gang members. As Outsiders, they portrayed CGIs through the lens of the impacts on their neighborhoods and communities. In contrast, the perspectives of Insiders Crow, LaBrea, Manny, Pedro, and Sunny suggested that they had considerable intimate knowledge about gang culture from direct and personal exposure to gang members. As Insiders, they portrayed CGIs through the lens of impacts on gangs. Together, both groups provided striking but juxtaposed insights into the effects of CGIs on an individual’s perspective of their safety. The sole supporting theme was Shared Perspectives. Despite differences in experiences and exposure to gangs, the Insiders and Outsiders saw some elements of CGIs through the same lens.

Figure 3

Thematic Schematic of Overarching Theme of Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality (Large Font), Main Themes of Outsiders, Insiders, and Shared Perspectives (Medium Font), and Effectiveness of CGIs (Small Font)



Interview Protocol

The researcher adhered to the data collection protocols explained in Chapter Three of this dissertation without deviation. To be consistent in delivery and inflection across interviews, the researcher read each interview question to each participant. Most of the interview questions were open-ended (see Appendix D). Each participant was allowed to answer interview questions with minimal interruption and prompting so that the researcher could solicit rich personal insights. The nonprobing policy was also employed to acknowledge and respect the potential emotional sensitivity of recalling lived experiences with gang violence and, as part of the hermeneutic process, to let each participant express themselves naturally. the researcher paraphrased

frequently to confirm the accuracy of his understanding of a participant's meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Word choice, phrasing, and personal expressions (e.g., colloquialisms and verbal crutches) were examined during analysis as another reflection of a participant's interpretation of their lived experiences, although excessive reliance on verbal crutches was modified when paraphrasing evidentiary quotes in this chapter to make them easier to read.

The evidentiary quotes (presented as evidence of themes) showed that the participants were forthcoming and generally conversational, although their fluent descriptions flowed between dispassionate and unrestrained language. Several participants asked clarifying questions about CGIs during the interview, which showed their interest in further enhancing their understanding. Participants' enthusiasm was evident throughout the interview process which was acknowledged by this researcher in appreciation.

Narrative data were collected during in-person interviews conducted in June and July 2022 as per participants' availability and lasted approximately 45–60 minutes (Table 2). Each participant was identified with a pseudonym, following Gerrard (2021). The researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews using the Otter AI application. This speech-to-text tool allowed him to record and transcribe voices using a mobile phone application (Otter.ai, 2022). Before transcription, the researcher listened to the recordings to double-check their clarity and accuracy. Transcripts were converted into text and Microsoft Word documents, checked again for transcription accuracy, and stored securely using this application on a password-protected laptop.

Introductory Script

Although the researcher selected the participants so that each brought unique and personal experiences to this research, he opened each interview with the following script to refresh each participant's information about CGIs and to put them on more of an even playing field across interviews. The introductory script of participant interviews is Appendix E.

Participants

This section introduces study subjects as gang “Insiders” or “Outsiders” in three parts. To gain a breadth of perspectives, the purposeful sample of eight participants was collected to encompass participants whose familiarity with CGIs ranged from highly familiar to passing knowledge only. Three participants were women: Casey, LaBrea, and Sunny. Five participants were men: Crow, Englebert, Greene, Manny, and Pedro.

To provide a rich portrait of each individual who participated in this qualitative study, this section introduces the participants by a pseudonym in three ways. First, impressions about fundamental differences in outlook between participants gained from a deep perusal of their narratives during the interviews and verified during data analysis are described in the section, *Fundamental Differences in Outlook*. Second, the section summarizing *Participants’ Familiarity with Criminal Gang Injunctions* describes the participants’ acquaintance with CGIs. These narratives illustrate the breadth of perspectives expressed in this chapter and provide an initial introduction to the tenor of each participant’s attitudes about CGIs, further evidence of which repeatedly surfaces throughout each individual’s comments in the rest of this chapter. Third, participant descriptions of their neighborhood before its enjoinder with CGIs, in the section, *Participants’ Descriptions of their Neighborhood before CGI Enjoinment*, not only to further introduce each participant’s exposure to the raucous behavior that led to the CGI decree. They also portray the nerve-wracking nature of the participants’ lived experiences with gang injunctions.

Table 1*Participant Interview Details*

#	Category	Participant	Setting	Interview date	Duration minutes	Transcript Pages #
1	Insider	Sunny	Library	7/7/2022	48	17
2	Insider	La Brea	Library	7/10/2022	57	19
3	Outsider	Englebert	Residence	7/14/2022	69	30
4	Outsider	Casey	Residence	7/16/2022	43	17
5	Outsider	Greene	Residence	7/24/2022	43	12
6	Insider	Pedro	Workplace	7/29/2022	34	12
7	Insider	Manny	Workplace	7/29/2022	41	14
8	Insider	Crow	Workplace	7/29/2022	39	12
Sum	Total				383	133
	Average				49	18

Fundamental Differences in Outlook

The participants formed a natural division into two groups, directly based on fundamental differences in outlook and indirectly based on differences in their apparent intimacy of knowledge about gang culture. Casey, Englebert, and Greene had little to no inside knowledge about gang culture. As Outsiders, their perspectives portrayed CGIs from the views of people who witnessed resultant changes in the community in which they lived and worked without interacting with gangs directly. This group of three Outsiders was composed of one female, Casey, and two males, Englebert and Greene.

Crow, LaBrea, Manny, Pedro, and Sunny were in the group who had considerable Insider knowledge about gang culture, suggesting that they did or still currently interact with gangs directly. As Insiders, their perspectives portrayed CGIs from the view of people who witnessed resultant changes in the gangs themselves. This group of five Insiders comprised two females (LaBrea and Sunny) and three males (Crow, Manny, and Pedro). Comparing the two groups' perspectives provided striking but juxtaposed insights into the impact of CGIs.

Participants' Familiarity with Criminal Gang Injunctions

Table 2 paraphrases responses to the interview question about the participant's understanding of CGIs. Outsiders Casey, Englebert, and Greene are listed first, grouped because they knew little about CGIs. Casey said, "When I first thought of the term safety zone, I thought of the freeway and all the cones and signs of slowing down." Englebert said candidly that he knew nothing about CGIs; however, he responded with a comment that was wide open to interpretation when the researcher listed criminal conduct in his introductory script, "Regular stuff. Yeah."

On the other end of the spectrum, Insiders Crow and LaBrea were the most outspoken and dismissive of CGIs. As a gang interventionist, Crow unequivocally claimed that CGIs were legal tools intentionally designed to be "used against people, for sure, *profiling*. It's a profile tool. That's true for the courts, to convict and suppress our community." LaBrea dismissed CGIs with her language, describing legal efforts to remove gang activity as "stupid" and merely "a police thing." Pedro was dismissive, but for a different reason: CGIs did not remove the problem, but simply moved it to a new location. Manny and Sunny appeared to be the only participants who understood the spirit and intent of CGIs.

Table 2

Criminal Gang Injunction Familiarity Index

Participant & Pseudonym	CGI Familiarity Index
Outsiders: Participants with Little Direct or Personal Knowledge about Gangs	
Casey	I don't know very much about the gang injunctions, just that they were used to try to reduce the crime in the area.
Englebert	I don't know nothing. I can be honest. I know nothing.
Greene	I have a little bit of an idea of what you're talking about.
Insiders: Participants with Direct and Personal Knowledge about Gangs	

Crow	It's a profile tool.
LaBrea	It's a police thing put in place to sweep where all the gang members in a gang are taken off the street. I feel that injunctions are stupid.
Manny	I thought that there are targeted at a specific gang to just get rid of gang members in general, not having them hanging out on the streets anymore. Not having them do criminal activities.
Pedro	Gang injunctions are like sweeping the dirt off the floor... sending these kids or the family somewhere they are not familiar with. Violence occurs in that neighborhood too.
Sunny	When they did the injunction, they took a lot of people [out of the neighborhood who] caused a lot of problems in the community, that were involved with criminal activities.

Participants' Descriptions of Their Neighborhood Before CGI Enjoinment

This section further introduces the participants by quoting their descriptions and paraphrasing their stories about the quality of their neighborhoods. The following comments about life before injunctions make the point that the participants brought plenty of experience with CGIs to this study. Moreover, their narratives left little question about the need for sweeping legal solutions to subdue or remove gang activity, although, as this chapter shows, this was by no means an unequivocal or collective attitude that CGIs were the answer among the participants.

Casey (Outsider)

Casey was an Outsider and the third female participant. Casey's description of her neighborhood before the injunction vividly established the hair-raising quality of life that imposed intense recollections of narcotics, noise, and personal danger. It also shows how gang activity restricted her ability to move about freely. Casey stated,

We had a lot of gangs, a lot of noise from motorcycles late at night, and people creating a lot of havoc. The worst feature of the neighborhood was gang violence. I saw a lot of gang members. The gangs were intimidating to other residents. They controlled the public spaces. They interfered with people's enjoyment of the neighborhood. There was also a lot of tagging of buildings and public spaces. Robberies and home invasions were

routine. When I first moved here, the next-door home was commonly known as a crack house.

I was warned not to go to Redondo Beach Pier or Perry Park because they were dangerous and frequently had gang violence. I didn't go for a long time.

Gang activity not only curtailed Casey's freedom to enjoy her coastal city in world-renowned Southern California. It also effectively held her prisoner in her own house:

It was just dangerous to be out, especially at night. I stopped going out. I never walked at night. I tried to exercise outdoors. At that time, I was working long hours and started getting up early in the morning to walk, thinking early in the morning wouldn't be any problem. When I did try to walk in the morning, I was walking on Grant Street because it's well-lit, and of course going right by Perry Park. On one particular day, I became afraid because several guys were following me in the truck as I took my daily walk. I ran over to the fire department to hit the emergency button there, but a jogger appeared that I recognized from seeing him every morning for several mornings. I called out to him, and he ended up walking me back to my house and the guys took off. That's how dangerous it was. That was the end my morning walks. I ended up buying a treadmill because I wanted to exercise, which I used for several years. I got a dog.

As to why Casey moved to a neighborhood that she "found dangerous" in the first place, this time, her finances were the prison guard: "It was what I could afford at the time." She had moved from Chicago to California, where she suffered "sticker shock" over southern California home prices. Casey confided, "At the time, the realtor said this was the neighborhood in transition. I remember telling her that, back east, we use the word 'slum' to describe transition neighborhoods." Happily, this was 40 years ago, and the monetary value of her home has increased exponentially since then.

Englebert (Outsider)

Englebert was an Outsider. He also bought his home in the rough neighborhood near Perry Park 1 decade before the injunction. He described himself as a friendly, outgoing man who claimed, "I don't fear anybody." As a man, he was presumably never followed by a threatening group of male thugs while taking a walk and was probably never forced to buy workout

equipment to use behind locked doors with a dog for added insurance. His pre-CGI recollections of the situation were as vibrant as Casey's but visual rather than social. Englebert recalled,

When I bought this place, there was that aluminum tape stuff on all the windows. If you crack your window, it sets off an alarm, which I thought, 'What the hell is this here for?' Then I noticed a lot of locks on things, things were chained down, it seemed like everywhere. The neighbor had a big, thick, concrete block with a chain on his barbecue because of the gangsters stole everything here.

Somebody told me that they were finally getting rid of the gangs over in the park at Perry Park. Now, I don't fear anybody. I's always worked out for me. So, they told me that they had just cleaned up Perry Park because there was a bunch of gang guys there. The Park didn't seem too beautiful yet. I didn't see bad stuff at Perry, but I heard there was lots of gang activity.

There was some tagging [graffiti] by a kid who tagged in the area by the fire station at the crossing into the park and the back of the stupid stop sign. So, I stuck my head in the fire department. They didn't seem too excited about it. Okay, so what do you want us to do about it? Yeah, maybe call your buddies the cops. For God's sakes, don't put you out too much, dude [to get rid of the tagging].

North Redondo Beach was known as the slums of the beach cities. That's what I tell everybody. Where do you live? Oh, I live in the north Redondo, the slum area. I think gang members used to run the joint [North Redondo] if there was such a thing as hosting many gang members in this area. Problems existed in the past because there was a lot of little apartments that might have been criminal activity.

Greene (Outsider)

Greene was an Outsider. He bought his home in North Redondo Beach when gang activity was still rampant:

When I bought my home in North Redondo in 1991, there was a lot of older dilapidated 1940s and 50s houses they were gonna demolish to build new townhomes. The area was just starting to flip. I moved from Gardena, so I thought everything was going to be nicer, but it turned out that there were pockets of areas. South Redondo is kind of nice. I thought North Redondo Beach was the same, but I later learned that North had this reputation of being, you know, less desirable than South. But at the time, I didn't notice that because we were moving closer to the coast. It was nice for me.

They said there were drug dealers and there would be a lot of police, and quite a bit of tagging of the walls and buildings and fences back then. There appeared to be an active gang because there seemed to be repetitive symbols. We couldn't decipher them. But they seemed clearly to be just some kid running around always painting symbols in the same walls because of the wall was nice and blank. You can't do it that well on the fence, but the nice brick facade would be a great place.

But I didn't see it because it had already started to disappear. We never saw anyone that we thought were gang members. We never encountered any violence. I never had any

robberies or anything. I don't know whether we're just naïve. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary to me.

Greene did not experience any lawbreaking or more serious criminal activity firsthand; however, knowing that the injunction was in place felt like “an additional safeguard” that made him feel safer. Yet, he questioned why there never seemed to be added surveillance:

It made me think that, somehow that translated into additional eyes on the area. However, I didn't see any additional police presence in the area. I rarely see them. Otherwise, if nobody was monitoring the area, I don't know how you would enforce the injunction.

The following descriptions of pre-CGI conditions were from the Insider participants, who appeared to know quite a bit about gangs.

Crow (Insider)

Crow was an Insider. He was loudly against CGIs. Recall that in Table 3, he described CGIs as tools for profiling. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, n.d.), racial profiling is the expression of generalized suspicion based on race rather than evidence of criminal activity. Racial profiling is patently illegal, defies the 4th Amendment guarantee of protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, and violates the U.S. Constitution's core promises of equal protection under the law to all. The ACLU website states that profiling is used regularly by law enforcement and private security personnel to target people of color for humiliating and often frightening detentions, interrogations, and searches based on perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. Crow's insistence that CGIs were a form of racial profiling characterized by a lack of evidence of criminality suggested that he dismissed the fact that CGIs result from solid evidence of criminal conduct. One of many examples of gang criminality in this chapter is the 2.5-year investigation underscoring the injunctions against Rancho San Pedro gangs. Crow's perspective provided evidence of the overarching theme of dismissing the reality of gang criminality.

During his interview, Crow also rebuffed the term “gang member” instead of a euphemism, as if understatement also dismissed the reality of gang criminality: “I don’t like the term ‘gang member.’ Please refer to this group just as *guys in the neighborhood*.” As a gang interventionist in numerous communities, Crow dismissed the criminal activities of gang members enjoined on CGIs by describing their civil acumen:

They're not stupid. They're brilliant individuals. Just because they got arrested when they were younger, or, or even when they're older... They're smart. They know how to work around it. I mean, not all of them get it [or are] the smarter ones. The smarter ones use it for their own tool to string out what they gotta do.

Then Crow told some of his many stories about the patent unfairness of CGI restrictions. One story was about an enjoined man who could not work on his car because of the CGIs. Crow’s story, however, does not articulate why the CGI restricted the man from working on the engine of his car:

But, like, I know, you can’t even change your tire in the front yard, or you are in violation. You can't open your hood and put some water in the radiator because you're doing [something] mechanical in the community's visibility. You, I mean, you can’t give somebody a jump.

Another of Crow’s stories was about crass policemen who seized any opportunity to harass enjoined individuals and accuse them of violating their CGI. Crow stated,

Put it this way. There's some law enforcement asshole cop who is gonna take your hand because you got a beer can in your hand. He probably knows you're picking up recyclables. I mean, he'll do something violent or something.

LaBrea (Insider)

LaBrea was an Insider. Before her neighborhood was legally declared a safety zone, it was the scene of domestic uproars and regular gang killings that LaBrea described calmly:

“When they were killings and *stuff like that*, you probably had a few times where, you know, a gang member probably got into it with his homie, and, you know, they got into a fight.” She said most killings were between gang members, “their own, you know, among associates.” There was

also “violence within that community civilians.” LaBrea’s perspectives on violence showed how much violence was infused in gang culture and saturated in her. Even as she seemed to justify the violence by putting it into the context of gang culture, she provided more comments that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality. The skull drag mentioned in the quote below refers to a man pulling a woman across the floor by her hair. As a woman, LaBrea’s dispassion about hair-pulling behavior like this was conspicuous because it was odd:

The gang members from my old community sometimes committed violence, but gang violence was between associates *to keep order*. Some of the violence was domestic too. Keeping home life straight. There are domestics among gang members against their women. Skull drags. Yes. Often. It is the way of this hood. But not too much rival stuff. Only when needed. The foes know the gang was here and strong before the injunctions came.

