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Social Exclusion and Community Severance in Impoverished Neighborhoods

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Abstract

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MPA, Southeast Missouri State University, 2012

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Transportation infrastructure, such as highways and interstates, creates a barrier that can physically limit access to those living in adjacent neighborhoods, a phenomenon known as community severance. In addition to creating a physical disconnect, these infrastructures can leave residents feeling socially isolated and excluded from the rest of the community. This qualitative single-case study focused on social exclusion and community severance and problems arising from the U.S. transportation network, addressing the development of the interstate system and its possible impacts on communities. The exclusionary effects of transportation-related severance were well supported in the literature. However, most of research had been quantitative. Framed within the relative deprivation theory and the concept of social exclusion, the current study addressed the lives and perceptions of individuals living in an impoverished neighborhood who were at risk of social exclusion as a result of community severance. The analysis of focus group data from 26 participants revealed the effects of community severance within the context of a U.S. state highway infrastructure. Data analysis included coding and theming. The findings indicated a geographic separation caused by the state highway infrastructure perpetuated a perceived division by creating sides of the community. Findings may be used to improve the understanding of the risk of transportation-related community severance, which may inform future community development policy and transportation impact assessments.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation work to the many women in my life who have inspired me and encouraged me throughout my life and academic journey. To my mother, Enola Watters, who has been my constant source of support, my cheerleader, and my friend; to a special elementary teacher, Mrs. Kathy Bastin, who may never realize the full impact she had on me in my younger years; to my high school best friend, Leah Childs, who, regardless of the miles between us, will forever be my BFF; to my three beautiful daughters, Mariah, Brittany, and Ava, who are my constant reminder that life is more than just the sum of my years here on earth; to my former supervisor, Lisa Hadden, one of my earliest examples of strong women leadership and a true community advocate; and to one my best adult friends, Koreena Rutherford, whose ability to overcome adversity is a constant source of inspiration in my life. I also dedicate this work to all of the women who will come after me in their academic journey. Although it may be a long road, a lonely road, it will be worth it in the end.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Social exclusion and community severance have emerged as essential concepts in urban planning and social development. In the recent past, many countries have focused on the potential impacts of urban transportation on people's lives, livelihoods, health, and social relations. Scholars and policymakers have provided differing conceptions regarding the scope of community severance and social exclusions. Community severance can be associated with the negative impacts of major road networks and railways lines on people's access to goods and services, social networks, and other health issues (Anciaes et al., 2015). Community severance focuses on the barriers to people's mobility posed by the existing road networks and other transportation frameworks (Anciaes et al., 2016). Social exclusion exhibits similarities to community severance. Social exclusion entails the possible or actual alienation of certain groups in the community from accessing specific resources, human rights, or opportunities when compared to other groups in the community (Bancroft, 2012). Despite the numerous benefits, especially access to health, employment, and education, that are attributable to the transportation networks, there are examples throughout the United States of negative impacts on the people living near such infrastructure (Stanley et al., 2011).

The exclusionary effects of transportation-related severance has been well supported in the literature. However, much of the research has been quantitative. Framed within the relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966) and the concept of social exclusion (Delbosc & Currie, 2011a; Lucas, 2012; Preston, 2009), the current qualitative case study addressed the experiences that people living in low-income neighborhoods

have related to transportation infrastructure that geographically segments the neighborhood from the rest of the community. This study addressed a gap in the literature regarding the perceptions of low-income individuals at risk of social exclusion and experiencing community severance. Findings may be used to improve the understanding of the risk of transportation-related community severance, which may inform future community development policy and transportation impact assessments.

This study focused on social exclusion and community severance problems arising from the country's transportation network, addressing the development of the interstate system in the United States and the possible impacts of the interstate system on communities. This chapter includes background on the research topic, the problem statement and purpose of the research, research questions, the theoretical and conceptual framework guiding this study, definitions of important terms referenced throughout the study, and an overview of the scope of the study including assumptions and limitations. This chapter concludes with the significance of this research to public policy and a transition to Chapter 2, which presents existing literature on the topic.

Background

Mohl (2002) provided an extensive historical account of transportation policy in the 1950s and 1960s and the subsequent effect the placement of interstates and highways had on low-income housing and neighborhoods in the United States. Transportation infrastructure had been placed in low-income neighborhoods as part of efforts to clear out what was perceived as slum and blighted areas. These discriminatory practices, referred to as "negro removal," led to the displacement and division of predominately minority

and low-income communities (Sanchez et al., 2003). Multiple examples of this exist in

the United States. The development of I-75 in Hamtramck, Michigan removed hundreds

of African American families and isolated the Grand Haven-Dyar neighborhood from the

rest of the community (Sanchez et al., 2003). Sheridan Expressway, built in the early

1960s, divided New York's South Bronx neighborhood and created a barrier to basic

amenities (Muioi, 2017). New York's Southern State Parkway, a notably low-clearance

highway, is believed to have been built purposely low to restrict access by nearby low-

income communities to Long Island beach (Campanella, 2017). Baltimore's East-West

Expressway demolished dozens of Harlem Park homes in the 1960s and was followed by

increased poverty and high rates of vacant homes (Baltimore Heritage, Inc., n.d.). Despite

being met with community opposition, the Santa Monica Freeway in California dissected

the then affluent African-American community of Sugar Hill (Masters, 2018).

Cape Girardeau, Missouri is in the southeastern region of Missouri, approximately

90 miles south of St. Louis, along the Mississippi River. Population estimates are 39,100

people living in the city limits of Cape Girardeau with nearly 25% of the population

living below the federal poverty rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Stretching 9 miles,

Missouri Highway 74 runs east to west from Dutchtown, Missouri to the Illinois-

Missouri state line at the Mississippi River. The original stretch of Highway 74 was built

in the 1920s; however, the Highway was rerouted in the early 2000s to connect with the

newly constructed Bill Emerson Bridge opened in 2003 (Traylor Brothers, Inc., n.d.;

University of Missouri-Rolla & Missouri Department of Transportation, 2007). Missouri

Highway 74 runs east to west through the City of Cape Girardeau, dissecting the city

separating the southern part of the city from the whole. The dissected southern part of the city is widely referred to as the South Cape neighborhood. The South Cape neighborhood of Cape Girardeau, Missouri is the southern residential area of the city, with the Mississippi River to the east, Missouri Highway 74 to the north, Kings Highway to the west, and county land to the south. Census tract data indicated that the south Cape Girardeau neighborhood is an area of concentrated poverty nearly 3 times higher than the Cape Girardeau county poverty rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). In addition to the high poverty level of the southern Cape Girardeau neighborhood, it also experiences a lack of economic development activity. There is one gas station at the corner of Highway 74 and S. Sprigg, a north–south road that crosses the highway into the southern Cape Girardeau neighborhood; this is the sole business in the entire neighborhood. This neighborhood is another example of social exclusion and community severance and provided the context for the current case study. Individuals living in the southern Cape Girardeau neighborhood were interviewed to explore the perspectives of those who experience community severance and to fill a gap in the existing literature. Findings may be used to improve the understanding of the risk of transportation-related community severance in other neighborhoods.

Problem Statement

The development of an Interstate Highway System in the United States has contributed to a variety of negative impacts on the populations, including reduced human mobility; decreasing access to facilities, services, and social networks; and possible health problems (Biles et al., 2014; Delbosc & Currie, 2011a; Nall, 2015). The Interstate

Highway System was designed and developed in the 20th century and focused on promoting economic integration, improving trade, and creating employment (Brown et al., 2009). The system was intended to ease the movement of people, goods, and services between the states. However, it has also been attributed to a variety of problems associated with community severance and social exclusion (Delbosc & Currie, 2011b; Taket et al., 2009). Transportation-related infrastructure, such as highways and interstates, creates a barrier that can physically limit access to grocery stores, parks, and other essential services to those living in adjacent neighborhoods, a phenomenon known as community severance (Bjornstrom & Ralson, 2013). Transportation infrastructure, in addition to creating a physical disconnect, can leave residents feeling socially isolated and excluded from the rest of the community (Lucas, 2012). Most research on social exclusion has been limited to definitions and methods of quantifying its effects (Anciaes et al., 2015; Grisolia et al., 2014; Handy, 2003) rather than an understanding of the implications, particularly from the perspective of the people affected. The absence of the voices of those affected by social exclusion was a gap in the literature that the current study addressed.

Purpose of the Study

The division of neighborhoods because of a highway or interstate development is defined, in transportation terms, as community severance (Anciaes et al., 2015), an often-overlooked aspect in transportation planning. The purpose of the current qualitative case study was to understand the experiences and perceptions of individuals living in impoverished neighborhoods affected by community severance who are at risk for

experiencing social exclusion. Findings may contribute to the understanding of the overall impact that transportation-related infrastructure has on individuals living in poverty. Missouri Highway 74, adjacent to the southern Cape Girardeau neighborhood known as South Cape, provided the setting for this case study. Focus group interviews provided the data to explore the experiences of individuals living in the affected low-income neighborhood to fill a gap in the existing literature.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

Question 1: What is the lived experience of individuals impacted by community severance, specifically those living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74?