Later in the interview, LaBrea confided the story of a horrific incident that clearly affected her deeply: A gang member was shot and ran through her aunt’s apartment before collapsing and dying on the porch of her aunt’s home. LaBrea was asleep at the time and “didn’t hear any gunshots.” But, alarmed, her auntie shook her awake and “asked me to look outside the apartment door to see who he was because I was familiar with many of the associates in the neighborhood.” Notice her euphemistic reference to gang members as “associates.” Although these interviews suggested that the term ‘associate’ was a popular local colloquialism, it is also a studiously neutral term that attenuates the connection with lawbreaking. Any use of the term ‘associate’ for a gang member was, therefore, another version of the speaker’s apparent dismissal of the reality of gang criminality. Despite her dispassion and euphemisms, it was hard for LaBrea to deny her shocked revulsion at finding a dead man on her aunt’s front porch. LaBrea recalled,

I didn’t see him the first time I went to go check because I looked through the peephole and not on the porch floor. The second time I went to go check, Auntie went with me, and I did see him. He was literally on the porch. But I think that was like the first time I’ve seen somebody dead up close and personal. Like I could literally see the gunshot wounds and everything. I don’t know if I was sad. I don’t think the incident really freaked

me out. But it's like the blood from him. After they took the body away, I think that's what got me the most. I literally would not step in that area. For a long time after, I would swing the door open, run, and jump off the porch. I literally would not step in that area. Like, it just grossed me out. The firefighters sprayed it down, but it didn't do much to remove the stains. My family also tried cleaning it the blood stains, but they remained for a very long time.

No one ever tried to help me cope. I didn't talk to anybody about it. Nobody ever came to check on us. You know, you have asked more the questions than anyone else has about how it made me feel.

Manny (Insider)

Manny was an Insider. Before the CGI, Manny credited the gangs in his neighborhood with several positive traits, mainly protecting the citizens and thereby maintaining a social order that was lost after the CGI provided a gap for rivals to fill. He told a story about gang members hanging out in front of a little “mom and pop” store run by an old Korean couple. In his view, gang presence protected that little store. His reference to the nicknames for the old couple gave glimpses of affectionate ties and pride in protecting them. Manny explained,

So, there's a hotspot that the guys like to hang out in front of a market. The market is known for the guys hanging out right there. If you pass by there, you're gonna find them right there. Well, the owners are like a mom and pop, Asian Koreans. We call them Mamasan and Papasan, and they are like family. You know, ever since I was a kid, I've only seen one whole new mama and papa take over. We [gang members] always protected that liquor store.

Manny saw the gang as providing positive protection but, in another comment that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality, saw police presence as a pestering nuisance: “There's still police presence in the community with or without someone calling in a report or an incident.” But Manny’s view as a gang interventionist was that the police were not there to help. Instead,

They're *just there to harass you*. When you want to scare somebody and want to give police the right to just harass anybody at any time, not giving that person rights of anything, it works in that way. When I'm there doing my work [as a gang interventionist], I know they're harassing, but I put on my professional hat, right? I say, ‘Hi, sir. How are you doing?’ then they go on about their day.

Pedro (Insider)

Pedro was an Insider. He grew up in San Pedro and described gang violence in the 1990s in lurid terms, although he estimated its frequency euphemistically as “way out of hand” and simply “what gang members do.” Pedro stated,

Before the gang injunctions, everything as far as gang violence was high. The death toll was high. When I say gang violence, I talk about harassment, beatings, and shootings. That I consider a gateway to assaults, you know, and robberies and break-ins. I mean, those things are what gang members do.

Here in San Pedro, south of Gaffey Street, are the Latino and black families. Many of the gang activity started there as a form of protection from the larger Los Angeles groups. Don't get me wrong. They were violent too. But the community south of Gaffey Street felt safe *because the gangs took care of San Pedro*. This gang activity did not cross North of Gaffey Street. These were the rich folks. I don't think they cared about what occurred South of Gaffey. They stayed up in their area. The gang members stayed down in their area.

Pedro was nostalgic for San Pedro's lost charm: “Before the injunctions, I loved it. San Pedro was such a small town. If you grew up in San Pedro, everybody went to the same high school. There was only one back then. It made for people to know each other and live peacefully.” Despite violence that gangs ushered in, changes eventually took place with an influx of new residents who ruined San Pedro's charm by “taking the community for granted. The love for the community is not anymore.” This was a revealing perspective because gangs did not express what one might consider expressions of love for one's community: making it beautiful and safe, and prosperous.

Whether his nostalgia for the San Pedro of his youth referred to before or during phases of heightened gang activity was unclear, but, like Manny, he had clear recollections of police behavior. This researcher does not condone police violence; however, Pedro's unequivocal characterization of the police doing “whatever they wanted to do to you” may have constituted another perspective that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality. This time, he says police prosecution was not driven by the gang's lawlessness but by the people's poverty:

Back in the 1990s, they had the police crash units. They were just out there doing the bust [arrest]. Police were going to grab you, throw you down, beat you, whatever it was that they wanted to do to you. That's what they were going to do. We still have a lot of police like in the 1990s, but many don't like that route anymore, you know, a little more approachable and less violent toward the community.

It is because [we are] talking about poor people. I'm pretty sure in those higher-end Beverly Hills neighborhoods or communities that, you know, they don't stop a kid, come talk to you, what is your name, and start filling out these [field information] cards documenting that as gang members.

Sunny (Insider)

Sunny was an Insider. She moved from rough neighborhoods in south LA to Rancho San Pedro. Her description of the peacefulness of Rancho San Pedro compared to the south LA neighborhood of her youth strongly hinted at her immersion in gang violence as a way of life:

When I first moved to Rancho to San Pedro, it was very peaceful and calm, a little bit different than where I came from [in] East Los Angeles. San Pedro was quieter. I was really surprised by how calm and peaceful it was because where I come from is a little noisier. When it got quiet there, things were about to happen' When it's noisy and rowdy is because they [gang associates] were just having fun, I guess. So, when everything was very peaceful in San Pedro, I would just be looking back to see what was going to happen next. But to my surprise, nothing happened. It was some getting used to because I was not used to too much quietness and peacefulness. It's just quite different than I grew up with.

Sunny's description of scared residents who hid in their homes was further evidence that gang presence and unpredictable behavior imprisoned residents. Sunny also revealed double standards that were perhaps related to residents' relative willingness or unwillingness to let gang activity imprison them in their own homes. She said neighbors in some neighborhoods were afraid to get to know each other. Yet in other neighborhoods, neighbors accepted the presence of gang members and behaved toward the gangs with "respect" by watching their words carefully:

I heard was a lot of stories from my community members where there was a lot of gang activity before the injunction because they will find bodies in the [nearby] parks in Rancho and to listen to the street, people are getting shot up. There was a lot of chaos. People were afraid to go out or even be close to their neighbors because you did not know who lived next to each other or what they were up to. They couldn't say nothing. So, it was more fear, fearful of people, you know, be more comfortable in their home

because they didn't know if there was a shooting and the bullet might go through an unopened door.

I had to consider the time I was outside in my neighborhood walking. I mean, like, you know, when it gets darker, it is not safe to be outside.

Before the injunction, everyone in the communities knew each other's families. I guess you knew how to talk the right way or not because they knew what family members were involved [in gang activity] and other things. So, they will be like, kind of just be respectful. Meaning you just kept on your toes.

Before the injunction, gang activity imprisoned residents in other ways. One gang activity, public shootings, intimidated residents into overruling their basic human instincts to help. This was revealed when Sunny told this alarming story:

Before the injunction, there was a shooting in the park. This lady said that her son saw a man sitting on the stairs, dying. Instead of wanting to help the person, people were fearful to go and help him because gang members might come back and shoot them. They were afraid that the gang was not done, you know, shooting. Her son told her the man was dead. The lady said that she just, you know, was sad looking at a man that was dying on the stairs and the neighbors were just sitting down, not doing anything to help.

Data Analysis Procedures

Good data gathering is necessary for research integrity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It makes sense to gather and analyze data on study factors to respond to questions, find an answer to a research question or hypothesis, test hypotheses, and evaluate results. This hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to measure community individuals' perceptions of their level of safety to determine the general effectiveness of civil gang injunctions in Los Angeles County, California. The central research question was: *Do locals believe that applying civil gang injunctions increases community safety?*

The current research considered word choice, phrasing, and individual expressions during analysis as another illustration of how participants interpreted their actual experiences. The researcher gathered narrative data during in-person interviews conducted in June–July 2022. Following the recommendations of Gerrard (2021), each participant was assigned a pseudonym.

In qualitative research, coding uses words or brief phrases to give the researcher a way to

finish a critical, analytical, and rigorous study of information gathered from diverse sources, including semistructured interviews (Leavy, 2014). The participants' observations and the meanings or interpretations they gave to their observations were organized and interpreted using the first-cycle coding method, in which the researcher identified a word or a brief phrase as the beginning of this process (Leavy, 2014). Some first-cycle codes include loss of freedom, imprisonment, restricted movement, anxiety, feelings of safety and security, disquiet, direct threat, indirect threat, injunction breach, various forms of aggressiveness, euphemisms, and dispassion. The second coding cycle in the study was completed using pattern coding. The second-cycle of coding placed a strong emphasis on two-pattern coding. Through pattern coding, which also entails merging codes, renaming codes, adding interpretive lenses, and developing preliminary patterns, similar passages of narrative material are classified into fewer themes or structures (Humble & Radina, 2018; Punch, 2013). By combining first and second-cycle coding, the researcher created introduction ties between codes to create groupings of related codes. For instance, the combination of limited movement, subtle intimidation, terror, and subliminal threats exposed how gangs imprisoned residents by limiting their freedom of movement within the city or in their locality. The data summary can be divided into fewer subjects or structures using pattern coding, which helps organize more specific and straightforward identifiers (Punch, 2013).

Insiders and Outsiders, two key themes linked to one of the two categories of research participants, served as the connecting threads for the overarching subject of dismissal. Casey, Englebert, and Greene's viewpoints on the Outsiders revealed that they had an indirect understanding of gang dynamics and little to no direct or personal contact with gang members. They depicted CGIs as Outsiders by focusing on how CGIs affected their local communities and neighborhoods. The opinions of Insiders, however, Crow, LaBrea, Manny, Pedro, and Sunny all

made references to their seeming intimate knowledge of gang culture gained through their close interactions with gang members. They presented CGIs as Insiders by considering how they affect gangs. Both groups' combined insights into how CGIs affect a person's perception of their safety are stunning, but contradictory. Shared Perspectives served as the lone supplemental topic. The Insiders and Outsiders perceived various aspects of CGIs through the same lens despite having different backgrounds and amounts of exposure to gangs.

Results

The results in this section are presented in three parts. The first describes the steps of theme development. The second lists the research question. The third answers the research question regarding this study's theoretical framework.

Theme Development

According to Babbie (2020), a theory is a well-organized interpretation to make findings about a particular area of study. By applying generality and meanings to concepts, assumptions, methods, and variables in social science research, theory clarifies and adds significance to the already known facts. Identifying the overarching theme and supporting themes, characterizing the central components of themes, creating hierarchies of themes or codebooks, implementing themes—tying themes to specific passages of narrative, and connecting themes into theoretical models—are the five challenging tasks involved in text analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Data analysis commenced during naïve reading of transcripts to gain a basic understanding of the text and determine its overall meaning (Simoný et al., 2018). During this time, the researcher also began scrutinizing the narratives for evidence of similar experiences and perceptions within and between interviews that could constitute codes or emergent themes. The interviews were coded in three iterative steps, in which the researcher repeatedly examined the narratives for significant phrases and statements, coding them until saturation.

Through first-cycle coding, the researcher identified a word or a short phrase that launched the process of interpreting and organizing the participants' observations and the meaning or interpretations they gave their observations (Leavy, 2014). First-cycle codes include loss of freedom, imprisonment, constrained movement, fear, feeling safe, feeling secure, feeling unsafe, direct threat, indirect threat, injunction violation, types of aggression, euphemism, dispassion, etc.

Second-cycle coding focused on pattern coding. Pattern coding is a process in which similar passages of narrative data are grouped into smaller topics or structures (Punch, 2013). It involves code renaming, merging codes, adding an interpretive lens, and preliminary construction of patterns (Humble & Radina, 2018). By combining first and second-cycle coding, the researcher drew initial connections between codes to create groups of similar codes. For example, the combination of constrained movement, indirect threats, intimidation, and fear suggested how gangs imprisoned residents by curtailing their ability to move freely about town or in their neighborhood. Three, thematic analysis employed the researcher's subjective impressions of broader units of participants' lived experiences to draw connections between groups of similar codes and infer the meaning they gave to their experiences (Saldaña, 2016). For example, evidence for the central theme, the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, emerged from the breadth of evidence provided by participants who were residents of enjoined neighborhoods and by participants whose narratives suggested Insider information about gangs.

Qualitative analysis is based on the suspension of judgment or noninvolvement, known as epoché, whose long history stems from the early practice of skepticism and philosophy (Simony et al., 2018). During qualitative data analysis, the researcher practiced epoché by suspending his knowledge of and beliefs about CGIs to focus on the verbatim appearance of the narratives, not

believing them but not disbelieving them either (Saldaña, 2013). This noninvolved stance was essential to this qualitative analysis because the researcher has a great deal of experience and expertise with court hearings, gangs, and CGIs. By suspending his reality of CGIs through epoché, the researcher better grasped the meaning of CGIs for his participants. Epoché started with identifying and removing (to the extent that was humanly possible) the researcher's preconceptions that may taint the research process (Saldaña, 2013); this is called bracketing. Due to his experiences with CGIs, the researcher needed to suspend all prejudgments to neutralize personal bias while remaining sensitive to the participants' experiences without influencing the study's findings. As a volunteer in the family court as guardian *ad litem* in the Los Angeles County community, the researcher has been routinely involved in the advocacy of children that witnessed or engaged with individuals enjoined by gang injunctions.

The research process depends heavily on trustworthiness. According to Amankwaa (2016), the level of certainty in the data, interpretations, and methods employed to ensure 'he study's integrity is what is meant by "trustworthiness" in qualitative research. In each study, researchers should outline the procedures for an analysis worth the readers' time. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the investigation must accurately mimic the sincerity of the lived experience and the persons studied for a researcher to develop a reliable assessment of reliability.

The researcher used triangulation and journaling to show that the research conclusions were credible and that the findings could be trusted to be accurate. To achieve triangulation, the researcher employed several techniques combining data from various sources to develop a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014). The present study used deliberate sampling, thorough description, and complete data to establish trustworthiness. The present study used a semistructured interview guide with open-ended questions to boost focus

and make understanding CGIs and how they affected safety more straightforward as a direct outcome of triangulation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Research Question

One research question guided this study: Do community residents associate Civil Gang Injunctions with safer and more secure neighborhoods?

Research Question Responses – Application of Social Disorganization Theory

This part presents evidence that the answer to the research question was yes and no, and that the application of social disorganization theory was confirmed and disconfirmed. There are two parts below: Injunctions Make Neighborhoods Safer and Injunctions Make Neighborhoods More Dangerous. Among Outsider participants, the answer was affirmative because they were living proof that CGIs create safer and more secure communities. In contrast, among Insider participants, the answer was negative, in that they primarily focused on the disruptive impacts of the CGI on the gang itself with only fleeting consideration of the effects on residents who were not involved in gangs. This difference of perspectives displayed intriguing disclosures when the evidence was considered in the theoretical framework of social disorganization theory.

The theoretical basis for this research on gang culture is social disorganization theory, which conceives individuals and groups establishing social relationships through cooperation and conflict (Grogger, 2002; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a; Maxson et al., 2005). The specific hypothesis is that social disorder predicts gang violence (Gagnon, 2018). Social disorganization theory also holds that physical and social circumstances are primarily responsible for the behavioral choices that a person makes (Gagnon, 2018), which corresponds to the symptoms of physical decay, such as poverty and a higher level of ethnic and cultural mixing that Shaw and McKay (1972) identified as characteristics of neighborhoods with the highest crime rates. These factors also predict gang violence. These scholars asserted that crime is not caused at the

individual level, but is a usual response of reasonable individuals to abnormal conditions. Thus, if a neighborhood is not self-monitoring and is imperfectly monitored by law enforcement and social service agencies, some individuals will practice their complete freedom to express their inclinations and desires, often leading to criminal behavior.