Subquestion 1: What emotions and thoughts do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 have about living in the neighborhood?

Subquestion 2: Based on their experience and perceptions, what do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 believe are the factors that result in social exclusion?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

I used relative deprivation as a theoretical framework (see Runciman, 1966). Relative deprivation occurs when groups perceive themselves as unfairly disadvantaged when comparing themselves to another group (Korpi, 1974). Research suggested that relative deprivation and well-being are linked; those experiencing relative deprivation are

less happy and less healthy (Chen, 2015). Relative deprivation and neighborhood disorder are also linked (Bossert et al., 2007; Elo et al., 2009; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). Additionally, I used social exclusion as a conceptual framework arguing that the concept of social exclusion is relative and can only exist in comparison of one's self with another, consistent with Runciman's (1966) theory on relative deprivation.

Social exclusion used in the context of transportation has been referenced by scholars such as Lucas (2012), Preston (2009), and Delbosc and Currie (2011a). The United Kingdom Social Exclusion Unit, formed by Prime Minister Tony Blair, published a report in 2003 exploring social exclusion concerning transportation, making a strong case that transportation barriers contribute to social exclusion that is evident in poor neighborhoods (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003). Although there are sufficient references to social exclusion in a transportation context (Delbosc & Currie, 2011a; Preston, 2009), much of the existing research on social exclusion has addressed its causes rather than its effects. In addition, the primary focus has been on poverty as a cause. Despite the limited research, the connection between transportation and poverty made social exclusion an appropriate conceptual framework for the current study.

Nature of the Study

I used an instrumental qualitative single-case study design to explore the lives and perceptions of individuals at risk for social exclusion as a result of community severance. The study addressed the effects of community severance by exploring the phenomenon within the context of Missouri Highway 74, the single case site selected. The purpose of the study was better served through qualitative rather than quantitative analysis.

Interviews gave voice to the experiences and perspectives of individuals at risk for social exclusion. A case study includes information from multiple sources that are important for analyzing a complex issue involving human behavior and social interactions (Creswell, 2009). For the current study, adults 18 years or older whose primary residence is in the southern Cape Girardeau neighborhood known as South Cape, a low-income neighborhood experiencing concentrated poverty, participated in a focus group interview. Adults 18 years or older with external knowledge and perspective on the issue, such as social service providers, city officials, and other community leaders, participated in a second focus group interview. Participant recruitment included both purposeful and snowball sampling, as described in Chapter 3.

Definitions

The following terms are defined as they were used throughout the study:

Community severance: A physical or psychological effect caused by the division of space, most often from a large transportation infrastructure such as highways, interstates, and waterways (Anciaes et al., 2015).

Concentrated poverty: A U.S. Census Tract with at least 40% of the population living in poverty (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014).

Impoverished neighborhood: A neighborhood that experiences concentrations of poverty and economic isolation, often evidenced by blighted areas and increased criminal activity (Shapiro et al., 2015; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014).

Neighborhood disorder: Physical and social characteristics, such as blight, dilapidated buildings, crime, and poverty, that may be either observable or perceived (Marco et al., 2015).

Poverty guideline: A way to measure eligibility for many federal benefits; Federal poverty guidelines are issued each year in the *Federal Register* by the Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2019).

Relative deprivation: The subjective feeling of being deprived when comparing one's self to another person or group (Runciman, 1966).

Social exclusion: The process of being deprived of the ability to participate in desired activities deemed normal by the community, for factors a person has no control over (Burchardt et al., 1999).

Spatial exclusion: A dimension of social exclusion that applies to geographical areas, such as neighborhoods, and is often referred to as the process of segregating people out of spaces and subsequently into other spaces (Bancroft, 2012).

Assumptions

Given the nature of this study and the complexity involved in recruiting participants who were unknown to me, some assumptions were made. First, I assumed that interview participants would willingly and honestly share their experiences and feelings. Second, I assumed that each participant had a unique experience and perspective, providing variation from which to expand the understanding of the issue. Third, I assumed that data gathered from the governmental source would be reliable, particularly the environmental assessment completed for Missouri Highway 74. A final

assumption of this study was that individuals experiencing community severance as a result of transportation infrastructure are at risk of social exclusion.

Scope and Delimitations

Although there have been numerous studies on poverty, none have addressed the impact of transportation-related exclusion on poor neighborhoods, particularly from the perspective of those living in the impacted area. This study included a sample of 26 individuals from the target neighborhood, rather than an entire population of people. This study focused on the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, a river town with an approximately 45% poverty rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Despite the potential of transferability of findings to similar settings, particularly those with shared demographics or cultural context, themes generated as a result of this study may not apply to those areas with a large variance in culture or geography. Social exclusion has multiple drivers, and the risk of experiencing exclusion varies by individual experiences and neighborhood context (Spoor, 2013). The current study was not intended to provide statistically significant findings, nor did it involve statistical analysis.

Limitations

The goal of this study was to produce a scholarly contribution to the public policy field regarding the effects of transportation on poor neighborhoods. This study had a number of limitations. First, there was no means of verifying participant incomes or their status as a low-income individual. Participants were selected based on their residence in the targeted neighborhood of South Cape Girardeau, an impoverished area with

concentrated poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Second, although this study provided an overview of the effects of social exclusion based on a comprehensive review of literature from the transportation and social service fields, findings were not meant to provide a full understanding of the effects of social exclusion because there is a wide range of potential consequences. Additionally, my experiences and knowledge of the community had the potential to influence the research and analysis. Results of this study may be limited by the small sample of participants, their unique lived experiences, and potential researcher bias. Given the relatively small sample size in this study, generalizability was difficult if not impossible. However, the findings may be transferable to similar contexts and situations.

As a leader of a large nonprofit organization in the community where this research was conducted, I was likely known by many of the participants, particularly those in a professional capacity. The potential for researcher bias required me to be mindful of the possibilities of my prejudices, as well as my role as a researcher compared to my role as a community leader. I aimed to minimize this bias through clarification of my role as a researcher throughout the process, as well as a constant reflection of my feelings and perspectives during data collection and analysis.

Significance

This study has the potential for influencing systemic policymaking activities, particularly in terms of transportation and city planning policies, in the public administration field. Transportation policy is a significant policymaking activity affecting nearly every person in the United States in some manner, both positively and negatively.

Historically, transportation planning has demonstrated its ability to affect neighborhoods and people. Mohl (2002) described the displacement of primarily poor and minority communities in urban cities as a result of interstate and highway development as a strategy to clear out slums and blight. In the late 1960s, research on highway planning began to address the social cost of interstate development, but it was not until the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 that environmental assessments were required to include the social impact, not solely an economic impact, on neighborhoods in the overall decision-making process (Goldstein, 1970).

Transportation planning, considering effects that are not solely quantifiable, has great potential for positive social change. Socially conscious transportation development can create inclusive communities and foster well-being in individuals (Transportation Economics, n.d.). Additionally, it can generate the desired economic development benefits so important from the early years of transportation policy (Transportation Economics, n.d.).

Summary

Roadways, highways, and interstates were created as a means to connect people and places. Often the same system designed to connect one point to another created disconnect within communities when transportation infrastructures geographically segmented neighborhoods from each other. There are multiple examples of this severance of communities across the United States, particularly where the vast interstate system prioritized economic efficiency over effect on neighborhoods, including building through communities rather than around them (Mohl, 2002). Existing literature demonstrated that

community severance has an exclusionary effect on neighborhoods, resulting in many quantifiable conditions, such as reduced travel behavior and increased noise pollution (Lucas, 2012). However, researchers had not explored the perspective of individuals and families living in socially excluded neighborhoods as a result of transportation infrastructure. The following chapter includes a review of existing research on topics related to social exclusion and community severance, as well as the theoretical and conceptual framework that was used to guide the exploration of the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Transportation-related infrastructure, such as highways and interstates, creates a barrier that can physically limit access to grocery stores, parks, and other essential services to those living in adjacent neighborhoods, a phenomenon known as community severance (Bjornstrom & Ralson, 2013). Transportation infrastructure, in addition to creating a physical disconnect, can leave residents feeling socially isolated and excluded from the rest of the community (Lucas, 2012). The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the effects of community severance on impoverished neighborhoods, focusing on the perspective of individuals living within the impacted area.

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature on relative deprivation and social exclusion, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to support this qualitative inquiry. I begin by describing the search criteria and then explore the current literature on poverty, community severance, and its effects on neighborhoods. I also review the literature on social exclusion as it relates to transportation.

Literature Search Strategy

An inquiry based on peer-reviewed journals, data from transportation organizations, books, and personal communication was conducted. The databases included ProQuest Central, EBSCO, Wiley, SAGE Publications, and ScienceDirect. Keywords and phrases used as search terms included *alienation*, *community severance*, *transportation disadvantage*, *spatial exclusion*, *community health*, *highways and neighborhood*, *social exclusion*, *transportation and social exclusion*, and *poverty and*

social exclusion. Compelling arguments on the topic of social exclusion and community severance, including similar concepts, determined the articles selected for review.