The initial theoretical perspective relevant to this study was that the community's ability—or, rather, inability—to control gangs was a crucial predictor of social disorder (Gagnon, 2018; Sampson, 1993; Thrasher, 1927). The idea was that communities that could not control gang activity suffered from the social disorganization that gang activity spawns. By inference, the community social disorganization perspective suggested that injunctions should theoretically *improve* patterns in community processes, such as recovering positive neighborhood relationships and minimizing community disorder, by removing gangs. When civil gang injunctions became the social norm in a community alone, they were not able to have social processes to progress to solve illicit activities and gang violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a). The principal objective of CGIs to prevent gang activity may not be achievable without affording further relief for harmful personal behaviors and socioeconomic limitations. The following sections present evidence that confirms and disconfirms the theoretical idea that injunctions improve patterns in community processes.

Injunctions Make Neighborhoods Safer

Among Outsiders, the answer to RQ1 was yes. Looking through their community lens as homeowners, Outsiders felt strongly that injunctions improved community processes by making neighborhoods feel safe and secure. Their perspectives confirmed the theoretical framework that injunctions improve community processes by removing gangs.

As the only woman among the Outsiders, Casey was virtually imprisoned in her home next to a crack house before the CGI swept her neighborhood clean of gang activity. Recall that

gang activity forced her to buy a treadmill for working out inside her home and that she purchased dogs over the years for protection. Casey said that injunctions worked because she felt increasingly safer and more secure since they were put into place. Casey had to walk her dogs in the morning and at night. This gave her more time outdoors to notice how the neighborhood slowly switched from gang-controlled to family-oriented. Eventually, she saw law-abiding citizens replace the gangs in the notorious Perry Park. There were kids on skateboards and all kinds of little league games in the park: “Forty years ago, you never saw kids in the parks.” Now there was a youth center. Older people were playing pickleball in the park. There was a senior center. As time passed, Casey felt safer and safer walking throughout her neighborhood and longer distances beyond it:

I think that the gang injunctions probably had an impact. I can't think of anything bad. I love this neighborhood. You know, the neighborhood changed. Since the injunctions, a lot of the rentals are being torn down, family homes are going up, and a lot of people are being priced out. Obviously, it's helped me that housing prices have gone up. What I do like too, is the neighborhood has become very family oriented. There's just a lot more kids playing. This has become a safer neighborhood. That's made it more desirable. I started to notice the neighborhood seems safer. I honestly didn't know why. I was still very careful to walk on well-lit areas. I only walked around the block. Then I started going down more blocks and found the neighbor appeared more safer. At one point, I was doing about five miles, and I started walking all through the area. And I noticed that Perry Park that previously didn't have a lot of people, had changed. It was probably 20 years ago that when I began to notice that there was not a lot of families using the park, even at night. Before the injunctions, I would never walk into the park. I remember seeing gang members playing basketball. That's all I saw was young men that seemed kind of rough. Before the injunctions, I have only went to the park to vote.

Many of Casey's neighbors agreed that the area was safer, but others disagreed, some strongly. Understandably, “this kind of surprised” Casey; however, she still had dogs to walk and felt that she could walk the streets, even in the evening, as a lot of her neighbors had begun to do since the injunctions scattered the gangs: “I know most of the dog owners. A lot of more single women like me are walking the dogs at nine o'clock at night and feel safe. Other people have

said that they don't feel safe at all, that [the gang injunction] hasn't made a difference. They're saying that they feel unsafe. I can't tell you why.” But as to whether Casey felt more secure because of the CGI, “Yes, I feel more secure.” As to why Casey feels more secure, “It seemed like it became a safer neighborhood once they put the injunctions in.” In her view, over the last 20 years, “The neighborhood has changed dramatically. It just seems much safer.”

Similarly, “CGIs work” in Outsider Greene’s experience. His impressions were that “the gang injunction in our area did have an impact on criminal activity in the neighborhood” because “violent crimes significantly went down.” Like Casey, he too sees law-abiding citizens feeling safer using Perry Park: “There were folks that told me they never went to the park, and then after the injunctions came into play, they began to very much use the park.” Greene agreed that CGIs worked to create greater feelings of personal safety and security: “In my case, yes, they served their purpose.” This included “efforts to clean things up.” He cited less tagging and painting over graffiti quickly after it appeared. He noted that “a lot of infrastructures went in” too. Playground swings were replaced. The sandbox was rebuilt and refurbished. A new youth center was built. The basketball courts were fixed. Greene stated,

Apparently, the gang injunction must have been taking hold because, you know, there were families [in Perry Park]. That park got a lot nicer. As far as I was concerned, it was a very, very safe place to be. I don't know because of the police presence or the injunction whether they decided to pour money into that facility, but it was very nice, and so we would go there all the time to play, and we never felt threatened.

Englebert was the third Outsider and the third participant who felt that his neighborhood had vastly improved because of the CGIs, despite some residual issues:

I think it's a very safe and friendly neighborhood. It's safe and social. I know all my neighbors. Of course, I'm on the outgoing side. The weather's very, very nice. It's absolutely beautiful here.

The injunctions affected the level of safety at this north end of Redondo Beach. After the injunctions, you can tell things were changing. From that point on, I don't remember anything bad about the neighborhood. The neighborhood slowly but surely got better

from the day I moved here. The whole thing just kept going up. It never went down. There was a lot of these homes that are here being built. We're here. That a new one [Englebert pointed] and a bunch of them.

There are no similarities between before and after the injunctions regarding feeling safe. Before the injunctions [North Redondo] seemed to be the afterthought of the city where crime from gangs persists. But after the injunctions, the area is much safer. Boom, the gang injunctions came, and, like, you are out of here. The change occurred like night and day.

Now cheerfully safe and secure in his nice neighborhood decades after the CGI swept the area clean, Englebert made an unsurprising comment: "I think the past criminality was just overstated." Given his own comments about the pre-CGI locked windows, burglar alarms, and rampant robbery, this perspective was more evidence of the overarching theme of an apparent dismissal of gang criminality, perhaps dulled by years spent in domestic stability or the immediate distractions of current, more pressing considerations: "What I don't like is too many effing dogs. My neighbor got three or four dogs."

Injunctions Make Neighborhoods More Dangerous

In contrast to the Outsiders' perspectives, the answer to RQ1 among Insiders was no. Looking through the gang's perspective lens, Insiders felt strongly that injunctions disrupted community processes. Their perspectives disconfirmed the theoretical framework that injunctions improve community processes by removing gangs. The contradictory evidence was summed up by LaBrea when she declared flatly that "If gang injunctions do have an impact, they make the neighborhood less safe." This study provided rich evidence that gang-controlled communities developed elements of organized culture that were *disrupted after* CGIs removed gangs. Specifically, the evidence in this section offers two new applications of social disorganization theory to the studies of gang culture and CGIs.

One application of social disorganization theory is disorganizing the social structure between gangs. This *disruption from without* was expressed in two ways: disorganizing the

gang's relations with the community and its residents and disorganizing established social organization between rival gangs. As far as Insiders were concerned, the disorganization of gang relations with the community and its residents initially manifested as an increased disruption rather than increased order. Disorganization between rival gangs emerged because of partial or wholesale shifting of the social norms of gangs about one another when the CGI elimination of one gang opens a gap for another rival gang to fill. According to this study's Insiders, both situations increased, rather than decreased, social *disorganization* in affected neighborhoods. Gang-like, the increased social disorganization was usually manifested by more killing and chaos. Evidence of this is presented in the two sections on Disorganizing Gangs from Without.

The other application of social disorganization theory refers to disorganizing the social structure within the gang. This *disruption from within* was also expressed in two ways: disorganizing the cultural structure of a gang and the gang's social norms by reducing or removing access to other gang members and associates. Evidence of this is presented below in the two sections on Disorganizing Gangs from Within.

Disorganizing Gangs from Without: Disrupting Relations with Residents. Criminal gang injunctions are meant to remove a gang from an area to remove their nuisance and unlawful conduct to improve residents' sense of safety and security. Safety and security were hard to come by when the gangs exhibited normal behavior. For example, LaBrea admitted that before the CGI, her neighborhood's worst feature was that it was "really gang-infested. Enemies literally came in every week to shoot up the neighborhood—every Wednesday and Sunday." Contradicting social disorganization theory, the evidence in this section argues that a gang whose members inhabit a neighborhood becomes co-creators of its social culture, in many respects for worse (as LaBrea's twice-weekly shooting sprees above attest) but in some respects for better,

and that the gang's removal has the unforeseen consequences of disrupting their disruptions. Whereas comments by Outsiders Casey, Englebert, and Green in the above section (Injunctions Make Neighborhoods Safer) suggested that safety and security were in place decades after the CGIs went into effect, lurid characterizations like Insider LaBrea's twice-weekly shooting sprees and further comments below suggest why it probably takes decades for CGIs to accomplish their goals.

Protection. This section presents evidence that CGIs disorganize gang relations with the community and its residents because the gangs felt they played vital, perhaps even heroic, roles by protecting residents. Insiders' perspectives were that, because of gang protection, *residents felt safe because of gangs*. Pedro spoke of protection, emphasizing that long-term gangs had established rules of conduct toward community residents. His descriptions of poetic Robin Hood-like benevolence seemed to reassure Pedro that gangs were not *all* bad, even though they constituted another perspective that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality. Pedro:

Leaders would look out the neighborhood, [establishing] rules like do not harm civilians [residents], protect those in the neighborhood from Outsiders, respect the community and the neighbors, you know, keeping neighbors safe. It's like the Robin Hood story. They robbed to rescue someone in the neighborhood, to give to the poor. They helped some of the older folks that lived in the community in the past, you know, so that those folks were with them. They were respectful too. They helped them. Their kids were safe. *A lot of folks felt safe*. They gonna look out for you, right?

Consequently, Pedro saw injunctions as removing the gang's protection and simultaneously removing citizens' feelings of safety. "The injunctions took them away from the neighborhood and *made the community less safe*." The irony was he thinks CGIs accomplish their intended mission of reducing gang activity. Pedro was the only participant who drew a poetic parallel between gang protection and Robin Hood-like benevolence, but all the Insiders spoke about protection. Like Pedro, this poetic parallel seemed to reassure them that gangs were not *all* bad,

even as protecting the same residents that they terrified constituted a glaring example of perspectives that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality.

Recall that LaBrea said the worst feature of her neighborhood before the injunction was that it was *infested* with gangs. Yet, when asked to name the best feature of her old neighborhood after the injunction, LaBrea answered without hesitation: “The best feature was the gang members, honestly. They kept the community protected; they protected the community; they protected their area.” On the other hand, although her neighborhood was “infested” with gang activity at that same time, she minimized their violence. She blamed the loss of protection on someone who snitched, another apparent dismissal of the reality of gang criminality. LaBrea stated,

Basically, the home gang would protect the neighborhood by putting in work. The community members were watching this happen. Someone told [the police]. The police came to sweep all the home gang away. The result: Our community was no longer protected.

Sunny echoed the notion that gangs served the vital community service of protection. An Insider with long-term experience in notorious sections of Los Angeles and Rancho San Pedro, Sunny experienced what she called “morals” among “the old gangsters, the OGS”: “Like, this is our neighborhood. We protect the people inside, don't do anything against people inside because it's our community. This is our territory. We take care of it.”

Insider Crow also said that the gangs served the vital community service of protection. Contradicting the stories that Outsider Casey told of virtual imprisonment in her house by gang activity, Crow claimed that while the gang ethos was in force, a woman would be protected: “If a lady was walking past you with her groceries, somebody's gonna help her carry that groceries home or protect her on her way home to make sure nobody tries to take her purse. Because you

got a knucklehead and maybe a dope fiend, a drug addict or something, you've gonna protect these people.”

Similarly, with the loss of that gang protection, LaBrea did not feel safer when gang members went under criminal injunction because, like Pedro and Crow, it removed a controlling element exerted by the gang itself. According to LaBrea, the CGI mandate against congregating “takes [enjoined] gang members off the streets, off the blocks, which keeps all the neighborhoods *from being safe*. I feel like their protection goes away when gang members are swept up.” Then LaBrea told another of her gory stories, this one about a bloodied relative after enjoined gang members had been swept up (i.e., removed from the vicinity) by an injunction and were unable to protect the neighborhood. LaBrea recalled,

The police did a sweep. Then, about 5 days later, I saw my entire street block is taped off. The police were searching for someone, who later turned out to be my cousin. When me and my family member went into our house, we found my cousin critically injured. We informed the police and told them to come and get him. My cousin (a rival) came over to visit along with other rivals. They were seen by some homies from the neighborhood, got shot at and came to our house to get away.

Manny told an even bloodier story as he talked at length about the impact of CGIs disrupting the gang culture of protecting the citizens on their turf, and in so doing, showed the reciprocity between losing the gang’s protection and opening a gap for the influx of rival gangs, as discussed in the next section. According to Manny, after the injunction was in place, the removal of the previous gang also created a gap that rival gangs filled. Manny described rival gang infiltration mildly as merely, “folks coming into the neighborhood,” even though the influx exposed rival gang members to one another, and the result was “just a lot of shootings;” both quotes were turns of phrase that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality. Recall Manny’s story in the Participants section above about gang members protecting the little store run by an old Korean couple affectionately dubbed Mamasan and Papasan by the gang who took

pride in protecting them. Redirecting the conversation to them, Manny described the gruesome impacts of the gang's absence but again blamed the injunction, not the criminal gang behavior that engendered it:

Since the gang injunction was put in place, there was no more protection for that liquor store. People were stealing, doing beer runs, disrespecting the owners, putting a gun down, and doing an actual robbery. So that liquor store, no more protection from the guys that used to hang out in front of the store. Now *the community does not feel safe* because of the gang injunctions.

The gang members who hung out in front of Mamasan and Papasan's store protected the store because they were associated with the neighborhood. Manny went on to describe how gang injunctions further affected the relationships between gangs and the community adversely because it allowed outside rivals to infiltrate. The disruption of the previous gang culture created havoc. Manny recalled,

The previous gang members had a relationship with those owners. When the gang injunction eventually came, it *just threw chaos into how the neighborhood* because before, the neighborhood was protected and the residents felt safe. Some don't even go to that store anymore in fear of being hurt. The diminished gang association with the community cause this outside rival to come in and create havoc. So, what happened was a shooting during in a robbery. By now, Mamasan and Papasan's store has been robbed several times. Now, the store owners have bulletproof walls or windows up in front of the store now. Now, when older guys from the neighborhood walk into the store, their first question is, 'What the heck is this?' Like, now there are mug shots of people stealing, you know, chips or 12 pack or what is miscellaneous stuff. There's no protection there. It was depressing and sad because that was our neighborhood, we had this system. In comes injunction. We can't protect it.

Like ripples from a stone tossed into a still pond, Manny told another story about the negative impacts of the injunction on the community's residents that reached even further than the dicey consequences of regular robberies of a neighborhood store. This story gave personal insights into touching neighborhood life before and after the CGI scattered the original gang. Manny described,

Yeah, the residents don't feel safe. And the store that I'm talking about has been there for this community – it's the only one store that's been there forever. Now they're running these folks out of business. You got [a new] 7-Eleven on the busy street, and [the owner] got another liquor store on the corner. For us, we live in poverty, you know. That's where the prices come in. Now we can't go out and buy a Pepsi. We got to buy the knock-off brand.

The [Mamasan and Papasan] store owners know the community so well that, it sounds funny, but they gave credit. You know, my mom [would] go in there and said, 'Hey, I can't buy toilet paper, can I get store credit?' 'Go ahead, get one row, or you can get the pack of six.' This is true, true story.

As foreshadowed by Manny's references to injunctions enabling the influx of rival gangs, the following section presents more evidence about how CGIs disorganize the previously established social organization, this time between rival gangs. This form of social disorganization occurs during whatever subsequent timeframe is required for the CGI to effectively reduce the reign of one gang without removing other area gangs.

Disorganizing Gangs from Without: Disrupting Relationships across Rival Gangs.

When questioning this researcher about the specificity of CGIs during his interview, Outsider Greene correctly anticipated that the gap created when CGIs removed one set of gang members enabled the influx of rival gang members. Upon learning that the injunctions do not simply name a gang but list specific members and associates, he immediately grasped that enjoinder opened a gap that guaranteed ensuing chaos. Challenging CGIs, Greene raised an excellent point:

I feel less safe with the injunction as more specific. If it was any gang member or activity, I would feel safer. Today I learned it was against one gang. I think that this is very disruptive because in a vacuum with only holding a specific gang accountable, you're going to get anarchy. That would make me a lot more concerned. I would rather have a stable gang present, instead of guys fighting over their brand attempting to gain new territory. I think that that makes no sense to me at all.