I found that most of the research on social exclusion was written in the late 1990s and early 2000s when an influx of research addressed the United Kingdom's creation of a Social Exclusion Unit within their governmental purview. This resulted in bringing the concept of social exclusion to the forefront of the public mind, which eventually waned. Recent literature on the subject was limited. Also, the literature on community severance, as it relates to transportation, was found largely in technical reports with limited access for academic purposes. Difficulty accessing these technical documents is acknowledged in existing research on community severance (Anciaes et al., 2015). To broaden the search, I used terms that encompassed similar concepts and were more likely to be used in social science research, such as *transportation disadvantage* and *spatial exclusion*, rather than focusing solely on the term community severance.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework providing the foundation for this study was the theory of relative deprivation, which refers to an actual or perceived lack of resources when comparing oneself to another group (Runciman, 1966). Relative deprivation is predicated on the sense of frustration that one may experience when they believe they are being unfairly deprived of something, particularly if they see someone else with it and they feel they ought to have it too. Runciman (1966) pointed out that it is not necessarily money or tangible items that a person may lack, but also power, recognition, or status, and that this can occur at both an individual and a group level. For these reasons, this theory is

considered a social justice theory and is often used to frame conversations on inequality and social movements (Brown et al., 2018).

Origin

Stouffer and his associates (1949, as cited in Zoogah, 2010) were the first to articulate the theory of relative deprivation in a study on American soldiers during World War II. In Stouffer's research, the military police officers compared their promotions with other military police officers, rather than with the air corpsmen, despite the air corpsmen's rapid promotions in comparison to the military police (Stoufer et al., 1949). Furthermore, Black soldiers in the South compared themselves with other black soldiers in the South, not with ones in the North, despite the continued racial segregation of the South (Pettigrew, 2015). Stouffer et al. concluded that people's life satisfaction level depends on their reference or comparison group. The primary assumption of relative deprivation is that a person's or group's life satisfaction is more focused on their condition in relation to other persons or groups and partially to their objective circumstances (Smith et al., 2011).

In 1966, Runciman (as cited in Webber, 2007) expanded on the relative deprivation theory to include the sense of frustration experienced by individuals when they see other people owning things that they desire but cannot obtain. Relative deprivation occurs when groups perceive themselves as unfairly disadvantaged as compared to their reference groups (Korpi, 1974). The discontent that arises from relative deprivation has been applied in explaining industrial disputes, crime and violence, radical politics, the rise of social movements, and messianic religions (Walker & Smith, 2002).

In the social movement literature of the late 1960s and early 1970s, relative deprivation was also widely applied (Walker & Smith, 2002).

Runciman (1966) used relative deprivation as a social psychological theory to study distributive justice. According to Runciman, egoistic relative deprivation results from the unfavorable social condition in comparison to reference groups but fraternalistic relative deprivation involves unfavorable comparison to other groups or individuals who are perceived to be more successful. The core of Runciman's theory is the proposition that relative deprivation is the social-psychological deprivation that is a basic precondition for an individual or intergroup comparison (Bossert et al., 2007). Runciman's theory of relative deprivation is based on two criteria including satisfaction within a group in the social structure and satisfaction within one's group (Bossert et al., 2007). There is a relationship between the sense of deprivation and dimensions of inequality that exist in the society including class, status, and power (Knies et al., 2007). This theory is used in describing subjective evaluations and gives a clear explanation of social behavior, thereby helping in shaping cognition, emotions, and subsequent behavior (Korpi, 1974). The assumption underlying Runciman's work involves people's reactions to objective circumstances that depend entirely on subjective comparisons with their reference groups (Walker & Smith, 2002). The unfavorable intergroup comparison can result in a feeling of dissatisfaction that eventually generates prejudice (Smith et al., 2011).

Literature and Research-Based Analysis

In the social sciences, the concepts of relative deprivation have been applied throughout history, including criminology, political science, and economics (Pettigrew, 2015). Social scientists use the model in predicting a broad range of significant outcome variables that encompass intergroup attitudes, individual achievement and deviance, collection, and physical and mental health (Walker & Smith, 2002). However, critics argued that the approach should be used in explaining a wide range of phenomena including susceptibility to terrorism recruitment, poor physical health, and participation in the collective protest (Webber, 2007). The approach has been used in describing the perceived discrepancy between people's value expectations and their value capabilities (Webber, 2007).

Relative deprivation has been applied widely, especially when explaining the interplay of economic and social forces by considering three main elements that include structural inequality, inclusion, and poverty (Zoogah, 2010). Furthermore, the concepts of relative deprivation have been used in studying poverty from a complex and simple perspective. Under this research-based analysis, four dimensions have been identified: framing, empirical focus, units of analysis, and heuristic purpose (Smith & Walker, 2008). Through the use of social exclusion as a conceptual framework, the literature indicated that the basic determinants of deprivation in the society include aggregate alienation a person experiences and lack of identification with similar members within the community (Knies et al., 2007). The researchers in social sciences mostly applied the

axiomatic approach to gain deeper insights into the characterization of classes of deprivation together with exclusion measures (Bossert et al., 2007).

In the political debate, social exclusion has gained a wider interest, and scholars have discussed attributes, novelties, and differences rather than the traditional concepts that include inequality, multidimensional poverty, and income disparities (Smith et al., 2011). In addition, there has been the application of relative theory together with an economic model of crime to illustrate the self-reinforcing effects of social exclusion and efficiency cost of relative poverty (Pettigrew, 2015). The theory has also been applied when arguing the reason to depict poverty issues in a context that is relative and intertemporal.

Rationale

The selection of relative deprivation as a theoretical foundation was based on its ease of application, appropriateness, and explanatory power regarding poverty and social exclusion (see Smith & Walker, 2008). The theory was used to connect the research on the effects of community severance on poor neighborhoods to the existing knowledge, and it was used in guiding the choice of research methods. The relative nature of this theory lends itself well in relating to a person's perceptions of their condition. Furthermore, Runciman's (1966) theory provides insights into the key variables that influence community severance by highlighting the need for examining how these variables differ in a social and economic context (Pettigrew, 2015).

According to relative deprivation theory, a defeatist atmosphere is created when individuals live in more advantaged neighborhoods, which makes it impossible to achieve

standards of living that are relatively perceived to be high (Vartanian, 1997). However, in the less advantaged neighborhoods, individuals living there are still encouraged to strive to achieve and enhance their economic power in society. Using concepts outlined by Runciman (1966) that may be egoistic or fraternalistic, I explored the dependence of people's life satisfaction on relative income position in the neighborhood. Furthermore, the effects of community severance on the impoverished neighborhood would be understood by applying the insights of this theory that explain that a person's or group's satisfaction is more focused on their condition concerning other persons or groups and partially on their objective circumstances (see Pettigrew, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

I used social exclusion, as referenced by Lucas (2012), as the conceptual framework in the context of transportation. There are few additional references to social exclusion in this context (Delbosc & Currie, 2011a; Preston, 2009). Much of the existing research on social exclusion addressed its causes rather than effects, and the primary focus has been on poverty as a cause. Despite the limited research, social exclusion's applications to the combination of transportation and poverty made it an appropriate conceptual framework for this study.

Foucault (1964) is often cited as the earliest reference to social exclusion in which Foucault uses this term to describe the confinement of people stricken with leprosy. Despite Foucault's early reference, many authors attributed Lenoir (1974) with popularizing the concept by describing unemployed persons as *les exclus* or "the socially excluded." Throughout history, the term socially excluded grew to encompass a wide

range of groups, including immigrants, criminals, the homeless, the unemployed, and broadly individuals living in poverty. The identification with a socially excluded group is generally within a negative context, having been referred to as the pariahs of the nation in the early 1980s (Silver & Miller, 2003).

Social exclusion is often framed around experiences of inequality, marginalization, and scarcity, particularly around involvement and engagement with other people, groups, or the community. There has been an evolution of the definition of social exclusion over the years as both policymakers and researchers have attempted to qualify the concept. Although the literature revealed multiple and varied definitions of the term (Silver, 1994), most studies included a lack of social participation and centered on access to resources, such as employment and educational opportunities (Duffy, 1995; Walker, 1997).

Duffy (1995) described social exclusion as alienation from mainstream society. Delbosc and Currie (2011b), in contrast, were among many scholars who looked at social exclusion in terms of its effects on individual well-being. Well-being factors include independence, health, socialization, morale, and financial stability. Access to the opportunities that enhance well-being factors is key to understanding the link between well-being and social exclusion (Delbosc & Currie, 2011b). The Social Exclusion Unit (2003), a United Kingdom governmental task force created by the former Prime Minister Tony Blair to reduce social exclusion, defined social exclusion in terms of limited access to three critical areas (employment, health care, and educational opportunities) and explored the relationship between social exclusion and transportation, focusing on those

without a car as the precipitating factor to reduced access. *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain* (2000) provided a comprehensive definition of social exclusion that included exclusion from social activities and relationships as a contributing factor to poor well-being.