Like Insider Manny's stories about Mamasan and Papasan above, LaBrea also provided rich insights when she addressed the long-term consequences of removing one gang and creating a gap that can be filled by another gang. After police swept her neighborhood and removed gang

members, rivals came into the neighborhood and started trouble. LaBrea said that rival gang members do not *necessarily* infiltrate an enjoined neighborhood immediately after the sweeps: “It’s not like they think, ‘Oh, well, they give the homies the injunction. Let’s go over here and mess with them.’” But she quickly conceded, “Of course, it happened once or twice. There was a sweep. Because everybody’s gone, it made it easier for them [rivals] to come and shoot people. So, the gang injunction [is] *taking the protection away* from the blocks in the community.” The gang injunction was a type of deterrent for one gang but opened a gap in the neighborhood for rivals and foes to fill.

Crime as a Solo versus Collective Activity. Insider LaBrea called injunctions “stupid” (Table 3). But she was not just being peevish and recalcitrant. Her reasoning, presented below, was sound: Restricting gang members’ access to one another does little to reduce crime. She revealed that gang members often commit crimes privately or prefer to commit crimes privately so that knowledge of it among associates could not be used against them. Thus, disassociation does not deter the gang member who is interested in committing a crime privately from committing it. LaBrea questioned,

What are [injunctions] really doing? Not helping the community. What is it solving? Is taking big homie gang members off the streets, and you say it’s to help prevent crime? I mean, one of the things the injunction tries to minimize it you can’t be with another gang. All gang members don’t need somebody else with them to commit a crime. Most would rather commit offenses and violence by themselves, so they have no one that can snitch on him.

In contrast to the above evidence that CGIs resulted in widespread social disorganization between rival gangs, the evidence in the next section argues that CGIs often disorganize the culture of a particular gang. This type of social disorganization within gangs occurs during whatever subsequent timeframe is required for the CGI to effectively reduce the reign of older gang members without removing younger members.

Disorganizing Gangs from Within: Disrupting the Gang's Culture. According to the Insiders, older gang members and associates exerted a relatively structured impact on a community before injunctions by imbuing its members with a specific philosophy, such as protecting residents, as argued above, based on a broad sense of connection to the community. The idea was that some gangs had organizations similar to a hierarchy, headed by a shot-caller or one or more leaders who transmitted the gang's culture of connection to the community to younger gang members. The literal or figurative removal of gang leadership or "elders" by the injunction rendered displaced leaders unable to transmit the gang's cultural code of community connection to younger gang members. The result of this gap was to reconfigure gang culture and dismember the security that gangs rendered to the community.

According to Insiders, community security was dismembered because younger gang members saw the world differently than the gang's elders saw it. When gang elders were removed, the new gang members who came into power had fewer relationships with residents and, therefore, less linkage with the community. As per Insider Sunny, "They do not seem to care about the community," creating a new wave of fear among residents. Sunny asserted that younger gang members do not have the same protective relationship with the people in the community that the older gang members had, and more chillingly, such reconfigurations of attitude characterized gangs from Los Angeles to Rancho San Pedro. Sunny stated,

In my experience with East Los Angeles OG gangsters, when the leaders got locked up, the younger gang members took over with different leaders and a different way of dealing with things. They had a different mindset and different goals. What I experienced is that the old gangsters, the OGS, had morals, you know. This is our neighborhood. We protect the people inside. You know, don't do anything against people inside because it's *our* community. This is our territory. We have to take care of it. Before the injunction, the old gangsters made the community feel safer. But the new gangsters these days are like this in all of LA, even in San Pedro.

At this juncture in her interview, Sunny asked a rhetorical question: “Why do they have a different idea about caring for themselves rather than the community?” Then she answered it herself, listing all too familiar self-serving aspirations that have punctuated the entire history of humanity: “They just want the money, the glory, and the females, and to be known. They want to make a name for themselves.” She said that although these young gang members care about their own families, “They don't care about other families because they don't see other families in the community as important. They see a community as just a territory. Families are just a piece of territory. *They really don't see the people.*” Sunny concluded blandly that “having all gangsters lose” is “not good” because “it's another crime,” a lone example in which participant perspectives did not dismiss the reality of gang criminality.

LaBrea also described the loss of a specific gang's culture and its history when CGIs removed leaders and created a gap filled by young gang members. She said that gang injunctions do *not* make LaBrea feel safer because the next generation of gang members lacks the [former] gang's culture:

You have a lot of upcoming generation. A lot of people who gang, right, have enemies in other gangs. But they don't even know the history behind why they fight. All they know is ‘Oh, I don't like them.’ They have no knowledge behind ‘hat they're even hiding for, shooting for, killing for. So, the gangs have no structure. These big homies, the older cats, are not putting them in place. Like, they're glorifying certain stuff, like the gangbanging. If the bigger homies, the older cats, will kind of instill a little bit of knowledge in something different...the whole community will be different.

The idea that newer gang members had a distinctively different outlook than older gang members was not exclusive to the female Insiders. Pedro described a similar impact on gang culture: older gang leaders became unavailable to pass the gang's culture onto the next generation. When Pedro spoke of past gang leaders who guided the gang by establishing rules of conduct toward community residents, Pedro seemed to be referring to himself:

I will speak as an ex-gang member and somebody that was older and was able to have some kind of word on what was not and what was going on. I was, you know, ordering others in the life. Leaders [established] rules like respect to the OG's [original gangsters population]. Most important, original gang members that were later put on [listed in the injunction] provided guidance to the new blood, in the sense of how to respect the community and keep neighbors safe. But the injunctions took them away and *made the community less safe*.

Pedro felt a similar skepticism of the next generation of gang members. To the extent that injunctions eventually disassociated older gang members from the neighborhood and new generations took their place without the benefit of their teachings, gang interventionist Pedro was actually “scared of the kids [new gang members] from my community. “Today [after the injunctions], these kids don’t know nobody, like, you know, because a lot of the older guys got kind of caught up on it.”

Crow had similar experiences that concerned him about new gang members. He told a quick story about a guy who “must have come from Redondo Beach because he looked like a surfer.” Crow described,

He was bad. It was bad. They're smoking out crystal meth or whatever they're doing today. Everything's laced. That's killing people. I'm scared right now. I'm just scared for those that use excuses to get a medical card to smoke marijuana' Well, it's not gonna work for your parole probation or your job. I'm scared that they're going to start, you know, this weed today, man. What are you putting in it?

On the heels of discussing the loss of the gang’s culture and social structure of community relationships “because the young blood wants do their own thing and look out for themselves,” Sunny added an alarming note about new blood when it comes to crime, “Hurting people, selling drugs, stuff like that, the young blood is more organized.”

A final form of social disruption engendered by CGIs is the disruption to the gang family.

Disorganizing Gangs from Within: Disrupting Social Ties. The Insiders agreed that for most gang members, the gang *is* family. For many, gang members are relatives and literally

family members. As LaBrea noted several times, “A lot of gang members are gang members because their older cousins, dad, uncles, and neighbors are part of a gang.” Whether connected biologically or through social ties, gang members become as dear as family. The unexpected consequence of the CGI mandate against congregating is that the mandate may strengthen the desire to congregate.

By trying to prevent gang members from congregating, CGIs are designed to disorganize gang structure from within by upsetting one or more individual gang member’s family structure. According to the Insiders, however, CGIs are *unsuccessful* at preventing gang members from congregating and *will always be unsuccessful* because gang members who see the gang as their family never honor this portion of the injunction and will never honor this portion. Gang members dismiss gang injunctions against congregating because their social ties to their gang family are so strong. The need to be with their family overrides the need to comply with the law, often because enjoined gang members have no other place to go. Pedro warned that simply sending enjoined kids or families somewhere unfamiliar resolves little because “Violence occurs in that neighborhood too.” According to LaBrea, the response of one man enjoined on an injunction was defiance: “Screw it. I gonna go see my family. I don’t care if the police or anybody else does not like that.”

Although neither Insider knew that the other was in the study, LaBrea and Crow both described the reigning philosophical rejection: Enjoined gang members do not cooperate with the mandate of disassociation because the gang is much more than “just guys in the neighborhood” (Crow). Crow told a fractured story about enjoined gang members ignoring the mandate against congregating at a nephew’s birthday party. Crow explained,

You got brothers and cousins and nephews that are all on injunctions. For example, a member of a family on it [enjoined on the injunction] went to his own cousin that was

already on it. ‘Grandma is having a party, and you can't go because I'm going, and I'm not getting caught up for you’...So, you're [together] in the backyard? This separated families.”

LaBrea described the gang-as-family cultural code in more detail. She said that gang membership transforms the gang into a large part of or the entire family ethos. Gang relationships are not forfeited readily. Her point was that a legal embargo against congregating will never exert a stronger influence than do the social and biological needs of humans to have one's own in-group or group of beloved others and have access to them. LaBrea opined,

Injunctions are dumb. What are they for, to stop crime and stop this and to stop that? The gang injunction itself isn't going to stop people from associating because their gang members are their family member'. You can't tell family' they can't be around their family. You cannot keep these people from being with their families. In the community, most gang members are a part of their environment. It's a part of neighborhood culture. It is silly police think this would work.

One reason that the gang becomes the in-group is that the expanded family ethos is often taught from early youth. Many future gang members attend school together as youngsters. As Pedro pointed out, kids in a gang-infested neighborhood usually

grew up together from kindergarten, elementary, all the way. One goes one way, started gangbanging, just a regular kid, maybe he smokes pot or whatever. The other goes the other way. But they are still neighbors. They grew up together. So, they have a bond.

Similarly, LaBrea spoke of children growing up together in the same neighborhood, “They learn of the life while in school, and there is no way that you can keep gang members apart.” This shared history reinforces social unity further and makes injunction mandates against congregating unlikely to succeed. Whether schoolmates grow up and opt-in, opt-out, or one opts to join a gang, and the other opts out of joining a gang, both still know and accept that gangs are part of the current social landscape. As importantly, from the standpoint of cultural tradition, both know and assume that gangs were part of the past social landscape in which they grew up.

Their shared history is not easily erased by threats of sanctions for breaking the injunction.

LaBrea stated,

The gang is their family. So, I can't be around my family because I'm a gang member, and my family has a gang member? That's not gonna happen. They are always gonna get in trouble for being together because you are not gonna keep somebody from family. That's all they know. A lot of times, the streets in the hoods include certain people, families, they don't have [their own] families. The community becomes their family so *that's where they go to get that sense of, you know, a family structure* and different stuff.

Another reason that the gang becomes the in-group is that the expanded family ethos provides a place of shelter, psychologically but often literally. An enjoined gang member may not be able to move, whether because the individual lacks the same mobility of a working citizen who chooses to move or is likely to encounter rival gang members in the new locale, which may and often does put lives at stake. LaBrea explained,

A lot of people don't have another place to go or another place might be full of rivals. Recently a friend of mine was told to leave my neighborhood by police. He went to stay with a family member in the rival community. He was targeted many times, he was jumped and threatened with a shooting. He returns to my neighborhood where he was safe.

LaBrea's insights were based on knowing over 40 people who were put under a gang injunction in her lifetime to date. Sunny was another Insider, like LaBrea, with profound experience with gang violence, having grown up in South LA before moving to Rancho San Pedro. She brought up another dimension of CGIs, the perspective of family members after their father or son was enjoined on a CGI. Sunny posited,

CGIs put people in a strain because a lot of people had to get rid of family members. People have been removed because they are gangsters or knew gangsters. It made it difficult, because even though the family members knew that that person [was enjoined], it was hard to get them out because there's their family. They want to see them change for the better. Some families were scared to kick them out because even their own families were intimidated by the enjoined family members. Some weren't really getting it. Or the whole family could get kicked out.

The above evidence argued that the gang is family and identification with one's gang family may last a lifetime. Gang affiliation crosses generations too, not only when a father and his son are members, but as both the North Side Redondo (NSR) and Rancho San Pedro (RSP) gangs demonstrated. Thus, a fundamental element for many gang members is that they will never be free of the gang. For example, Outsider Casey provided a quick life history of her manicurist's nephew, who was unable to sever his gang ties until he went to prison. Her explanatory references to "dumb" and "stupid impulse" provide another perspective that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality:

My manicurist's nephew is in prison now. He got recruited into the local gang [NSR]. The last time I saw him, I observed a North Redondo banner tattooed on his forehead, kind of a dumb thing to do. But he was a teenager. He got into trouble. Shoplifting was his first strike. He got a girl pregnant. Gang [NSR] gang memberships was his second strike. Because of the gang injunctions, he ended up moving to Texas, and was out of the gang life for a long time. Then North Redondo gang members needed to hide, went to Texas, and stayed with him. He got right back into the life, ended up with a divorce. Came back here, stole a car, just one of these stupid impulse things. He wasn't supposed to be hanging around these other gang members because of the injunction, another strike against him. And then third one, he is involved a gang related shooting and got sent to prison. He's been in prison now for well over 10 years.

The conclusion is that rather than successfully disrupting the social organization of a gang from within, the injunction mandate against usually congregating boomerangs and strengthens gang members' ties and determination to assemble. Because an injunction forbids associations among individuals who associations resulted in crime, this philosophy of rejecting its basic tenet was another example of dismissing the reality of gang criminality. Safety in numbers is stronger than the law.

Shared Perspectives – CGIs as Brands that Last Forever

A gang injunction does not expire. Enjoined individuals never age out of the injunction. CGIs are written to be indefinite. Unless legislation changes, persons enjoined as young

teenagers carry this criminal identifier for the remainder of their lives. Because of arguments against the infinite nature of CGIs, lawmakers have recently developed a path to remove enjoined persons from an injunction. Still, it is unfortunately so expensive and convoluted that few enjoined persons have taken advantage of it.

The shared perspectives in this section refer to evidence that both Outsiders and Insiders thought the lack of CGI expiration was too harsh. Although most participants shared hair-raising experiences with gang violence, most disagreed with the indefinite timeframe of a CGI. Englebert pointed out that something that stays on your record forever is “ridiculous” because “the repercussions in the long run are devastating.” Englebert then modified his stance on harshness because CGIs affect both residents and gang members, so harshness must be specified. “Injunctions are *not* too harsh for all residents because it works. Injunctions *are* too harsh [for enjoined individuals] because they are indefinite.” After all, in his benign perspective, a CGI is just “a punishment for a kid, for God's sake. Most of them are [kids]” and the CGI “should go away once they have learned their lesson.”

The participants’ specific reasons for disagreeing with the indefinite timeframe of CGIs varied. One argument against the indefinite timeframe of a CGI was based on life’s impermanence and unseen impacts over the long term. Whereas Outsider Greene thought that the intentions behind CGIs were good, the problem was, “like anything, you never know what the downstream consequences are,” continuing,

Twenty years later, you may have to rethink some of this stuff. Does it need to be in place anymore? Do we have better tools to make us safer? Now that I have a fuller understanding of injunctions, having a permanent injunction makes zero sense to me if they are to make me feel safer.

A second argument against the indefinite timeframe of a CGI was that some people mature out of gang mentality. Thinking about gang members who made terrible choices as

teenagers, Outsider Greene said that the indefinite status is too harsh: “An injunction should not hold you down if you're 25 years old and trying to get a regular job. I think people change. You can't put a permanent tattoo on him saying, ‘Well, that's the way you are and nothing changes.’ That's that does not seem fair to me. I would not agree with that.” Always thoughtful, Greene noted unnervingly that there are, of course, alternatives to unemployment: “You're denying them the ability to do legal work. If they're not going to work, they're gonna do criminal activity.”

This argument was further illustrated with Insider Pedro's eloquent plea, albeit spiked with verbal crutches that lent emphasis to his discomfiture with entreaties for mercy. His ardent entreaty spoke for several participants and provided another perspective that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality:

Everybody makes mistakes. You know, everybody makes mistakes, man, you know, whether you are young or old. A lot of times these kids, they just, you know, they are thinking of the fun that they are having, or just hanging out, not to get caught up. You know, just basically partying all day, hanging out and not thinking of the future. They are not thinking like, hey, one day men sort of pass away [or] whenever I have kids that want... Then the carpet of their future is cut just for hanging out. They are not thinking at the moment. Because you're thinking how their life should go for the rest of their life. And that does not make any sense at all.

A third argument against the indefinite timeframe of a CGI was that it is hard for an enjoined person to find a legitimate job. At the time of this writing, there was an ongoing lawsuit between the ACLU and the City of Los Angeles because employers were calling into police stations and specifically asking if a potential employee was a gang member. Databases are available to provide that information. Based on her professional experience as a hiring manager, Outsider Casey spoke with passion about CGIs saddling the enjoined person for life. She reasoned that if there is a database that employers can use to find out whether a job applicant has been in a gang, and use that to blackball that applicant, “That's not fair.” Casey stated,

If they're identified as a gang member, and the CGI doesn't expire, this is going to stay on their record for life. They're in the system. It is difficult to get out. It is difficult to find a good job. We've got to have a pathway and it shouldn't be expensive. It actually should be free. CGIs are often misused by employers who violate a citizen's privacy by finding out if they were in the gang.

I was a hiring manager for years. If a person has a record as a felon on one conviction and they put that down [on a job application], you cannot ask. If they had a felony, we didn't ask what it was for. You are branding a person. We are basically forcing people into a life of crime.

Crow gave the example of the skilled labor needed to work in the southern California refineries. He explained that skilled workers needed to obtain a Twik card, "a membership that I'm authorized to work in this field of work on the Port of LA." But background checks eliminated a lot of guys experienced in pipe fitting, installation, fabrication, scaffolding, and carpentry in these refineries. "But if you had a conviction, you weren't able to get the Twik card. They're gonna deny you." He did concede that persons can appeal "and a lot of times, that appeal works."

A fourth argument against the indefinite timeframe of CGI was that gang culture is so pervasive in infested neighborhoods—fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins, and classmates belong to a gang—that membership is learned early. Childhood lessons develop into a personal social outlook that most people find impossible to outgrow the community level, they become a cultural hallmark from which few people probably emerge. As Crow put it, "How are you going to denounce where you grew up?" Hence, the unending CGI penalties are too harsh for social attitudes that surround a helpless, developing child who is psychologically designed to absorb and emulate the behavior and attitudes of those around him.

A fifth argument against CGIs involves the indefinite timeframe of a CGI was that people can be enjoined on an injunction unfairly. This idea here was that not everyone who associated with gang members was themselves, a bono-fide gang member. The process of identifying a

gang member or associates is not foolproof. Law enforcement personnel working a criminal gang injunction identify gang members through certain databases in Los Angeles County, although there are many questions and different methodologies on how to identify a gang member. The most common is a person who self-identifies as a gang member. The gang itself can be a marker for the injunction. A person need not be identified by name to fall under these provisions. But a person's gang affiliation, such as family members and especially older folks, is normally incidental to these injunctions. It may also be that an enjoined person is not notified that they have been named on an injunction. For example, if the documentation was sent to a location, but the person never sees it, they may remain unaware. There is no requirement for that person to notify authorities that they understand their enjoinderment.

According to the participants, gang injunction enjoinders include civilians who were not affiliated with the gang—those not actively participating in gang activity, but who were neighbors, family members, or friends with gang members. Law enforcement identified these “innocent friends” as fraternizing with gangs. After that, innocent friends were deemed gang associates, listed on an injunction, identified by a field information card known as a white card, and subject to the same restrictions as those gang members responsible for crime and violence. Insider Pedro spoke with passion about the unfairness of innocent friends being enjoined on an injunction, leaping to the melodramatic conclusion that “Anybody can be arrested just because you know someone!” and providing another perspective that appeared to dismiss the reality of gang criminality. Further, Pedro claimed that this radiated well beyond the personal dilemma for the now-and-forever-enjoined innocent friend because “this makes the community feel unsafe about gang injunctions too.” According to Pedro,

Now you got this good kid on an injunction. Why? Because he grew up with these kids, because every time you see him walking down the street, you pull them over and roll out

his white card. That is what happened with the injunction out here. A lot of these kids that got put were not part of the problem. They knew the guys that were causing the problem, but they just grew up together, sharing a bond.

Pedro told a poignant story about a young man enjoined on an injunction. Pedro assumed that the young man was only an innocent friend but was sure that enjoinder dashed his dreams. The loss of his dreams, according to Pedro, may have even turned him into a gang member himself, a comment reminiscent of Casey's dire warning that indefinite CGIs force a person into a life of crime:

The first year I worked the Summer Night Lights outreach program, there was this kid who knew the guys that were hanging out because he grew up with them. They stayed close, often hanging out. This kid had just graduated high school. He wanted to follow his dream to join the sheriffs. He had done the academy, the youth cadets.

For his graduation, his family threw a party, celebrating. People from the neighborhood [gang members] pull up [to his house]. The kid knows them from childhood. The kid goes outside to greet them, and they congratulate him on graduating. So, the kid is saying, 'Come inside my home to eat some food.' The police see the gang members and complete the white cards [Field Interview Cards].

Bang, the kid is on the injunction. So, it stopped him from being able to continue doing what he was doing to become a sheriff. So, after he became disillusioned and I ran into him on the street, I asked what happened to the sheriff's dream. So, one thing I remember him telling me was like, you know, 'The only thing I had going for me is that captain that used to oversee the program.'

Gang injunctions ruined that kid. They made him paranoid about showing his face on the street. They messed up his future. No, destroyed his future and gave him reason to go the route of the gang member.

Pedro symbolically clenched his fist when he asserted emphatically, "You are not just affecting him in that moment. You are affecting the rest of his life!" He paused and then asked rhetorically, "How are you offering them any help?"

Greene called for a critical review of the need for CGIs to be permanent: "It may be time to look at it. They need to say, 'I didn't think there's anything wrong with taking it away and then watching how things are' because my impression is if they took that away, it probably be just fine."

This researcher was struck by an arresting parallel between two fundamental elements of this study of gang culture. One fundamental element is that gang affiliations are often lifelong. Even Outsider Casey knew that “If you try to get out of the gang, there's really no way out.” The other fundamental element is that CGI enjoinderment is lifelong. Once enjoined, an individual is never free of the injunction or its restrictions. This parallel between a lifetime connection to the gang and a lifetime connection to a CGI was arresting because gang activity imprisons neighborhoods. Yet gang life itself, and CGI punishment for involvement therewith, is itself a prison.

Limitations

Limitations are events beyond the researcher's control that limit or restrict the investigation's scope (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Like previous studies, this one had some restrictions. Residents of CGI-made safety zones freely took part in this study. The participants were chosen because they were close to areas severely affected by gang violence and later suppression tactics used by local police enforcement. The study's location and the event description are exclusive to Los Angeles County. The popularity of CGIs presented problems because of the 1980s gang prevention culture, which commonly used injunctions against gangs to stop gang violence. The increasing use of CGIs exacerbated community resistance to their use. Other states, like Texas, Utah, Minnesota, and Tennessee, have also implemented CGIs to reduce gang violence in their local areas, but at a lower scale and with fewer citizen worries regarding their objectivity (O'Deane & Morreale, 2011).

Researchers conducting empirical studies often encounter ethical challenges (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These problems may develop at any time during the research process, but researchers are still required to minimize any potential harm to study participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). To protect the welfare of the participants, the researcher requested IRB permission

before starting the study. After receiving IRB approval, the researcher obtained informed consent from the participants by explaining the study's voluntary nature, their option to discontinue participation at any time during the study, and the researcher's plans to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Qualitative studies do not emphasize generalizing their conclusions due to the unique inclusion of random sampling methods and the individuality of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). *Transferability* is a tool used by qualitative researchers to ensure that future researchers can successfully translate a study's findings into various settings or situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The current study enhanced transferability by thoroughly explaining the study's history and main hypotheses. The current researcher also offered evidence that the study's conclusions might apply to stakeholders in other communities where CGIs are frequently used to reduce gang violence.

Closing statement

This results chapter ends with LaBrea's bleak perspective because it is an uncloaked warning for law enforcement and prosecutors:

These kids or whoever want to be local gang members like, it starts in the family, in the home. A lot of times, you become a product of your environment. Your parents, school all day, can teach you this and that. You know, in the household, I think, if the older gang members, you know, the OG, was to step in and really likes the gang bang, it starts them in a different direction. *But it is always going to be something.* I mean generations to come. There's going to be more gang members. It's going to be 'ore evolved. It's not going to stop.

Summary

The absence of winter weather in Southern California allows generations of gangs to infuse or "infest" communities year-round, generating recurring wakes of chaos and fear. In this chapter, the researcher presented the results of a hermeneutic phenomenology of the lived

experiences of people exposed to CGIs resulting from gang violence mainly perpetuated by the North Side Redondo Gang and the Rancho San Pedro Gang.

During the interviews, Greene was the participant who raised the most insightful points. With remarks about the similarities between this study of the lived experiences of those impacted by CGIs and the lived experiences of people receiving cancer treatment, he concluded his own interview. This chapter closes with his comments because they showcase this research's intent and importance. Greene stated,

I am involved in cancer research and development. I think what you're doing is parallel to medical research we do called quality of life studies. *Who is the end user of all this?* We ask the patient who just went through cancer what he or she thinks about it. Was this a doctor thing? Did you live another 2 months? Was that 2 months' worth of living? Would it have been better to have a more dignified death and not go through any of that? You, [addressing the researcher directly] are correct in finding out what the people who lived there experienced. I mean, you can't *assume* what people are saying, right? Yeah, this guy lived X number of days longer. But were those meaningful days? You're asking the same sorts of questions.

This CGI has a purpose, how its implemented, how long it's implemented, and the incidentals that come with it. Maybe we need to examine it again. To your point, its quality of life. As you said, is it helping to make all residents' life of high quality or is it detrimental to day-to-day living? You can't just say, 'Well, it's only affecting the people who live in the area. How is it affecting the people on the injunctions? If they can't get qualified, dignified work, you know, what are you going to do? That's the way for them to live. So, you have got to look at all ends of the spectrum.

This hermeneutic phenomenological study examined how CGIs have affected residents of two Los Angeles communities through their lived experiences. This study was guided by the following research question to discover how people of adjoining neighborhoods regarded the effect of CGIs on their safety: Do community residents perceive the use of civil gang injunctions (CGIs) and their effectiveness in promoting safer and more secure communities? In answering the research question in the current study, the data analysis revealed one overarching theme, Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality. the supporting theme of the current study was Shared Perspectives. According to the current research, the response to the research question was both

yes and no, and the idea of social disorder was verified and disproven. As interpreted by Shaw and McKay (1972), the social disorganization hypothesis served as the theoretical foundation for the current investigation. The concept of social disorder emerged to describe how difficult it is for a community structure to uphold the shared values of its members and preserve appropriate societal restraints. The current study of citizens' views of CGIs is most significant to social disorder since it prepares the way for influencing social transformation. A neighborhood may be able to organize and take part in restoring the physical and social order in their area as the intimidation actions decline, likely impacting gang violence and civic involvement. The current study's narrative evidence supported and refuted the theoretical claim that injunctions enhance patterns in collaborative processes. Safer neighborhoods served as confirmation. Disrupting gangs from the Outsider and Insider perspective was one method of disconfirming. Due to fundamental disparities in attitude and variances in their seeming familiarity with information about gang culture, the participants in the current study were naturally divided into two groups. As Outsiders, their perspectives portrayed CGIs from the views of people who witnessed resultant changes in the community in which they lived and worked without interacting with gangs directly.

From the gang associates' point of view, Insiders firmly believed that injunctions interfered with civic activities. Their opinions refuted the theoretical hypothesis that gang removal through injunctions improves collaborative processes. Disorganizing the social structure amongst gangs is one example of how the social disorganization theory is applied. This *disruption from without* was expressed in two ways: disorganizing the gang's relations with the community and its residents and disorganizing established social organization between rival gangs. Insiders firmly believed that injunctions interfered with civic activities from the

perspective of the gang associates. Their views contradicted the theoretical claim that community processes are improved by gang eradication through injunctions. One example of how the social disorganization theory is used is to disrupt the social structure among gangs.

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology aimed to determine the overall efficacy of criminal gang injunctions (CGIs or injunctions) in the eyes of community residents exposed to them. The study had two aims. One aim was to determine whether CGIs worked as intended to promote safe and functional communities. The other aim was to use those findings to generate conversations among stakeholders and decision-makers to explore avenues for improving CGIs. The theoretical framework of this study was social disorganization theory.

The overarching theme was the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality, based on participants' comments that appeared to discount, disregard, overlook, or minimize the reality that gangs committed illegal offenses ranging from nuisance acts that annoyed citizens to criminal conduct that terrified or endangered them. Evidence of this Dismissal theme ranged from minor to major. The overarching theme of Dismissal was girded by two main themes: Insiders and Outsiders. Outsiders' perspectives were based on distant knowledge of the inner workings of gangs and portrayed the impacts of CGIs through the lens of their personal views of improvements in their neighborhoods. In contrast, Insider perspectives were based on intimate knowledge about gang culture and portrayed the impacts of CGIs through the lens of the direct effects on gangs. The supporting theme of Shared Perspectives reflected elements of CGIs that participants saw through the same lens.

One research question guided this study: Do community residents associate Civil Gang Injunctions with safer and more secure neighborhoods? The answer to the research question was yes and no, and the application of social disorganization theory was confirmed and disconfirmed.

Outsider participants said that CGIs create safer and more secure communities. In contrast, Insider participants said the CGIs disrupt gang culture, leaving neighborhoods less safe and secure. Narrative evidence confirmed and disconfirmed the theoretical idea that injunctions improve patterns in community processes. Confirmation took the form of safer neighborhoods. Disconfirmation took forms of disrupting gangs from without (disrupting gang relations with the community and with other gangs) and within (disrupting gang culture and family ties). Both Insiders and Outsiders agreed that the indefinite timeframes of CGIs were wrong because people can change, and individuals who were enjoined on permanent CGIs and denied legitimate employment are likely to seek criminal work.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

Through this hermeneutic phenomenological study, the researcher aimed to examine the perceptions of the impact on personal safety by residents in two communities in Los Angeles, California, where CGIs existed. In this chapter, the researcher provides an overview of why the study is critical and explains how the study contributed to understanding the topic and problem. This current research provided rich evidence that gang-controlled communities developed elements of organized culture that were disrupted after CGIs removed gangs. Specifically, the evidence in this section offers two new applications of social disorganization theory to the studies of gang culture and CGIs. One application of social disorganization theory is disorganizing the social structure between gangs. The other application of social disorganization theory refers to disorganizing the social network within the gang.

In this qualitative study, the researcher examined the impact of CGIs in communities impacted by gang violence and their residents' experiences related to their safety. The study's outcomes are summarized in this chapter's opening section, followed by a discussion of earlier theoretical and empirical studies. The other purpose was to use those findings to generate conversations among stakeholders and decision-makers to explore avenues for improving CGIs. The study's limitations, constraints, and academic and empirical results are also included. The chapter ends with suggestions for additional research.

Summary of Findings

This section explores and provides an understanding of community members' perceptions of CGIs and their impact on their safety to understand the current study's findings. One research question guided this study to understand how residents in enjoined communities perceived the impact of CGIs on their safety:

RQ1: Do community residents perceive the use of Civil Gang Injunctions (CGIs) and their effectiveness in promoting safer and more secure communities?

Hermeneutic phenomenology demands the researcher to look for themes and engage with the data interpretively to comprehend the significance of the participants' lived experiences (Sloan & Bower, 2014). The current study addressed the research issue through theme and sub-theme development through textual accounts of the participants' real-life educational experiences and structural understandings of how the participants experienced the phenomena.

Developing relevant themes and a subtheme assisted in answering the research question. The researcher looked at the textual accounts of the participants' experiences and structural explanations of phenomena to answer the research question. The data analysis revealed one overarching theme, the *Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality*, and the supporting theme of *Shared Perspectives*.

Research Question

One research question guided the current study to understand how residents in enjoined communities perceive the effects of CGIs on the safety and security of residents: How do community residents associate Civil Gang Injunctions with safer and more secure communities? The data analysis revealed an overarching theme among study participants, *Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality* discounted, disregarded, overlooked, or minimized the reality that gangs committed illegal offenses ranging from nuisance acts that annoyed citizens to criminal conduct that terrified or endangered them. Likewise, a meticulous evaluation of the collected data revealed the supporting theme of *Shared Perspectives*. This subtheme reflected elements of CGIs that participants collectively agreed upon as seen through the same lens.

Discussion

The hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of individuals who lived within a safety zone designated by the Civil Gang in Los Angeles, California. The social disorganization theory interpreted by Shaw and McKay (1972) provided the theoretical foundation for this investigation. Snowball sampling utilizes an intentional criterion in the hermeneutic phenomenological design to choose the eight participants from the semistructured interview data for this study. With this strategy, the researcher revealed themes and interpreted the data to comprehend the significance of the participants' actual experiences (Sloan & Bower, 2014). The study's findings about the theoretical and empirical literature offered in chapter two are discussed in this section. While some of the present study's conclusions align with past research, others are contrasting.