Burchardt et al. (1999) offered an operational definition of social exclusion that is consistent with that used in the current study, referring to a person's desire but inability to participate in activities deemed normal by the community because of factors they have no control over. In a further attempt to operationalize the concept, Burchardt et al. identified five dimensions that constitute normal activities: consumption, savings, production, political, and social. Three of the dimensions involve economic power: the ability to pay for items you both need and want, the ability to save or to have equity, and the ability to engage in something that produces income. Political activity is associated with voting and civic engagement. Social activities are interactions with people that offer support, such as family and friends. Burchardt et al. expanded on this dimension and referenced a person's basic need to connect with their community or their social capital. It is in this dimension that researchers can explore the effects of mechanisms of exclusion outside of the common quantification found in the other four dimensions. Here, researchers can explore how a person feels, such as the aspect of social exclusion addressed in the current study.

Worldview

Underpinning my research is a combination of a social constructivist and interpretivist worldview. An interpretivist worldview holds the belief that the meaning people give to things is subjectively formed. Meaning is therefore grounded in one's

experiences and context dependent. Reality is subjectively constructed based on a

person's own lived experiences and interactions with the environment around them.

Using an interpretivist approach I acknowledge the goal of this research as seeking to

understand rather than measure and to present the perspective of the participants rather

than that of the researcher (Creswell, 2009; Holstein & Gubrium, 2008; Patton, 2002).

Review of Literature Related to Key Concepts

Social Exclusion and Poverty

Stanley (2011) argued that social exclusion and poverty were inextricably linked

in a causal relationship, where poverty was identified as a driving force behind social

exclusion. Similarly, low income and living in a poor neighborhood were identified as

key factors in experiencing social exclusion in a report by the United Kingdom's Social

Exclusion Unit (2001). Research that explores that concept of social exclusion must

recognize its connection with poverty, not simply because of a lack of income, but rather

the limitations placed on a person's ability to be included in something because of that

lack of income. Sen (2000) described the link between social exclusion and poverty in

terms of being deprived of the life one could have if not for living in poverty. As

referenced previously, three of the five dimensions used to define social exclusion by

Burchardt et al. (1999) were related to economic status. In their definition of

consumption activity, one of the five dimensions, a person was considered excluded if

their income fell below half of the mean equivalized household income, a widely

accepted way to measure household income outside of the United States. A comparable

measure for the United States is calculating the Area Median Income (AMI), often used

by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (2018) in determining program eligibility. Every metropolitan area in the United States has an AMI calculation that is formulated by Fair Market Rent (FMR) values and household size. Falling below 50% AMI is considered to be very-low-income. Although lack of income is an essential component of poverty, research points out that poverty is also about lack of access to resources, including income. Church et al. (2000) argued that people can live in poverty, as measured by household income, but not necessarily be socially excluded. They should not be considered synonymous but are intertwined.

Complicating the discussion, attempts to define poverty vary from an absolute definition of poverty based on an accepted calculation of income comparison, such as the Federal Poverty Guidelines, to relative poverty, a subjective measure of poverty. Laderchi et al. (2003) reported four approaches to defining poverty. The first and most commonly used is a monetary definition of poverty in which income and its difference in a predefined "poverty line" are measured in an objective process. As shown in Table 1, a family of four would be considered below the poverty guidelines if their household income was below $25,750 in 2019.

Table 1

Poverty Guidelines, 2019

Persons in Family/Household	Poverty Guideline
1	$12,490
2	$16,910
3	$21,330
4	$25,750
5	$30,170
6	$34,590
7	$39,010
8	$43,430

Note. U.S. Health & Senior Services, 2019

The second approach, the capability approach, is measured in terms of a person fulfilling their individual potential and focuses on well-being. Although money is seen as a means to an end in this definition, money remains an essential function of creating well-being. Social exclusion, the third approach to defining poverty, mirrors earlier discussion on defining the term. Laderchi et al. (2003), similarly referenced Burchardt et al.'s (1999) definition of social exclusion quoted earlier in this chapter. Burchardt et al. (1999), after identifying five dimensions of social exclusion, went on to give specific guidelines within each dimension, indicating that the social activity dimension was measured by lacking support in key times or moments, such as in times of crisis, such as deaths or emergencies, for comfort in times of grief or sadness, for appreciation when you have done something special or achieved a milestone, for comradery, friendship, or just to listen. However, they acknowledge that their measurement lacked an essential component, as they failed to recognize community connection in the measure. Room

(2002), similarly to Burchardt et al. (1999) stated the importance of not only community connectedness, but also community resources, to social exclusion. Room points out the necessity of including resource availability in surveys designed to measure social exclusion. Returning to Laderchi et al.'s (2003), approaches to defining poverty, their fourth approach, the participatory method, engages individuals in articulating their own poverty experience. This approach allows a researcher to analyze the contextual factors of a person's life, using a Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) model (Norton & Bird, 2001), subsequently defining poverty in terms of that person's experience, rather than imposing a definition on them.

It is important to understand that although poverty and social exclusion are interconnected concepts, you cannot solely interpret social exclusion looking through an economic lens (Madanipour et al., 2015). Rowntree (1910), in his seminal work on researching poverty in New York, recognized the importance of looking at the social aspects of those living in poverty, in addition to income. Despite the wide usage of measuring poverty in terms of income, it is widely accepted that poverty, likewise, is a complex, multi-dimensional social issue, and to define it purely economically limits comprehension (Naude et al., 2009). In contrast to poverty as it relates to income, which primarily considers the individual or the household, social exclusion considers the relationship between the individual and society

Castells (1998) argued that the gap between the rich and the poor, known as income polarization, also divides the populations spatially, creating zones of exclusion. Bryne (2005) described this as spatial exclusion. Mudimann (1999) pointed out that

although these zones of exclusion often gain sensationalized attention through media coverage of the negative indicators of social exclusion, such as crime and deteriorating housing, it equally results in a division of the neighborhood from the rest of the community. The concentration of poverty within neighborhoods leads to an increase in perpetuating exclusion. Poor neighborhoods are less likely to experience business development, housing development, and increased access to public goods or services. As the neighborhood continues to decline economically and to deteriorate physically, the more excluded it becomes. The combination of these factors creates "a cycle of disadvantage" (Department of Social Security, 1999, p. 2). Furthermore, the environment in which people exist, particularly one's neighborhood, is an influential factor in character development (Grannis, 2009).

Spatial Exclusion

Understanding social exclusion requires temporal patterns and spatial concepts due to the many ways in which people cannot geographically access the various components of communal life at suitable times of the year, week, or day (Room, 2002). For instance, Room noted that poor people travel less because of the limited opportunities within their locations. Studies on marginalization have shown the proof of social segregation based on elements such as space and time. Exclusion denotes a condition of socio-spatial isolation and separation among various social clusters (Room, 2015). In that regard, the studies substantiate how geographical obstacles along ethnic or racial lines prevent the poor from participating in viable economic activities. Nonetheless, several studies on marginalization focus more on the imbalanced social

distribution of the clusters in residential regions and less on the component's exclusion from social collaborations in a spatial context (Silver & Miller, 2003). According to Room (2002), the focus on the communal group in exclusion studies is criticized due to the omission of other significant activity locations such as places of work.

Isolation based on places of residence is essential for delineating socio-spatial marginalization. Nevertheless, the concept of social exclusion cannot be explained by considering the residential regions alone but also through the movement patterns of those secluded. The latter gives more significant clues to the issue of socio-spatial segregation. In that perspective, Silver and Miller (2003) noted that spatial actions can reveal cultural variations in experiences, constraints, and activities among people. For instance, studying the relationship between the different individual paths is essential in understanding social isolation since the correlation of the trails expresses itself as spatial exclusion over time and space. The manifestation of the same illustrates a complicated social dynamic. Measuring the spatial activities can provide a profound technique for comprehending the entire spectrum of social isolation.

Room (2002) argued that the lack of or inadequate acquaintance with some places is associated with limited and weak social networks or links. Similarly, Silver (1994) held that socially marginalized individuals are segregated from certain portions of physical space and that exclusion is a result of a break in the social bonds between groups. In other words, curtailed activity space limits social exchanges with other individuals since meeting face-to-face is essential to extending one's network (Room, 2002). Conversely, studies show that the pattern of an individual's activity can manifest

limiting factors and constrain potential elements for building social and spatial networks (Kwan, 2012). A restrained activity pattern as a result of a fixed action is ordinarily regarded as a limiting factor. Nonetheless, Room (2002) contended that a static activity is also a possible resource for social networking. On the other hand, a person's daily routine through space and time is determined by their social linkage (Silver, 2015).

Causes of Social Exclusion

Despite the close correlation of the perceptions of deprivation, social isolation, and poverty, they are not synonymous with one another. The latter can be described as one-dimensional and static aftermath, whereas social seclusion is a multidimensional and dynamic process (Yigitcanlar et al., 2019). According to Silver (2015), social isolation, unlike poverty, is better delineated in terms of spatial capabilities instead of commodities, and it is a process, or state, which results in deprivation. In that regard, measuring social exclusion must consider factors such as lack of adequate social safety programs, unemployment, absence of quality learning or education facilities, poor healthcare, marketing restrictions, credit market isolation, absence of amenities for the disabled individuals, etc. Poverty denies its victims from enjoying a satisfactory threshold of living and precludes them from accessing vital services and goods. Kwan (2012) emphasized the same by noting that social disadvantages arise because of poverty. In the same vein, cultural and language barriers, discrimination, or regional isolation resulting from any form of disability also cause exclusion (Kwan, 2012). Room (2002) and Silver (2015) directly attribute social isolation to inequality such as crime, homelessness, poor health, lack of role models, unemployment, disability, etc.

Dimensions of Spatial Exclusion

There are various realms of daily life where social isolation arises. Room (2002) listed the orientations as taking economic, social, moral or cultural, and political or legal perspectives. Kwan (2012) contended that these realms occur at the neighborhood, group, or individual levels, and further links the poverty notion to political, social, and economic disadvantages.

Silver (2015) provided a divergent opinion in identifying the spatial exclusion realms by arguing that they should be based on normal activities which the secluded individuals do. Accordingly, the dimensions include consumption activities which are a measure of poverty; savings activities such as mortgages; and social activities geared at developing family, friends, and cultural relationships. Conversely, Silver and Miller (2003) asserted that spatial exclusion is virtually wholly an urban issue. In that regard, he argued that the perception of social seclusion denotes a tendency of pushing the poor and vulnerable persons into remote locations, farthest away from corporate ambitions, marginalizing them from the orthodox community, and stripping them of their sense of belonging (Silver & Miller, 2003).

Social Exclusion and Transportation

Social exclusion used in the context of transportation has been referenced by scholars such as Lucas (2012), Preston (2009), and Delbosc and Currie (2011a). Their research primarily focused on lack of access to transportation and how that creates exclusion. The United Kingdom Social Exclusion Unit published a report in 2003 exploring social exclusion in relation to transportation (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003).

Historically, transportation planning has demonstrated its ability to affect both neighborhoods and people. Highways have been purposefully designed and placed to separate neighborhoods along socioeconomic and racial lines, with evidence of racial segregation caused by highways in urban cities across the nation (Fox, 2017). Mohl (2002) provided an extensive historical account of transportation policy in the 1950s and 1960s and the subsequent effect the placement of highways had on low-income housing and neighborhoods. Existing literature supports the notion that transportation-related infrastructure, such as highways, railways, and waterways, creates not only geographic boundaries, but also social boundaries, yet few researchers have qualitatively explored the psychological or sociological effects created by such boundaries (Anciaes et al., 2015; Delbosc, 2012; Grannis, 2009). Throughout history, social exclusion has moved away from an individualistic focus to that of a societal one, as a matter of space or place. In doing so, transportation and access have increasingly been contextualized in the discussions on social exclusion (Preston & Raje, 2007; Yigitcanlar et al., 2019).

Delbosc and Currie (2011a) pointed out that despite much of the existing research on the effects of barriers to transportation focused on a large scale, geographic impact, it neglects the individual perspective. Although their research emphasized the individual, few connections were made to a person's psychological well-being, remarking though that there is a clear connection between transportation disadvantages and social exclusion. Delbosc's (2012) research on social exclusion indicated a correlation between an individual's psychological well-being and access to key factors, such as employment, opportunities to engage in meaningful social activities, and health. This is consistent with

research conducted by Stanley et al. (2011) which used the Personal Well-being Index (International Well-being Group, 2006) and the Scales of Psychological Well-being (Ryff, 1989) to demonstrate a relationship between well-being, both subjective and psychological, and social exclusion, using quantitative analysis.

The Personal Well-being Index (PWI) was developed by the Internal Well-being Group (2006) as a tool to measure an individual's satisfaction with their life using seven dimensions: - standard of living; personal health; achieving in life; personal relationships; personal safety; community connectedness; and future security. The PWI is used to subjectively measure a person's quality of life as a whole (International Well-being Group, 2013). The Scales of Psychological Well-being was developed by Carol Ryff as a tool to assess psychological well-being using six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Social Exclusion and Alienation

Abrams et al. (2004) identified several possible psychological effects of social exclusion. These include contraction of self, self-concept threat, lowered self-esteem, anger, frustration, emotional denial, and cognitive impairment. Baumeister et al.'s (2007) research on the effects of social exclusion showed a link between social exclusion and a decrease in pro-social behavior and an increase in self-defeating behavior. Williams et al. (2000) argued that ostracism, an exclusionary behavior, led to the ostracized person attempting to conform to the behavior of others to feel included. This is consistent with Seeman's (1959) seminal work on alienation. Seeman (1959) described powerlessness as

the feeling of having no control over the circumstances in one's life, regardless of their actions, despite one's feelings that they are capable of doing more. Feelings of powerlessness are considered to be the most damaging to a person's well-being and socioeconomic status is viewed as a contributing factor (Cheryl, 2004; Fischer, 1973; Tiffany and Tiffany, 1973). Feelings of control over one's own life are directly linked to one's quality of life. Where powerlessness focuses on having little control over outcomes, the feeling of meaninglessness is described as having low expectations about one's circumstances or having no purpose. The feelings of normlessness arise when a person feels unable to conform to societal norms. Experiences of alienation can cause people to deny their own personal interests and desires to conform to societal norms. This creates a lack of identity or self-estrangement. Social isolation is described as "being segregated from one's community" (Kalekin-Fishman, 1996, p. 97) and viewed as a contributing factor to feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and normlessness. Holcomb-Mccoy (2004) described social isolation as a disconnectedness from society. Social connectedness has been described as the opposite end of a spectrum, with community severance on the other side (Quigley & Thornley, 2011). Oitt and Featherman (1975) pointed out the alienation is subjective and based on a person's perception of their condition. Ross and Mirowsky (2009) attempted to demonstrate a link between feelings of alienation and living in poor neighborhoods, purporting that psychological distress is indicative of poor neighborhoods where perceptions of powerlessness and alienation are heightened by disorder in a neighborhood. Ross and Mirowsky (2009) also argued that

neighborhood disorder can cause subjective alienation, perceived powerlessness, and further psychological distress.

Community Severance

Delbosc (2012) captured the essence of community severance in describing how the physical infrastructures in transport systems interact and influence their environments. Where many researchers stop short of is an assessment of infrastructure's impact on the community rather than just on the users of the system in general. Over time, multiple scholars have attempted to articulate their own definition of community severance (Anciaes et al., 2015; Grisolia et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2001; Handy, 2003), resulting in no clear, single description. Despite the varied interpretations, all have some reference to a barrier that has a causal relationship with something, from travel to traffic flow to well-being. Anciaes et al.'s (2015) simplistic definition described community severance as a physical or psychological effect caused by the division of space. They pointed out that severance can also be perceived or experienced, an element not always referenced in other definitions. Handy (2003), in contrast, defined community severance as a physical barrier focusing solely on the psychological implications. James et al. (2005) pointed out that the barrier may not necessarily be real, with perceptions being an important part of community severance. Guo et al. (2001) defined community severance as either static or dynamic. Static severance is defined as a permanent structure that causes separation, whereas dynamic severance references traffic flow and patterns that impede movement. Similarly, Grisolia et al. (2015) defined community severance in terms of it not only disconnecting people within the community because of transportation

infrastructure but also includes the effect of extended travel necessitated by the barrier.

Litman (2017) focused on the impact that highways have on non-motorized mobility and

is concerned that by creating barriers to pedestrian travel, people are more likely to

convert to motorized travel, thereby increasing traffic-related pollution and increased

congestion. Litman, in contrast to many researchers who acknowledge the psychological

or sociological implications of severances, such as Anciaes et al. (2015) and Handy

(2003), stated, simply, that its effects are solely external. Many scholars expound upon

the simplistic view to include the effects of the barriers. In an extensive literature review,

Quigley and Thornley (2011) included multiple definitions of community severance, in

which they cited a New Zealand report that defines community severance in terms of

alienation felt by the community. Delbosc and Currie (2011a), having done widespread

research on transportation and well-being, supported the conclusion by many researchers

that lack of access inhibited by barriers to transportation increase the effect of social

exclusion. Highways can limit access to essential services, including access to jobs,

healthcare, educational institutions, and social support (Lucas, 2012). In addition to the

physical disconnect, highway structures can create a psychological severance (Quigley &

Thornley, 2011) that leave residents feeling isolated and cut off from the rest of the

community (Lucas, 2012), affecting a person's health and well-being (Delbosc & Currie,

2011b).

 Delbosc (2012) directly linked an individual's sense of well-being to social

exclusion, pointing out that well-being is a subjective, individualistic measure of a

person's perception about their own life. This contrasts many researchers focus on

quality-of-life measures that focus on objective, societal level indicators in an effort to quantitatively measure what is essentially happiness. Delbosc argued that the three most influential contributions to happiness or unhappiness are unemployment and poverty, meaningful relationships, and health- all of which can be linked to transportation using the qualitative measure of well-being. Lee and Sener (2016) maintained that how a person rates their well-being or quality of life is introspective and is based on each person's perspective, yet influenced by external factors, such as culture and neighborhood features. They also pointed out the limited existing research on transportation and mental well-being.