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical framework for the current study was the social disorganization theory, as interpreted by Shaw and McKay. The theoretical literature contained in this study served as the dissertation's overall "blueprint" for investigation. The use of the social disorganization theory revealed a specific methodological approach to research and acted as the foundation that developed and supported the study. According to Eisenhardt (1991), "a structure that guides research by relying on formal theory...constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships is what a theoretical framework is" (p. 205). According to Lovitts (2005), the empirical review of literature should reveal that a theory is suitable, logically interpreted, well-understood, and aligned with the research question to be used or developed for a dissertation.

The social disorganization theory supports this study because it provides a framework for understanding how an injunctive order becomes the social norm in a community and explains

how social processes emerge (Grogger, 2002; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a, 2013b; Maxson et al., 1998). The Chicago School research by Shaw and McKay further developed the social disorganization hypothesis, making it one of the most influential sociological methods for examining crime and delinquency (Bernard et al., 2016). The concept of social disorganization emerged to describe how difficult it is for a community structure to uphold its members' shared values and appropriate societal restraints (Gagnon, 2018). According to this hypothesis, variations in crime and delinquency between areas with various demographic features may be attributed to declining economic levels, racial and cultural variances, and subpar housing.

The current study of citizens' views of CGIs is particularly relevant to the concept of social disorder since it prepares the way for influencing social transformation. Even if people are not actively involved in CGIs, reducing the amount of gang violence fear can improve the community's quality of life by enhancing collective efficacy (Sampson, 1993). A neighborhood may be able to organize and take part in restoring the physical and social order in their area as the intimidation actions decline, likely impacting gang violence and civic involvement. The current study's narrative evidence supported and refuted the theoretical claim that injunctions enhance patterns in collaborative processes. Safer neighborhoods served as confirmation. Disconfirming gangs involved internal and external disruption by disturbing gang relationships with the community and other gangs and disrupting gang culture and family ties.

As a result of fundamental disparities in viewpoint and variances in their seeming intimacy of information about gang culture, the participants in the current study were naturally divided into two groups. Casey, Englebert, and Greene had little to no inside knowledge about gang culture. As Outsiders, their perspectives portrayed CGIs from the views of people who

witnessed resultant changes in the community in which they lived and worked without interacting with gangs directly.

According to the positive response, CGIs cleared the path for influencing social transformation among Outsiders. Outsiders who owned homes thought strongly that injunctions helped community processes by fostering a sense of neighborhood safety and security. Before the CGI cleaned much of the gang activities in her neighborhood, Outsider Casey was imprisoned in her home adjacent to a crack house. Injunctions, according to Casey, are practical because they have made her feel more comfortable and secure. In the renowned Perry Park, Outsider Casey saw how the neighborhood gradually shifted from being gang-controlled to family-oriented—and how, eventually, law-abiding citizens took the place of the gangs. Outsider Greene endorsed Outsider Casey's position. According to him, “violent crimes dramatically decreased,” which suggests that the gang injunction in her neighborhood affected neighborhood criminal activity. The neighborhood's infrastructure improved with a playground swing and the sandbox being rebuilt and renovated, according to Outsider Greene, who supports the social disorganization theory that CGIs may restore the physical and social order in their area with the consequent effects on gang violence and civic engagement. Additionally, Outsider Greene informed that the basketball courts were repaired, and a children's center was constructed. According to Englebert, the third Outsider to make this observation, the area had significantly improved due to the CGIs.

In contrast to the Outsiders' viewpoints, Insider responses to RQ1 (Do neighborhood residents associate the use of Civil Gang Injunctions with safer and more secure communities?) were negative. From the gang's point of view, Insiders firmly believed that injunctions interfered with civic activities. Their opinions refuted the theoretical hypothesis that gang removal through

injunctions improves collaborative processes. Insider LaBrea succinctly stated, “If gang injunctions do have an influence, they make the community less safe” in response to the conflicting findings. The data in this part offer two fresh applications of the notion of social disorder to study gang culture and computer-generated images. One application of social disorganization theory is disorganizing the social structure between gangs. This *disruption from without* was expressed in two ways: disorganizing the gang’s relations with the community and its residents and disorganizing established social organization between rival gangs. As far as Insiders were concerned, the disorganization of gang relations with the community and its residents initially manifested as an increased disruption rather than increased order. Contradicting the social disorganization theory, the evidence from the current study contends that a gang whose members inhabit a neighborhood becomes co-creators of its social culture, in many respects for worse but in some respects for better, and that the gang’s removal has the unforeseen consequences of disrupting their disruptions.

Insider Pedro expressed his belief that CGIs reduce community safety by pointing out how they disrupt gang relationships with local communities since the gangs believed they played crucial—even heroic—roles by defending the neighborhood. Pedro and other Insiders said that “residents felt safe because of the gangs.” Pedro saw injunctions as removing the gang’s protection and simultaneously removing citizens’ feelings of safety. During the semistructured interview, Pedro stated that “the injunctions took them away from the neighborhood and made the community less safe.” The irony was he thinks CGIs accomplished their intended mission: reduce gang activity. According to Insider LaBrea's account, a recent study refuted the social disorganization theory that claimed that by removing gang members and related behavior, CGIs might reduce gang violence fear, improve community well-being, and improve collective

efficacy. LaBrea explained that “the best feature (of her neighborhood) was the gang members, honestly. They kept the community protected; they protected the community; they protected their area.” Insider Sunny echoed the notion that gangs served the vital community service of protection. Sunny experienced what she called “morals” among “the original gangsters (OGs).”

Sunny believed that OGs were the first individuals to be expelled from a neighborhood due to an injunction ruling when she said, “Like, this is our neighborhood. We [gang members] protect the people inside, don't do anything against people inside because it's our community. This is our territory. We take care of it.” Insider Crow added that the gangs provided the crucial function of protection for the neighborhood. Crow asserted that a woman would be protected if the gang mindset was in place. “If a lady was walking past, you with her groceries, somebody's gonna help her carry that groceries home or protect her on her way home to make sure nobody tries to take her purse.”

When one gang is eliminated through a CGI, a void is left for another competitor group to fill, causing disorganization amongst rival gangs to form as a result of partial or complete shifting of the social norms of gangs regarding one another. According to Insiders in this study, both conditions worsened social disorder rather than diminished gang violence in the affected neighborhoods. The heightened social chaos typically showed greater violence and gang-like mayhem. Outsider Greene predicted that the void left by removing one group of gang members by CGIs would allow the entrance of competing gang members. According to Greene, the impact of CGIs on relationships between gangs and the community will be detrimental to his safety: “I feel less safe with the injunction as more specific. If it was any gang member or activity, I would feel safer.”

Insider LaBrea addressed the long-term consequences of removing one gang and creating a gap that another gang can fill. The gang injunction was a deterrent for one gang but opened a gap in the neighborhood for rivals and foes to fill: “There was a sweep. Because everybody's gone, it made it easier for them [rivals] to come and shoot people. So, the gang injunction [is] *taking the protection away* from the blocks in the community.”

The Insiders claim that older gang members and associates had a more organized influence on a community before injunctions by instilling in them a particular philosophy, such as the protection of citizens, as was previously asserted, based on a strong sense of community ties. Due to the injunction's removal of gang leadership or “elders,” the displaced leaders could not pass on the gang's cultural code of community ties to newer gang members. This divide had the effect of reorganizing gang culture and destroying the security gangs provided to the neighborhood. Insiders claim that community security was dismantled because younger gang members viewed the world differently than the gang's more experienced members. When gang leaders were ousted, the new gang members who took over had fewer connections with locals and hence fewer ties to the community, which led to a fresh wave of terror among locals.

The disruption of the gang family is the final type of social disturbance brought on by CGIs. Gang members become as cherished as family, whether biologically related or by social ties. The unintended result of the CGI mandate against gathering is that it may increase the temptation to do so. CGIs are intended to disrupt the family structure of one or more individual gang members and to disorganize gang structure from within by attempting to prevent gang members from congregating. According to the Insiders, however, CGIs are *unsuccessful* at preventing gang members from gathering and *will always be unsuccessful* because gang members who see the gang as their family never honor this portion of the injunction and will

never honor this portion. Because of their close social ties to their gang family, gang members disregard gang injunctions against congregating. Because enjoined gang members often have nowhere else to go, the need to stay with their families precedes the necessity to obey the law. In the statement, Insider LaBrea encapsulated this view by recounting and detailing the disobedience of one man who had been served with an injunction: “Screw it. I gonna go see my family. I don’t care if the police or anybody else does not like that.”

As the North Side Redondo (NSR) and Rancho San Pedro (RSP) gangs revealed, gang membership may span generations, not just when a father and his son are involved. Thus, they would never be out of the gang is a vital aspect for many gang members. The data from the current study suggests that contrary to the social disorganization theory, the injunction mandate against congregating boomerangs. This typically strengthens gang members' ties and determination to assemble rather than successfully disrupting the social organization of a gang from within. This concept of rejecting the fundamental principle of gang injunctions by the social disorganization theory was another example of downplaying the reality of gang activity.

Empirical Literature

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology aimed to determine whether CGIs were generally effective from the viewpoint of the exposed community members. In the latter half of the 20th century, Los Angeles frequently employed CGIs as an anti-gang strategy (Ridgeway et al., 2019). CGIs are civil restraining orders issued by a court to monitor alleged gang members' daily activities to reduce crime and eliminate public nuisances in gang-infested areas (Swan & Bates, 2017). The idea behind gang injunctions is that by placing limitations on gang members in particular locations, crimes will not be committed by them. Gang injunctions may lessen crime by serving as a specific disincentive to certain gang members (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Nagin,

2013). Who should be covered by gang injunctions and the actions that should be made illegal have been the main topics of legal discussion in California.

The current study had two objectives. The first objective was to determine whether CGIs work as intended by looking at their advantages and disadvantages from the perspectives of those who live in CG” safety zones, or “civilians,” as gang members call them. The second objective was to use those conclusions to start discussions among decision-makers and stakeholders about ways to enhance CGIs. The current study fills a vacuum in the literature by giving inhabitants of gang-infested neighborhoods a voice to show how locals equate CGIs with a safer and more secure community to advance this conversation.

Study Objective #1

Using injunctions against gangs as a form of targeted deterrence may be effective. According to several academics, research on problem-oriented policing shows that it is most beneficial for police to concentrate their efforts on the people, places, and situations that lead to the problem (Hinkle et al., 2020). Therefore, tailored deterrent strategies focus on offenders who cause problems in particular places. Historically, Boston, Massachusetts, has had some success combating gun violence by employing focused deterrence strategies (Kennedy, 2019). It is yet to be seen whether CGIs are successful in the eyes of the local populace.

Criminal justice organizations have suggested strategies to curb gang violence, including CGIs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012) produced the Comprehensive Gang Model, which identified effective gang response strategies based on more than 20 years of gang research. The community's involvement in initiatives that unite social service and law enforcement organizations helps the intervention process. Education, training, job, and social assistance programs are all included in this paradigm. Community groups, agencies, and

organizations—including the police—approach gang members and their families to help them access essential services.

Although researchers have discovered that suppression strategies are most frequently utilized to restrict gang activities, they are ineffective on their own (Kinnear, 2009; Klein, 1996). It is significant to highlight that CGIs are a standard method of gang suppression used to curb gang violence, and the applicable laws are applied uniformly to all people and locations (Ridgeway et al., 2019). CGIs are a tool of repression used to stop behavior that encourages gang violence and intimidates community members (Bichler et al., 2020). When used alone, this suppression strategy fails to restore broken societies. Collaboration with social programs, with input from interested parties who understand their needs and perceptions regarding how and where suppression methods are used, is the cornerstone of this strategy.

Suppressive responses to gang violence have frequently worsened the situation, as opposed to improving neighborhood circumstances, suggesting that responses unrelated to deteriorating community conditions may be causally related to gang growth, spread, and development (Klein, 1996; Spergel, 1995). Asserting that concentrating on a particular pattern of concerns in a specific area does not provide a general solution to the community-level conditions that give rise to gangs, Klein (1996) questioned the efficacy of utilizing problem-oriented treatments to address street gang issues. According to Klein, problem-oriented interventions were a limited, enforcement-driven version of crime prevention, with decisions made by law enforcement officials, as opposed to an intense form of community policing wherein the community and the police jointly make resources and assignment choices.

CGIs are targeted deterrent strategies designed to stop gang conflict and neighborhood intimidation while limiting gang violence. The community's contribution to suppression tactics is

crucial (Swan & Bates, 2017). Under suppression tactics, local people and community organizations are frequently reduced to serving as informants. In contrast, locals often refuse requests from law police to provide information on the whereabouts of gang members. The residents of a disturbing neighborhood generally believe that law-abiding citizens' safety and security worries are not increased by cooperating with the police. In organized crime, those who assist the police are frequently referred to as rats or narcs. Criminal justice professionals actively counter the stop-snitching legend in Los Angeles County (Police Executive Research Forum, 2009).

Because the criminal justice system moves slowly in many neighborhoods, residents and law enforcement deeply mistrust one another. In Los Angeles, it may take months or years to prosecute a gang member for a serious criminal offense (Lewis, 2021). Some residents are prompted to take matters into their own hands because of the notion that local authorities are not doing enough to keep dangerous gang members off the streets due to the speed of the criminal justice system. Contrarily, criminal justice system delays allow gang members to defend themselves by verbally or physically abusing crucial witnesses. The setting is ideal for the anti-snitching message because of these circumstances. The residents are disincentivized to fight if the police cannot protect people and the gangs can get revenge.

CGIs were created without considering the relevant data. For instance, many of the earliest CGIs were made without theoretical justifications or theoretically grounded research. Although it is essential to provide theoretical explanations of gang behavior in legal discussions regarding the use of gang injunctions, they have mostly been disregarded (Allan, 2002). The application of gang injunction case law during this time was also ignored. The inability of law enforcement agencies to work around the constitutional restrictions on criminal law has grown

due to the lack of empirical investigations and the exclusion of case law involving gang injunctions. Researchers took time to incorporate social science theory and research to investigate the constitutional difficulties created by injunctions. A gang injunction caused the contentious nonassociation clause to become a standard in CGIs in 1992 (Burnett, 2019). A clause in the motion filed against the Burbank, California-based Barrio Elmwood Rifa Gang forbids gang members from appearing publicly with any other defendant when a safety zone is in effect. The Barrio Elmwood Rifa Gang injunction was the first to use a nonassociation clause prohibiting any gang member in the safety zone from congregating or being seen with any other gang associate in public (Finn & Hylton, 1994). The nonassociation provision of CGIs typically deepens gang members' commitment and ties (Allan, 2002). Therefore, stakeholders must be aware of this if they want to increase community members' safety sentiments. Another illustration of how the reality of gang criminality is disregarded is this philosophy's rejection of this fundamental principle. A CGI prevents interactions between individuals whose associations resulted in crime. More people exist than there are laws.

The results of Swan and Bates (2017) and Hennigan and Sloane (2013b) were pertinent to the current investigation. Hennigan and Sloane (2013b) looked into gang identification, the impact of gang injunctions on gang unity, and youths' perceptions of the risk of being caught and punished for engaging in unlawful behavior. They found that compared to gang-involved kids in neighborhoods without injunctions, youth in CGI areas displayed a weaker social label and reported poorer street cohesion among gang members. Swan and Bates (2017) spoke with participants in the San Diego County CGIs about their opinions on gang containment techniques, particularly the underlying harms these practices cause to impacted people. First, they learned that respondents thought measures to curb gang activity hindered their capacity to integrate

successfully into society. Second, injunctions restricted gang members from maintaining conventional family ties in safe areas. The participants in the Swan and Bates (2017) study also mentioned that police frequently harassed them and kept them under close observation, preventing them from forming relationships with nongang members.

Study Objective #2

The second objective was to use those conclusions to start discussions among decision-makers and stakeholders about ways to enhance CGIs. The current study filled a vacuum in the literature by giving inhabitants of gang-infested neighborhoods a voice to show how locals equate CGIs with a safer and more secure community to advance this conversation. Although CGIs aim to curb gang activity in specific troubled neighborhoods, which enables police to claim that CGIs are successful, little is known about how community people view the impact of injunctions on troubled areas. Through this study, the researchers intended to contribute to the empirical body of work on how communities with CGIs characterize their experiences there. The usefulness of CGIs in reducing gang violence has been the subject of empirical research. Only a few scholars have examined the perspectives of community members, although doing so was crucial to this field of study.