Development of Interstate Highway System in the United States

The Interstate Highway System is a network of interconnected highways that connected the different states in the country. The formation and development of such a network are attributable to former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower through the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (Biles et al., 2014). The construction and development of the country's highway network have focused on the plans laid by Eisenhower. To date, a majority of the urban routes stipulated in the project have been developed, others canceled and never built, and others have been introduced depending on the changing economic conditions, settlements, and political factors. Through this system, the country's leadership developed superhighways regarded as more superior to the pre-existing road networks in the country, and these superhighways played a critical role in connecting different states, communities, and urban centers in the country (Nall, 2015). In addition to the superhighways and highway networks, the transport network also

focused on overpasses, by-passes, and underpasses that cut through neighborhoods, and which – to some extent – affected communities, the environment, and wildlife (Lee & Sener, 2016). By the late 20th century, the government had completed more than 36, 000 miles of highway and superhighway networks with more than 3,000 miles under construction (Biles et al., 2014). At the onset of the Interstate system, the government mainly focused on the economic benefits of increased connectivity between the different states and urban areas in the country and neglected the possible negative impacts on the communities affected by the construction. The government's actions have played a critical role in the current community severance and social exclusion situation experienced in the country.

Studies suggest that Eisenhower's transportation policies mainly focused on the potential economic benefits of developing the Interstate Highway system. Notably, the government spent a considerable amount of revenue on funding the construction project, which approximated $30 billion in predicted costs (Biles et al., 2014). For instance, a proposal to establish the network of highways and superhighways in the U.S. was intended to streamline economic activities, especially regarding trade, to promote the creation of employment opportunities, and to increase access to social amenities (Lee & Sener, 2016). Through such infrastructural development, the government focused on the potential benefits expected from the increased movement of people and goods between the different states and urban centers. To some extent, this project has been playing a significant role in economic development and ease of access to government services to a majority of people in the country. Nall (2015) suggested that the establishment of the

Interstate Highway System has increased the movement of motorists between states and eased the flow of goods and services in the past few decades. In simple terms, the development of the highway and superhighway road network has influenced massive economic benefits, especially concerning the increased movement of goods and services, improved trade, and the creation of employment. Despite the benefits exhibited by infrastructural development, the country also exhibited a variety of negative impacts. The problems arising from the construction of the interstate highway system are attributable to the nature of policies adopted by the government.

Like any other government project, politics and policies play a critical role in the formulation, adoption, and implementation of policies. In the case of the Interstate Highway System, policies and politics have also played a vital role in shaping the nature, scope, and spatial distribution of the transport network (Biles et al., 2014). It is of paramount importance to state that politics and policies have contributed mainly to the resulting community severance and social exclusion in the country. As a majority of the government of policies are developed based on people's interests and their access to power, the intentions of establishing public roads in certain areas are also based on people's interests. As stated above, some roads stipulated to be constructed in the original plans have been canceled but others included the modified Interstate Highway system. These changes can be accredited to changing interests and the formation of new alliances among politicians and individuals in society. The development of the highway system exhibits a diversity of impacts on different groups in society. For instance, the highway system may attribute to increased trade and economic progress to some groups and loss

of lands, livelihood, and social networks for other groups (Nall, 2015; Retzlaff, 2019). In that case, the continued development and modification of the highway system should consider all the factors, both the economic, social, political benefits to the country as well as the negative impacts on the communities. By addressing such factors, the government would make a significant step in addressing issues of community severance and social exclusion influenced by the historical development of the highway system.

Possible Impacts of the Interstate Network on Communities

The construction of the Interstate Highway system was an essential development to the U.S. economy as it played a critical role in fostering trade, promoting the creation of employment, and the transportation of goods – notably oil, steel, and cement. The completion of the highway system was a milestone to the efforts intended to improve the country's transport sector and to ensure social cohesion and inclusivity. Despite the potential benefits, the policymakers did not put enough measures designed to address the adverse outcomes to the transport system on communities and neighborhoods, including potential effects on mobility; amenity outcomes; and limited access to facilities, social networks, and services.

Impact of Interstate System on Human Mobility

Human mobility is an important consideration when developing policies that relate to transportation. The essentiality is based on the fact that an improved transport network plays a critical role in the movement of individuals, goods, and services between different locations. To some extent, the U.S. Interstate Highway System has negatively affected people's mobility, especially for motorists, pedestrians, equestrian users, and

cyclists (Mindell & Karlsen, 2012). In this context, human mobility focuses on the movement of people between different geographical locations. Anciaes et al. (2015) asserted that the construction of the Interstate Highway System poses challenges to the movement of individuals, especially cyclists and pedestrians. In this regard, passers-by reported increased problems concerning crossability, especially when attempting to transverse between two spaces divided by highways (Mindell & Karlsen, 2012). Due to increased complexities in the construction of the highway systems, individuals find it difficult to cross to the other side of the road owing to the barricades and barriers intended to reduce mobility across the highway or superhighway. In a majority of cases, the government established specific crossing points for pedestrians to use when moving to cross the road. Therefore, the nature of the interstate highway system attributes to increased pedestrian delays, trip lengthening, and the impending movement of individuals between two places (Nall, 2015). Such cases are evident in a majority of highways in the U.S. with pedestrians spending more time seeking crossing points; especially zebra crossing areas and footbridges, which play a critical role in minimizing mobility and increasing delays. To elaborate on that, increased barricades and reduced crossing points in the American highways demotivates people to travel between two spaces separated by a road.

Also, increased cases of vehicle traffic may affect human mobility in the Interstate Highway System. Anciaes et al. (2015) and colleagues examined the correlation between traffic flows in highway and pedestrian delays. The study findings reveal that increased traffic flows in the road attributes to increased cases of pedestrian

delays. In simple terms, pedestrians spend more time waiting to cross the street when there are minimal traffic and rapid movement of vehicles. The highlighted pedestrian behaviors relate to the psychological fear associated with the increased risk of a possible accident. In that regard, the pedestrians may choose to delay their movement or to choose other routes, which may attribute to increased time wastage and diversion of destinations (Lee & Sener, 2016). The highlighted factors tend to restrict the movement of individuals between places, and therefore attributing to community severance. The above factors may also play a critical role in increased social exclusion, as a majority of the individuals may find it difficult to access resources and social support in such situations. The construction of the Interstate Highway System has contributed to pedestrian mobility problems through the increased traffic flows and road barricades installed by the government to prevent individuals from across the highway, except in designated areas.

Impact of Interstate System on Access to Facilities, Social Networks, and Services

Another impact attributed to the American highway system is a reduction in accessing government facilities, services, and social networks, which mainly results from the disconnection of spaces. Anciaes et al. (2015) asserted that reduced accessibility is associated with community severance and social exclusion. To elaborate on that, reduced availability focuses on the reduction of individuals' capacity, especially communities bordering the highways – to reach certain places and to access the resources necessary for their survival. The decline in accessing facilities and government services may be attributed to the emergence of busy highways in certain neighborhoods, especially the ones that separate settlement areas from government facilities (Mindell et al., 2017). In a

majority of cases, the government tends to establish designated crossing points intended for use by the communities. However, such access points may not accommodate all the individuals residing in such regions, especially for people with disabilities and groups living further from the designated crossing points (Currie, 2011). In addition to the reduced access to facilities and services, the concept also focuses on the increased travel time when pursuing such services (Anciaes et al., 2018). For instance, individuals with non-motorized modes of transport may find it difficult to access the facilities and government services due to increased travel time, which might prove expensive and time-consuming. Even though walking longer distances provides individuals with opportunities to promote their health, it is essential to note that such a case does not apply to individuals with health issues. Furthermore, a majority of people residing in such neighborhoods prefer traveling to walking, as noted in a recent study by Mindell and Karlsen (2012). The Interstate Highways System has attributed to reduced accessibility of specific destinations, especially facilities and services.

Still focusing on accessibility, the emergence of busy highways and superhighways impedes the capacity of individuals to access social networks and support groups. Notably, the construction of transportation systems may separate individuals from the same social group, which plays a critical role in reducing an individual's social support and their access to their inalienable rights (Currie, 2011). The study, Zones of Exclusion: Urban Spatial Policies, Social Justice, and Social Services (Bancroft, 2012) focused on how specific policies limit the movement of certain groups in society. For instance, it is notable that the United States has, in the past, adopted spatial policies that

focus on separating different groups in the community and preventing other groups from accessing specific regions (Bancroft, 2012). For instance, the government based the construction of the Interstates Highway system on economic exclusion policies that focus on dividing regions into commercial segments. In simple terms, the development of roads in the country sometimes focuses on dividing regions into residential areas comprising of high-income earners and low-income earning populations (Altshuler, 2013). From this basis, the government fails to address increased cases of social exclusion as individuals from poverty-stricken neighborhoods are barred from trespassing in high economic and residential regions. Besides, the construction of highways also reduces the ease of access to people's social networks in times of crisis. The availability of active social groups is an essential factor in an emergency as such groups may provide the resources required to alleviate the situation (Bancroft, 2012). However, community severance and social exclusions, as attributed to the construction of certain roads, results in limited access to the social support group. Reduced social support stems from reduced mobility and accessibility.