Social scientists have historically paid little attention to CGI research. Few people questioned the impact and efficacy of CGIs during the CGI research, which was performed mainly in legal assessments to determine whether CGIs were constitutional (Grogger, 2002; Ridgeway et al., 2019). When researchers first started studying CGIs, they mainly focused on how successful and legitimate they were, giving little thought to the context-specific features of CGIs. There has been little research on using CGIs to implement social control mechanisms that prevent urban areas from developing (Barajas, 2007; Wang, 2007). There have been few

thorough studies to support the claims made by politicians and law enforcement regarding the effectiveness of gang injunctions in curbing gang activity.

Synthesis of Study Findings

The following question led to the current study: Do local citizens believe that using civil gang injunctions results in safer and more secure neighborhoods? The application of the social disorganization theory was confirmed and disconfirmed, and the answer to this question was both yes and no. According to the initial theoretical framework that informed this study, gang control within a community significantly predicted social dysfunction (Gagnon, 2018; Sampson, 1993; Thrasher, 1927). According to the theory, gang activity causes social disorder in areas that cannot regulate it. By implication, the perspective on community social disorganization indicated that by dismantling gangs, injunctions should theoretically enhance patterns in community processes, like reestablishing strong neighborhood ties and reducing community disorder. When civil gang injunctions turned into the community's exclusive social norm, however, they could not advance social processes to address illegal activity and gang violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a). Without providing additional alleviation for negative personal behaviors and socioeconomic constraints, the primary goal of CGIs to reduce gang activity may not be accomplished. The evidence presented in the following sections supports and refutes the theory that injunctions enhance patterns in social processes.

In the current study, the participants from Outsiders claimed that CGIs foster safer and more secure societies. Outsiders believed that injunctions helped community processes by making neighborhoods feel safe and secure when viewed through their community lens as homeowners. Their viewpoints supported the theory that injunctions enhance community dynamics by dismantling gangs. The CGIs, on the other hand, allegedly undermine gang culture, making communities less safe and secure, according to Insider participants. From the gang's

point of view, Insiders firmly believed that injunctions interfered with civic activities. Their opinions refuted the theoretical hypothesis that gang removal through injunctions improves the collaborative processes. This study offered compelling evidence that gang-controlled communities created organized cultural aspects disturbed when CGIs eliminated gangs. The data in this part provides two new applications of the notion of social disorder to study gang culture and CGIs.

Disorganizing the social structure amongst gangs is one example of how the social disorganization theory is applied. Both the gang's relationships with the community, as well as the established social structure amongst competing gangs, were disrupted by this external interference. When one gang is eliminated through CGI, a void is left for another competitor group to fill, causing disorganization amongst rival gangs to form as a result of partial or complete shifting of the social norms of gangs concerning one another. According to the Insiders of this study, both events exacerbated social disorder rather than diminished it in the neighborhoods they impacted. The heightened social chaos typically showed greater violence and gang-like mayhem.

Disorganizing the social structure within the gang is the other application of the social disorganization theory. The Insiders asserted that older gang members and associates had a relatively organized influence on a community before injunctions by instilling in its members a particular philosophy, such as the protection of residents, as was previously argued, based on a deep sense of community connection. According to the theory, specific gangs functioned as hierarchical organizations, with a shot caller or one or more leaders in charge of passing the gang's culture of community involvement to the younger gang members. The injunction effectively or figuratively removed the gang's leadership or "elders," preventing the relocated

leaders from passing the gang's cultural code of community ties to newer gang members. This divide had the effect of reorganizing gang culture and destroying the security gangs provided to the neighborhood. Participants said the CGIs disrupt gang culture, leaving communities less safe and secure.

In the current study, participants also expressed their concerns about the fairness of CGIs, especially the clause stating that a gang injunction is permanent once it is documented. Due to the indefinite nature of CGIs, enjoined parties never age out of the injunction. Enjoined as young teenagers, individuals carry this criminal identity for the rest of their lives unless the law changes. Legislators have lately created a method to remove enjoined persons from an injunction due to concerns against the endless nature of CGIs; however, it is so expensive and complicated that few enjoined persons have used it. The lack of CGI expiration was perceived as overly harsh from Insider and Outsider participants' points of view. Different participants disagreed with the unlimited timeframe of CGIs for various reasons. One argument against CGI's indefinite timeframe was based on life's transience and long-term effects that could not be foreseen. Although CGIs' goals were noble, according to Outsider Greene, "The issue was that with anything, you never know what the downstream ramifications are."

Another objection to a CGI's infinite lifespan was that some individuals grow out of gang mentality. Outsider Greene claimed that the uncertain status is excessively harsh, considering gang members who made poor decisions when they were minors: "I think people change. You can't put a permanent tattoo on him, saying, well, that's the way you are and nothing changes. That's [indefiniteness of CGIs] that does not seem fair to me. I would not agree with that."

The inability of an enjoined person to acquire a legitimate vocation was the third argument against CGI's infinite term. CGIs, according to Outsider Casey, bind the enjoined

person for life. She reasoned that if there were a database that employers could check to determine whether a job applicant had ever been involved with a gang, they could use that information to reject that person. Uncomfortably pointing out that there are alternatives to unemployment, Greene said, “You're denying them the ability to do legal work. If they're not going to work, they're gonna do criminal activity.” Casey cited research in the field of employment services that demonstrated such. Supporters of CalGang said that because CalGang only refers to source materials and is not used by employers to determine eligibility or suitability for military service, the information identifying a person as a member of a California gang had no impact on that person's social status. According to a required audit, three California police agencies searched the CalGang data for employment or military-related screening (CalGang Criminal Intelligence System, 2016).

Participants in the current study expressed concerns similar to constitutional problems brought up by required state audits of the CalGang system. The audit's conclusions included the admission that CalGang's inability to guarantee the data provided by police agencies were accurate and appropriate limited its effectiveness as a tool for preventing gang-related violence. Furthermore, the mandated audits discovered that inaccurate information in the CalGang record system violated the privacy rights of those whose data is contained there.

Conclusions

Through this qualitative study with a hermeneutic phenomenological design, the researcher sought to ascertain the general effectiveness of CGIs or injunctions in the eyes of exposed community members. Two objectives drove the investigation. One goal was to determine whether CGIs promoted safe and functional communities as envisaged. The second objective was to use those conclusions to start discussions among decision-makers and

stakeholders about ways to enhance CGIs. The social disorganization hypothesis served as the study's theoretical foundation.

The framework for the current investigation, which included the perspectives of those most touched by a CGI to guide future laws and policing techniques and add to this body of work, was established by examining past studies on the effectiveness of gang injunctions. Throughout the 20th century, experts, decision-makers, and stakeholders have disagreed on what constitutes a gang (Esbensen et al., 2001). An ongoing area for improvement in past studies was the challenge of positively identifying what constitutes gang characteristics. These terminological discrepancies impact the development and invention of suppression techniques.

Most analysts concur that gang activity surged in the 1980s and 1990s and has substantially impacted community safety and security in American communities throughout the 21st century (Ridgeway et al., 2019). As a result, civil gang injunctions, a novel strategy for preventing gang violence, were required. Historically, social scientists have not given much thought to CGI research. During the CGI study, primarily conducted in legal assessments to determine whether CGIs were constitutional, few people questioned the impact and efficacy of CGIs (Grogger, 2002; Ridgeway et al., 2019).

In the latter decades of the 21st century, gang violence in troubled communities in Los Angeles County was significantly reduced, according to a small body of researchers concluding that CGIs were a key factor (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Nagin, 2013). Many people believed that gang injunctions were an effective form of focused deterrence. Concentrating police attention on the people, places, and circumstances that cause the problem is the most successful course of action, according to studies on problem-oriented policing (Hinkle et al., 2020). Los Angeles police departments and prosecutors experimented with various gang suppression strategies,

including during the endemic violent crime rates of the 1990s. In previous studies on gang injunctions, lawmakers and stakeholders did not pursue the views of gang members, their families, and locals (Swan & Bates, 2017).

The original research on CGIs gathered data on how gang injunctions affect crime, almost exclusively focusing on how CGIs affect crime in designated safety zones (Bloch, 2020; Grogger, 2002). Previous scholars have also indicated the importance of community involvement for CGI's success (Swan & Bates, 2017); nonetheless, locals routinely rebuffed inquiries from law enforcement for information on the whereabouts of the gang members. Working with the police to implement CGI, according to residents of a troubled neighborhood, creates concerns about the safety and security of law-abiding citizens and has a detrimental impact on how the neighborhood's residents view their safety. Residents were generally not allowed to participate in decision-making or CGI implementation. The community did not support law enforcement well, which raised several concerns for their safety and security.

Most gang injunction research looked at reported offenses to gauge the effectiveness of CGIs (Swan & Bates, 2017). The body of social science research gradually grew to incorporate qualitative analyses of gang members, law enforcement, and justice officials' views; however, the inclusion of family members, neighbors, and other interested or impacted parties as CGI research participants was minimal, if any. Prior studies have indicated markers of a high level of living or how sentiments among young people varied depending on whether they lived in injunction zones (Hennigan & Sloane, 2013b; Maxson et al., 2005).

Previous researchers also concluded that CGIs were only made with some relevant information in mind. The creation of many of the earlier CGIs frequently lacked theoretical explanations or theoretically supported research (Allan, 2002). After examining an expansion of

theoretical frameworks, the legal development, and the chronological progression of CGIS evolution of this anti-gang technique, CGIs went through several growing pains. In court cases and scholarly studies, the utility of CGI and its consequences on the community were constantly contested. Despite conflicting findings from studies, legislators continued to use them. The people living in enjoined communities, who are most affected by CGIs, are typically only consulted once politicians and legal authorities have made their decisions. Additional research is required to determine whether individuals believe that CGIs increase their safety, security, and quality of life.

Based on comments that seemed to discount, disregard, or overlook criminal behavior that terrified or endangered them, the overarching theme of the current study was the Apparent Dismissal of Gang Criminality. Both small and significant evidence supported this dismissal motif. Dismissal's critical themes of Insiders and Outsiders served as its axis. Outsiders' viewpoints were based on a remote understanding of the inner workings of gangs. They depicted the effects of CGIs through their perceptions of changes in their areas. On the other hand, Insiders' opinions were founded on intimate familiarity with gang culture and portrayed the effects of CGIs through the lens of their direct impact on gangs. Shared perspectives, the supporting topic, highlighted aspects of CGIs that participants viewed from the same perspective.

The following question led to this study: Do local citizens believe that using civil gang injunctions results in safer and more secure neighborhoods? The application of the social disorganization theory was confirmed and disconfirmed, and the answer to the central research question was both yes and no. Participants from outside groups claimed that CGIs foster safer and more secure societies. The CGIs, on the other hand, allegedly undermine gang culture, making communities less safe and secure, according to Insider participants. Narrative evidence

supported and refuted the theoretical notion that injunctions improve collaborative processes. Safer neighborhoods served as confirmation. Disconfirming gangs involved internal and external disruption (i.e., disturbing gang relationships with the community and other gangs, as well as disrupting gang culture and family ties). Both Insiders and Outsiders agreed that CGIs should have a finite time limit since people can change, and those placed on permanent CGIs and turned down for suitable jobs will turn to crime.

Reflection on the Dissertation Process

According to Partman (2021), the dissertation process is full of ups and downs. The current researcher examined all the aspects of the needed academic labor to consider, draw upon, and spark this discussion of a reflection of the dissertation process. Although the coursework for the doctoral degree served as a strong foundation for the voyage, the dissertation phase began as a leap of faith. Before starting the present study, the researcher frequently felt like the effort was shooting in the dark. Reaching a successful outcome would be fortunate with his initial time management skillset and comprehension of the research procedure. The dissertation process increased the researcher's skills in secondary and primary research.

Obtaining Secondary Research Proficiency

Although the researcher had a basic understand of secondary research techniques, those techniques considerably improved after starting the current investigation. The study technique, secondary research, made use of previously published literature. In Chapter Two of this study, existing data was compiled and structured to improve the overall efficacy of the ongoing research endeavor. The secondary research included in this study comprised publications that provided a theoretical underpinning for CGIs, such as books, journal articles, and online news sources. That supported this qualitative investigation. Lastly, the need for the current study on the effectiveness of gang injunctions became most understood with the increased competency of

secondary skills. The increase in examination aptitudes also laid the foundation for studying the opinions of those impacted by CGIs. Because the dissertation process gave the researcher the skills required to recognize the flaws associated with secondary data and provide input for improving the contents of materials, the critical mindset the researcher acquired in analyzing secondary data will prove to be highly beneficial in subsequent endeavors.

Obtaining Primary Research Proficiency

While conducting this study, the researcher's primary research skills were enhanced. It was his first-time experience working on a qualitative investigation that required individualized primary data collecting and interpretation. One-on-one, semistructured interviews were the primary source of information for this study. The participants, through these interviews, provided the researcher with a superior understanding of the participants' lived experiences in this investigation with definitive proof of how CGIs affect the safety of the affected residents. During the research design process of this dissertation, the researcher examined the benefits and drawbacks of other primary data collection techniques. The survey of existing primary data methods collected included focus groups, questionnaires, and surveys. The researcher gained in-depth knowledge about these techniques, even though the preliminary data were only obtained using interviews as the primary data collection method.

The involvement primarily influenced the researcher's growth as a scholar in collecting and analyzing primary data. It is also essential to highlight the dissertation supervisor's and chairperson's valuable contributions. They provided insightful and helpful advice on overcoming problems that cropped up throughout this qualitative research project, mainly when dealing with methodology-related challenges.

Implications

In two communities in Los Angeles, California, the researcher of this hermeneutic phenomenological study examined the lived educational experiences of people who reside in a safety zone created by CGIs. The study provided insight into the opinions and experiences of individuals most directly influenced by CGIs regarding their safety. The theoretical, empirical, and practical consequences of the study are examined in this section. These findings lead to specific recommendations for legislators, judges, community leaders, and law enforcement.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical basis for understanding this occurrence was the social disorganization theory, as interpreted by Shaw and McKay (1972), which provided the theoretical lens through which this phenomenon might be seen. According to the social disorganization theory, CGIs should enhance community processes (such as informal social control, disorder, and neighborhood relationships). According to the initial theoretical framework that informed this study, gang control within a community significantly predicted social dysfunction (Gagnon, 2018; Sampson, 1993; Thrasher, 1927). According to this theory, gang activity causes social disorder in areas that cannot regulate it. By implication, the perspective on community social disorganization indicated that by dismantling gangs, injunctions should theoretically enhance patterns in community processes, like reestablishing strong neighborhood ties and reducing community disorder. Narrative evidence supported and refuted the theoretical notion that injunctions improve patterns in collaborative processes. Safer neighborhoods served as confirmation. CGIs disrupted gang relations with the community and its residents because the gangs believed they played vital, possibly even heroic, roles by protecting the community. This finding also contradicted social disorganization theory, according to many study participants.

Practical Implications

The theoretical claim that injunctions improve patterns in community processes was supported and refuted by the evidence in the current study. Dismissal's two major themes, Insiders and Outsiders, served as its axis. The participants naturally split into these two groups due to variances in worldview and inequalities in their seeming intimacy of knowledge about gang culture. Outsiders' viewpoints were based on a remote understanding of the inner workings of gangs and depicted the effects of CGIs through the lens of their perceptions of changes in their areas. On the other hand, Insiders' opinions were founded on intimate familiarity with gang culture and portrayed the effects of CGIs through the lens of their direct impact on gangs. Three traits could distinguish Insiders and Outsiders.

Future Implications

The theme of the participants was first determined by a person's impressions of the fundamental contrasts in viewpoint between the participants in their apparent closeness to an understanding of gang culture. As Outsiders, their perspectives depicted CGIs from the views of individuals who observed resulting changes in the neighborhood where they resided and were employed without having direct contact with gang members. Their perspectives, as Insiders, depicted CGIs from the viewpoint of individuals who saw the resulting changes in the gangs themselves. The perspectives of the two groups were compared, yielding startling—but opposing—insights into the effects of CGIs.

Second, the section summarizing Participants' Familiarity with Criminal Gang Injunctions describes the participants' acquaintance with CGIs. Outsider participants who weren't familiar with CGIs were placed together. On the other extreme of the spectrum, the Insider participants were the most vocal and contemptuous of CGIs.

Third, the participants' *Descriptions of their Neighborhood before CGI* enjoiment helped to designate Insider participants from Outside participants by quoting their descriptions and paraphrasing their stories about the quality of their neighborhoods. At the same time, violent street gangs were active in Los Angeles, CA. The current study also developed the themes from the perspectives of individuals who saw the gangs' changes without directly engaging with them and views portrayed in computer-generated images from individuals who saw the gangs' developments.

Strengths and Weaknesses

One weakness of the current study was that the research site for this study was geographically limited to two Los Angeles counties. Even though there are advantages to using Los Angeles County as it was deemed to be the Gang Capital of America (Queally, 2020), the demographics of Redondo Beach and San Pedro featured almost exclusive Latino gangs. By concentrating on only two Los Angeles County cities, this selection may have limited the overall generalizability of the findings.

A second weakness in the current study concerns population selection. Residents of CGI-made safety zones freely took part in this study. They were chosen because they lived in areas that had been severely affected by gang violence—and, later, suppression tactics used by local police enforcement. The population selection did not consider education, financial stability, or other social-economic factors that also may impact the generalizability of this study.

In contrast to the current study's design strength of the current research shown in the information obtained from a diverse responder pool of residents who had experienced the same phenomenon, confirming snowball sampling was appropriate for the research design. The current study used snowball sampling, a well-liked technique for locating and choosing subjects with lots of data (Palinkas et al., 2015). The participants in the current study were also forthcoming

and generally conversational, as evidenced by the evidentiary excerpts given as evidence of themes, even though their fluid descriptions alternated between detached and unrestrained language. Throughout the conversation, a few participants sought to deepen their grasp of CGIs by asking clarifying questions. Participants' openness and enthusiasm for the subject matter were apparent, making their shared information impactful in answering the research question.

The current study's revelation of the social disorganization theory's applications in gang culture and CGIs is another strength. This study proved that when CGIs eradicated gangs, CGIs disrupted structured cultural characteristics in gang-controlled neighborhoods. One example of how the social disorganization theory is used is to disrupt the social structure among gangs. This outside involvement destroyed the gang's relationships with the neighborhood and the established hierarchy among rival groups. The other use of the social disorganization theory is to disrupt the social structure within the gang. The hypothesis contends that gangs operated as hierarchical organizations, with a shot caller or one or more leaders in charge of disseminating the gang's culture of civic engagement to the younger gang members. The injunction prevented the relocated leaders from passing along the gang's cultural code of community links to newer gang members, effectively or figuratively removing the gang's leadership or "elders." This division had the effect of restructuring gang culture and dismantling the neighborhood protection that gangs offered. It was undermining gang culture and reducing the safety and security of areas.

Specific Recommendations for Stakeholders

This study proved that enforcement disrupted structured cultural characteristics in gang-controlled neighborhoods when CGIs eradicated gangs. The current research presented two novel methods to investigate gang culture and CGIs using the concept of social disorder. One example of how the social disorganization theory is used is to disrupt the social structure among gangs.

The established social system between rival gangs and the gang's links with the community were both harmed by outside meddling. Insiders claim that the community's and its people's gang contacts were first disorderly, which resulted in more chaos than order. When a rival gang is eliminated using CGIs, a hole is left for another to fill, which causes the social norms of the rival gangs to partially or entirely alter, resulting in disorder. According to the current study, numerous gang members consider their gang their family. The community frequently views gang members as relatives and even real family. Gang members, whether linked biologically or by social ties, come to be treasured as family.

The participants formed a natural division into two groups, directly based on fundamental differences in outlook and indirectly based on differences in their apparent intimacy of knowledge about gang culture. Some of the participant's perspectives portrayed CGIs from the views of people who witnessed resultant changes in the community in which they lived and worked without interacting with gangs directly. In contrast, the other participant's perspectives portrayed CGIs from the view of people who witnessed resultant changes in the gangs. Comparing the two groups' perspectives provided striking but juxtaposed insights into the impact of CGIs. Stakeholders must consider how varying levels of familiarity with CGIs affect community members' perceptions of their level of safety. The participants contributed a wealth of CGI experience to this study, as seen by their comments regarding life before injunctions. Additionally, their accounts did not doubt the necessity of broad legal remedies to contain or eliminate gang activity. As the current study demonstrated, there was no universal agreement among the participants that CGIs were the solution.

The initial theoretical perspective relevant to this study was that the community's ability, or rather inability, to control gangs was a crucial predictor of social disorder (Gagnon, 2018;

Sampson, 1993; Thrasher, 1927). The idea was that communities that could not control gang activity suffered from the social disorganization that gang activity spawns. By inference, the community social disorganization perspective suggested that injunctions should theoretically *improve* patterns in community processes, such as recovering positive neighborhood relationships and minimizing community disorder, by removing gangs. When civil gang injunctions became the social norm in a community alone, however, they were not able to have social processes to progress to solve illicit activities and gang violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; Hennigan & Sloane, 2013a). The principal objective of CGIs to prevent gang activity may not be achievable without affording further relief for harmful personal behaviors and socioeconomic limitations.

The CGI prohibition against gathering may increase the incentive to do so, which is an unexpected consequence. The requirement of a court order prohibiting the association of gang members boomerangs. The nonassociation clause of CGIs generally strengthens the bonds and commitment of gang members. Therefore, if stakeholders wish to raise community members' feelings of safety, they must be aware of this. This philosophy's rejection of this basic tenet was another example of how the reality of gang criminality is discounted. A CGI inhibits relationships between people whose associations led to crime. There are more individuals than there are laws.

Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations and conclusions of this study can serve as a starting point for future research. Although adaptability to different people and places is not a key goal of qualitative research, proper sampling, and the disclosure of the specifics of the research methodology may increase the transferability of this study to other locations where CGIs were deployed. Because participant demographics may differ across areas, the first recommendation is to replicate this

study with participants from other California cities and American cities where CGIs are mandated. For instance, this study specifically included the county of Los Angeles, where gang culture has permeated numerous communities for many years. Latino gang members are also prevalent in several Los Angeles gangs that are affected by gang injunctions (Queally, 2020). Nearly all the San Pedro Gang members and the North Redondo Beach gang are Latino. Future studies should concentrate on a population affected by gangs that did not only consist of Latino members.

Second, future research can build on the current study by including both enjoined and current gang members to understand how CGIs impact their safety. The current research did not use the demographic of gang association. The only delimitation in the present study is that the participants lived within a safety zone created by a CGI. Future research could include gang associates as participants to determine what impact CGIs have on their safety.

Third, future researchers can determine the influence CGIs have on the perspectives of individuals by a specific gender. The current study used snowball sampling, and the participants' categories were selected solely by identifying the study subjects as gang “Insiders” or “Outsiders.” Therefore, future researchers could analyze which specific characteristics based on the gender of the participant influence the likelihood of a participant feeling safe as impacted by CGIs.

Fourth, the existing literature on the history of gang injunctions in Southern California almost permanently enjoined gang members of Latino and African American descent. The researcher learned of three other violent gangs exclusively with Caucasian members that were not selected for injunctions. Three such gangs are Public Enemy #1, Nazi Lowriders, and the Aryan Lowriders. These gang associates operated in Los Angeles County (Long Beach) and

Orange County and managed extensive criminal activity that commonly recruited white suburban adolescents and involved in methamphetamine trafficking, prostitution, and identity theft. Significant law enforcement emphasis has been placed on combating these three gangs. The secondary literature, however, determined no efforts to establish injunctions on these gangs associated with injunctions during a literature review. Future researchers use existing literature to compare the enjoined Latino or African American gangs with these three gangs to determine what factors played in the decisions to employ or not employ CGIs to quell gang activities.

. The fifth suggestion is to investigate how different self-identified gang members perceive their level of safety now that a CGI has been implemented in their neighborhood. According to earlier studies, social control mechanisms implemented by CGIs prevent urban areas from thriving (Barajas, 2007; *Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles*, 2011; Swan & Bates, 2017; Wang, 2007). The nonassociation clause as a mainstay in CGIs and the current studies understanding that for most gang members, the gang *is* family. Understanding these factors' effects on gang members' perceptions of their safety about CGIs would enhance the comprehension of this phenomenon. Because the patterns of association of members of enjoined gangs are starting to resemble those of nonenjoined gang members, the overall impact of a CGI appears to either decrease over time or disseminate to nearby rivals. The exact duration of this phenomenon remains to be discovered.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 13, 2022

Marc Collazo
Sean Grier

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-945 Civil Gang Injunction (CGI)Effects: The Perceptions of Residents and Neighbors of their safety.

Dear Marc Collazo, Sean Grier,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46.104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: RECURITMENT FLYER

Research Participants Needed

Civil Gang Injunctions Effects: The Perceptions of Residents and Neighbors of their safety

- 1. Are you between 18 and 75 years old?**
- 2. Do you reside in, or do you frequent public spaces of San Pedro or Redondo Beach, CA?**

If you answered **yes** to both questions, you may be eligible to participate in this research study. The purpose of this research study is to understand the perspectives and experiences of people directly influenced by civil gang injunctions (CGIs). Participants will be asked to participate in a recorded, one-on-one interview that will take approximately 30 minutes. Consent information will be provided.

Please contact the researcher identified below to discuss a date, time, and location of the research study.

Marc M. Collazo, a doctoral candidate in the Helms School of Government at Liberty University, is conducting this study. **Please contact Marc Collazo at [REDACTED] for more information.**

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: Civil Gang Injunction (CGI) Effects: The Perceptions of Residents and Neighbors of Their Safety

Principal Investigator: Marc M. Collazo Ph.D. Candidate, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be between the ages of 18 and 65 and either reside in or frequent the public spaces of Burbank, CA or Redondo Beach, CA. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to determine how community residents associate the application of Civil Gang Injunctions (CGIs) with a safer community. CGIs are court-ordered civil restraining orders used to supervise the everyday activities of accused gang associates to minimize criminality and eradicate public nuisances in districts infused with gang activity.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in a one-on-one, semi-structured interview. The discussion will be recorded and take approximately 30 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

The benefits to society are an expansion in the knowledge and practices of gang injunctions by adding research that includes the perceptions of community members about CGIs' effect on personal safety.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and faculty committee will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Hard copy data will be stored in a locked desk. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and hard copy data will be shredded.

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- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty university. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Marc M. Collazo. You may ask any questions you have

If you have any questions, please contact the researcher at (318) 941-1548 or email at collazo@liberty.edu

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

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APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How do you feel about your safety in your daily interactions with others in your neighborhood and community?
2. What are your thoughts regarding gang activity in your community?
3. How would you describe the impact of gang membership and associated activities (crime and violence) on your community?
4. Do you know anyone who CGIs have impacted?
 - a. If so, was the participant a gang member or a nongang member?
5. Do you feel that CGIs fulfill their intended purpose of suppressing gang violence?
 - a. If so, can you describe how CGIs suppress gang violence?
6. Do you feel that CGIs are promoting safer communities?
 - a. If so, can you describe how CGIs have accomplished this purpose?
7. How do you feel about your safety in the day-to-day interactions that you have with others in your neighborhood and community?
8. What are your thoughts regarding gang activity in your community?
9. How would you describe the impact of gang membership and associated activities (crime and violence) on your community?
10. Do you know anyone who has been impacted by CGIs?
 - a. If so, was the individual a gang member or nongang member?
11. Do you feel that CGIs are fulfilling their intended purpose of suppressing gang violence?
 - a. If so, can you describe how CGIs suppress gang violence?
12. Do you feel that CGIs are promoting safer communities?
 - a. If so, can you describe how CGIs have accomplished this purpose?

APPENDIX E: INTRODUCTORY SCRIPT

Today we're going to talk about the impact of criminal gang injunctions on the perceived safety of yourself, your friends, and your family. Your perceptions are important for many reasons but two in particular. One important reason is to determine how CGIs impact people. Past studies have addressed the effectiveness of injunctions, that is, if they lessen gang violence. Nothing is known about how injunctions impact people. That is why your participation is so important. Thank you. I appreciate that you are taking the time to talk about it. The other important reason is to determine whether injunctions work. Do they make citizens feel safer?

The main goal of injunctions is to make people stop committing crime. Gang injunctions are legal mandates with legal ramifications. Injunctions are ordered by the court. They are civil restraining orders. They are somewhat like domestic violence restraining orders. They restrict certain people, specifically, associates of gang members in specific neighborhoods. You may have heard or seen that, in certain neighborhoods, people who are considered gang members aren't allowed to do certain things. Injunctions are used to supervise the everyday gang activities of accused gang members in safety zones. Safety zones prohibit gang members and their affiliates from engaging in select activities within a particular geographic area.

Gang members can be in a safety zone but not engage in nuisance or criminal conduct, the two behaviors that law enforcement uses injunctions to try and stop. Nuisance behaviors include vandalism, being drunk in public, associating with other gang members, and wearing gang colors. Criminal conduct includes narcotics possession and use, drug dealing, destroying public property, intimidating people, tagging, assault, threats, and possession and use of firearms. Each of these types of criminal conduct is illegal in California, as they should be, and individuals can be charged and arrested when it happens.

Gang injunctions also restrict or usually prohibit acts that you and I could do without a problem, like congregating, meeting in public places, driving together in a car, hanging out with members of gangs, and assembling in common areas of housing complexes. Those are the things that gang injunctions attempt to neutralize.

Finally, when I say "enjoined," I am saying that the "enjoined" individual, neighborhood, or gang is earmarked in a civil gang injunction. So, with that in mind, we kind of have a clear understanding of what an injunction is. For anonymity, I'm going to use the name [pseudonym] to identify you going forward. Do you have any questions before we begin?

APPENDIX F: CODE BOOK

Code	Description	Example
Descriptions of their Neighborhood before CGI Enjoinment	Introduces the participants by quoting their descriptions and paraphrasing their stories about the quality of their neighborhoods while the notorious NSR gang prevailed in Redondo Beach and gangs were active in Rancho San Pedro.	“We had a lot of gangs, a lot of noise from motorcycles late at night, people creating a lot of havoc. The worst feature of the neighborhood was gang violence. I saw a lot of gang members. The gangs were intimidating to other residents. They controlled the public spaces.”
Injunctions Make Neighborhoods Safer	Presents evidence that both confirms and disconfirms the theoretical idea that injunctions improve patterns in community processes.	“I think that the gang injunctions probably had an impact. I can't think of anything bad. I love this neighborhood. You know, the neighborhood changed. Since the injunctions, a lot of the rentals are being torn down, family homes are going up, and a lot of people are being priced out. Obviously, it's helped me that housing prices have gone up. What I do like too is the neighborhood has become very family oriented. There's just a lot more kids playing. This has become a safer neighborhood. That's made it more desirable.”
Injunctions Make Neighborhoods More Dangerous	Looking through the lens of the gang's perspective this perspective disconfirmed the theoretical framework that injunctions improve community processes by removing gangs	“If gang injunctions do have impact, they make the neighborhood less safe.”
Disorganizing Gangs from Without: Disrupting Relations with Residents.	Argues that a gang whose members inhabit a neighborhood becomes co-creators of its social culture, in many respects for worse but in some respects for	“[Gang] leaders would look out the neighborhood, [establishing] rules like do not harm civilians [residents], protect those in the neighborhood from

better, and that the gang's removal has the unforeseen consequences of disrupting their disruptions.

Outsiders, respect the community and the neighbors, you know, keeping neighbors safe. It's like the Robin Hood story. They robbed to rescue someone in the neighborhood, to give to the poor. They helped some of the older folks that lived in the community in the past, you know, so that those folks were with them. They were respectful too. They helped them. Their kids were safe. *A lot of folks felt safe.* They gonna look out for you, right?"

Disorganizing Gangs from Without: Disrupting Relationships across Rival Gangs.

Addressed the long-term consequences of removing one gang and creating a gap that can be filled by another gang

"It's not like they think, 'Oh, well, they give the homies the injunction. Let's go over here and mess with them.'" But she quickly conceded, "Of course, it happened once or twice. There was a sweep. Because everybody's gone, it made it easier for them [rivals] to come and shoot people. So, the gang injunction [is] *taking the protection away* from the blocks in the community."

Disorganizing Gangs from Within: Disrupting the Gang's Culture.

The literal or figurative removal of gang leadership or 'elders' by the injunction rendered displaced leaders unable to transmit the gang's cultural code of community connection to younger gang members. The result of this gap was to reconfigure gang culture and dismember the security that gangs rendered to the community.

"In my experience with East Los Angeles OG gangsters, when the leaders got locked up, the younger gang members took over with different leaders and a different way of dealing with things. They had a different mindset and different goals. What I experienced is that the old gangsters, the OGS, had morals, you know. This is our neighborhood. We protect the

CGIs are brands that last forever

Refers to evidence that participants thought the lack of CGI expiration was too harsh. Most of them disagreed with the indefinite timeframe of a CGI.

people inside. You know, don't do anything against people inside because it's *our* community. This is our territory. We have to take care of it. Before the injunction, the old gangsters made the community feel safer. But the new gangsters these days are like this in all of LA, even in San Pedro.”
“Injunctions are not too harsh for all residents because it works [however] Injunctions are too harsh [for enjoined individuals] because they are indefinite.”