Impact of Interstate System on Health

In addition to reduced mobility and accessibility, the construction of the interstate system attributes to possible health problems on the individual pedestrians, both residents, and non-residents. Traffic barriers pose health-related risks to pedestrians, especially concerning pollution, traffic accidents, and possible psychological impacts (Anciaes et al., 2015). One notable impact of the interstate system in the country is the risk of traffic accidents. In a majority of cases, individuals traversing the highway

pavements, walkways, and undesignated crossing points are always at risk of automobile accidents. Mindell and Karlsen (2012) noted that that the number of people involved in traffic accidents in the past few centuries has increased two-fold. The increase is an indication of the increased accident risks attributed to the increased traffic flow on busy highways. Another factor evident in community severance research is the increased cases of pollution and the resulting impacts on people's health. The establishment of busy roads in certain neighborhoods has contributed to the increased emission of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, and other toxic substances (Mindell & Karlsen, 2012). It is essential to note that increased emission of toxic substances into the environment attributes to a variety of respiratory and other health problems. Therefore, increased traffic flows in busy highways mostly affect human health for the individuals residing in the communities located near the roads. Increased traffic barriers also attribute to the possible increase in psychological obstacles to mobility. Evidence suggests that increased travel time and reduced crossing points may contribute to the reduced motivation for walking (Lee & Sener, 2016). When faced with barriers, people's perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and cognitive processes tend to change. Lee and Sener's (2016) research revealed that a majority of parents residing near busy highways tend to prohibit their children from crossing the road without assistance from adults. From this perspective, it is important to note that the emergence of the Interstate Highway System in the country may attribute to individual health problems, especially injuries, respiratory problems, and psychological issues.

Summary and Conclusions

Although contemporary literature is limited on the topic of social exclusion, particularly concerning transportation, it is evident by the preceding literature review that exclusionary behavior, including the development of transportation infrastructure adjacent to poor neighborhoods, affects both individuals and communities. Runciman's (1966) theory on the subjective nature of deprivation supports claimed that transportation-related severance is not solely physical but can also create an emotional or psychological response based on a perceived detachment from the community. The above review examined the various roots and dimensions of community severance and social exclusion, additionally exploring similar concepts, such as spatial exclusion and neighborhood disadvantage. While much of the current literature focused on quantifying the effects of community severance on neighborhoods through its impact on walkability, drive time, and pollution, existing research, as evidenced by the literature presented here, still made a clear connection between transportation, neighborhoods, and a person's psychological well-being. The following chapter will explore the specific methods this researcher used to research the problem identified in this study. Also included in Chapter 3 is the rationale behind the identified methodology and my role as a researcher.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Despite a multitude of studies quantifying the effects that a lack of access to transportation creates (Anciaes et al., 2015; Grisolia et al., 2015; Handy, 2003), current research has not adequately captured the perspectives of individuals living within poor neighborhoods impacted by community severance and its exclusionary effects. The current qualitative study was conducted to contribute to the understanding of the impact transportation-related infrastructure has on individuals living within the impoverished neighborhood, thereby filling a gap identified in previous research (see Anciaes et al., 2015). In Chapter 3, I discuss the research design and rationale, my role as a researcher, the population for the study, and procedures for data collection and analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

Question 1: What is the lived experience of individuals impacted by community severance, specifically those living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74?

Subquestion 1: What emotions and thoughts do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 have about living in the neighborhood?

Subquestion 2: Based on their experience and perceptions, what do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 believe are the factors that result in social exclusion?

Rationale

The purpose of this qualitative study was to further understand the effects of community severance on impoverished neighborhoods, focusing on the perspective of those individuals living within the impacted area. Underpinning my research was a combination of a social constructivist and an interpretivist worldview that the meaning people give to things are subjectively formed through their lived experiences (see Patton, 2002). Both worldviews lend themselves to qualitative inquiry. An interpretivist study relies on observation, interpretation, and contextualization. Its foundation is in both hermeneutics and phenomenology, which attempts to make sense of the complexities of people within a social construct (Collins, 2010). The current study was consistent with the essence of a social constructivist worldview in seeking to understand the lived experiences of a person or group (see Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

I employed a case study research design. A case study includes data from multiple sources and perspectives, which is important for analyzing complex issues and is appropriate when studying the context of an issue (Yin, 2018). I used an interpretive single-case qualitative design to provide insight on community severance by exploring the phenomenon within the context of Missouri Highway 74 running through a mid-size city in southeastern Missouri, the single case site selected. I was interested in the perspective of the people directly affected by the existence of Highway 74, particularly those individuals living adjacent to the transportation infrastructure. This type of perspective is better revealed through qualitative analysis rather than a quantitative analysis.

Researchers had not considered the spatial concept of community severance. Despite growing interest, no correlation between spatial and social relationships had been established. For instance, the study conducted by Kwan (2012) did not involve either qualitative or phenomenological analysis; instead, Kwan obtained data strictly from census statistics. Similarly, Room (2002) explored the quantitative effects of spatial isolation on societal networks. In the same vein, Silver (2015) examined the quantitative reasons for community segregation from an interpretivist perspective; the study did not include a phenomenological analysis. In the current study, I aimed to bridge the gap by conducting a qualitative analysis of data obtained from focus group discussions.

Role of the Researcher

My role in this study was participant-observer as I engaged with participants and attempted to discover meaning through a qualitative analysis. As a community leader in Cape Girardeau, I was likely to have a professional relationship with the members of the focus group consisting of other professionals in the community. My role in the community also made identifying participants unknown to me a challenge. I knew a large number of individuals who live in the targeted neighborhood for this study. I relied on these relationships to assist in identifying participants who were unknown to me. I had no power relationship over any participant in this study, eliminating potential conflict of interest or power differential.

Methodology

To obtain the multiple perspectives needed to answer the research questions in this study, I conducted three focus group interviews, with an average length of 70

minutes, conducted among two distinct populations of people, including 26 participants

in all. The first population was people currently living in the adjacent impoverished

neighborhood, to obtain the perspective of those impacted by community severance.

Although in-depth one-on-one interviews may provide a variety of perspectives, focus

groups allowed for brainstorming through interactions among fellow participants and

created opportunities for one person's answer to trigger another person's response

(Femdal & Solbjør, 2018). Focus group interviews are useful for exploring group

perceptions around a specific issue (Kairuz et al., 2007). Interview questions in the

current study focused on soliciting participants' feelings and perceptions related to

Highway 74. The analysis aimed to incorporate the voices of the collective group. This

group was an integral part of this study because the perspective of those affected had

been identified as part of the gap in the existing literature on the topic. Eighteen people

participated in one of two focus groups consisting of this population. The second

population, with eight interview participants, consisted of other people with external

knowledge and perspective on the issue. These were social service providers, city

officials, and other community leaders. This group had the potential to provide maximum

variation and vastly different perspectives (see Marshal, 1996).

I interviewed 26 people among the two distinct focus group populations providing

an adequate amount of data to provide the in-depth understanding necessary for a case

study (see Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The use of detailed semistructured interviews is a

means of achieving a rich, in-depth experiential account of the participants (Kapoulas &

Mitic, 2012). Additionally, using focus group interviews with a semistructured dialogue

provided flexibility by enabling me to formulate relevant follow-up and clarifying questions.

Participant Selection

Participants of the first focus group population were recruited primarily using snowball sampling (see Marshal, 1996; Patton, 1990) identified by people known to me and from recommendations from other identified participants (see Patton, 1990). Participants were identified as having a residence in the South Cape neighborhood of Cape Girardeau because this was the population I aimed to explore. The first contact made was with a few individuals known to me (via phone, email, or in person) to engage those individuals to help in identifying potential participants unknown to me until a minimum of eight individuals agreed to participate. After establishing verbal consent, I made phone calls to all of the participants to remind them of the time, venue, and objective of the interview so that they would show up prepared. Participants were given written consent before beginning the group interview. The focus group interview took place in a local community center room. Any participation was based on free will. Participants were required to be age 18 years of age or older.

Participants in the second focus group population were recruited using purposeful sampling. Given my professional role as a nonprofit organization leader who primarily serves low-income individuals in the community, it was likely that participants would be known to me in some professional capacity. I reached out to possible participants based on their role in the community and the likelihood that they would know the case.

The number of participants for this study provided the necessary data for answering the research questions. Data saturation was based on thematic analysis and the assumption that no new patterns or themes would emerge outside of the sample population. Patton (1990) recommended a focus group size of five to eight participants, described as a homogenous sample. Several researchers (Jelsma & Clow, 2015; Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012; Kumar, 2013) recommended that a focus group discussion should be composed of a similar number of participants to enable homogeneity. Should saturation not have been achieved with the minimum anticipated participants, an additional focus group would have been added.

Other Data Sources

Archival document review included documents related to the planning and development of Missouri Highway 74. These documents were produced by the Missouri Department of Transportation. These documents provided historical and contextual information regarding how the location of Highway 74 was determined. Other documents included maps and photographs to provide visual aids. Historical or legal documents conferred several advantages to this qualitative research. First, they were easy to retrieve. Second, they were cost-effective. Finally, they contained reliable and authentic data in a refined form (see Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Three focus groups interviews with two distinct populations were conducted for approximately 70 minutes each. Written consent was obtained before the commencement of the focus group meeting after participants were provided with the necessary details of

the study. A consent form was included, as well as a brief overview of the study, withdrawal information, confidentiality measures, and appropriate contact information. The focus group sessions consisted of semistructured, open-ended questions and were recorded for later analysis. No participant disagreed with being recorded. Had participants not agreed to be recorded, they would have been excluded from the study. Participant names were not used in the analysis. Audio recordings did not identify individual people. A participant number was used to replace the name of each participant to ensure their confidentiality. Each focus group participant was assigned a number during the informed consent process. The participant's study code was also used in notes taken during the focus group interview. Too few participants showed up for the initial focus group, requiring that I conduct an additional focus group on another date. These additional participants were identified by existing participants, consistent with snowball sampling (see Marshal, 1996; Patton, 1990). The process for this follow-up focus group was consistent with the process for the initial focus group.

Data Recording

I used a digital audio recorder to record the focus group discussions for later transcription and analysis. Also, short notes were taken during the sessions geared at answering the research questions. To protect the participants, I used numeric codes throughout the study, including recordings, researcher notes, and transcripts. All data were stored in a locked cabinet and with password-protected files on my personal laptop. Data will be stored for a minimum period of 6 years.

Exit and Follow-Up Procedure

I debriefed the participants immediately following the focus group. I wrote an appreciation email to each participant after the completion of the transcript, giving participants 10 days to review the transcript and the opportunity to reply with any edits or clarifications. Few replies were received, with no edits. For those with no reply, I assumed that the information was correct. A copy of the final analysis was available to participants upon request.

Data Analysis Plan

The initial stage of qualitative analysis involved reading the dialogue transcripts and listening to the audio recordings several times to glean any new insights from them (see Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012). While taking notes, I focused on the initial informational remarks; context; language used such as symbols, pauses, metaphors, repetitions, etc.; and the content of the case under study. With an iterative process, the next phase involved changing my notes into emerging themes (Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012). Finally, similar ideas were grouped depending on the similarities and labeling each cluster descriptively.

Coding

Manual coding was done initially to familiarize me with the data. NVivo, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, was subsequently used to organize and manage the coding process and provide a recheck of the initial manual coding process. Consistent with the experiential nature of this study, the first cycle coding process included theming the data (see Saldana, 2016). Focused coding was used as a second

cycle coding method to identify similarity in the themes identified in the first cycle of coding. Theming the data and focused coding are appropriate for an ontological study exploring the reality of participants (Saldana, 2016).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility measures the internal validity of research and determines how its findings are congruent with reality (Jelsma & Clow, 2015). Scholars have argued that credibility supersedes all other factors of research trustworthiness (Todorova, 2011). Several provisions have been advanced to justify the reliability of the phenomena being investigated.

Triangulation

Triangulation incorporates the use of various research techniques such as observation, focus groups, and document analysis as the main strategies for collecting data for a qualitative investigation (Shenton, 2014). Triangulation in the current study was achieved by collecting and analyzing focus group interview data, analyzing my field notes, and reviewing relevant documents. Whenever a focus group participant mentioned any document during the interview sessions, diligence was taken to examine the referenced document for further triangulation. Another technique of triangulation involves using several informants to provide a broad spectrum of data sources (Shenton, 2014). The two focus groups populations, one consisting of people living in the target neighborhood and the other of professionals in the community that interact with the target population, provided the broad perspective needed for triangulation. The focus group

interviews allowed me to compare individual experiences and perspectives with others, resulting in a vast array of behavior, attitudes, and needs of the interviewees being constructed based on the information received. This combination of data collection and analysis ensured data validity and reliability.

Member Checks

Checking the accuracy of the data was done after the data collection session (Todorova, 2011). I transcribed all of the focus group interviews. I had anticipated that it will take approximately two weeks for the transcriptions to be completed, this proved true. Focus group participants were then contacted via email to review the transcriptions of the dialogues in which they took part. Emphasis was laid on whether the words on the transcripts articulated their (participants') actual intention. Member checks encompassed the informants verifying the researcher's emerging inferences and concepts formulated during the interviews.

Saturation

During the focus groups, as comments begin to be repeated and no new information was being given, it appeared that there was enough data to answer the research question, indicating that I was nearing saturation (Grady, 1998) Similarly, during the coding and theming process, when no new codes and themes were emerging, it was likely that saturation had been met (Urquhart, 2013). Despite the small number of individuals participating in each focus group, the focus groups intended to gather rich substantive data in which to support saturation in the research. Saturation, being particularly difficult to substantiate and apply in qualitative research, appeared to have

been met as no new information was being collected by the end of each focus group conducted.

Reflexivity

Evaluating the research during its development is essential in determining the usefulness of the methods employed (Todorova, 2011). The process was achieved by conducting a reflective commentary documenting my initial targets of data collection, new ideas, and concepts generated, thereby leading to progressive subjectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Transferability

Transferability is synonymous with external validity, or generalizability, in a qualitative study (Kornbluh, 2015). The concept was improved by employing a thick description technique to provide a detailed and robust account of the my experiences while collecting data. The same was achieved by making an explicit association to the social and cultural contexts surrounding data collection. The procedure included documenting where the meetings or interviews happened, the probability of the informants undergoing interviews after work, and other factors that can provide a fuller and richer understanding of the study context. On the other hand, various participants cutting across the social, political, and economic divide were incorporated in the study to provide a rich background for transferability.

Dependability

Dependability denotes the repeatability and consistency of the results of the research (Todorova, 2011). The concept is established when the informants evaluate and

interpret the outcome and recommendations of the project to ascertain the evidence of supporting data obtained from all the participants. Techniques such as audit trail and triangulation were employed to demonstrate dependability (Todorova, 2011) An audit trail is a data validation process whereby all the decisions and the process of data collection will be accounted for and analyzed (Scott, 2011). Records containing observation and interview notes were maintained for cross-checking. Regarding dependability, triangulation ensures that the shortcomings of one data collection technique are compensated by utilizing other approaches to obtain the same information (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Confirmability denotes the degree to which the research findings can be corroborated or confirmed by other investigators (Jelsma & Clow, 2015), and it involves ascertaining that the interpretations and data of the investigation do not stem from the imagination of the inquirer, but are evident derivatives of the data (Kornbluh, 2015). Reflective commentaries are essential for reference, tentative interpretation, and planning of data collection. Reflexivity entails assessing the stimulus of the researcher's interests, perceptions, and background on the progress of the qualitative investigation (Scott, 2011). Commentary may comprise of analytic memos, annotation, and notes on the data and the researcher's experience, including reflections on the researcher's personal relationship to the topic, code choices, and problems or ethical dilemmas that may arise during the course of the research (Saldana, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

IRB approval was sought, and approval was received by Walden University before any data collection. My IRB approval number is 07-17-20-0546255. Every effort was made to ensure the ethical treatment of human participants and appropriate collection, storage, and disposal of all data collected. Consent was obtained at the onset of the focus groups after providing participants with the necessary details of the study. A consent form included a brief overview of the study; withdrawal information, confidentiality measures, and appropriate contact information. The principle of voluntary and informed consent recognizes that respecting the wishes of the participants is essential for obtaining information without coercion (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). The crucial aspects of the research about which the informants were made aware include benefits, procedures, purpose, time, and an explanation of the voluntariness of the involvement (Jelsma & Clow, 2015). The participants were furnished with a detailed outline of the purpose associated with this study as part of their informed consent process. The information collected and shared was treated with utmost confidentiality as a way of protecting and showing respect to the participants. Paper records collected were secured in a locked cabinet in the home of the researcher with access only to the researcher. Digital files, including audio recordings, were stored in password-protected files on an external hard drive. Audio recordings were erased as soon as information had been transcribed and were no longer needed for research. All remaining research data collected will be properly disposed of after a period of five years from study completion. The

disposal process will include clearing data from external hard drives and shredding paper documents.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology in conducting qualitative analysis on the impact of social exclusion and community severance on those individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Highway 74 in a mid-size city in the midwestern United States. The current study employed a single site case study design. It utilized focus group interviews of individuals living in the impacted neighborhood to detail the perspectives of those affected by community severance and at risk of experiencing social exclusion as a result. Additional research data emerged from focus group interviews of city government leaders, social workers, and other community leaders who provided their perspective on the effects of community severance. This chapter also provided details on participant selection, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations. The findings obtained from the data collected as outlined in this chapter informed the analysis and discussion in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to understand the effects of community severance on impoverished neighborhoods, focusing on the perspective of individuals living within the impacted area. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

Question 1: What is the lived experience of individuals impacted by community severance, specifically those living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74?

Subquestion 1: What emotions and thoughts do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 have about living in the neighborhood?

Subquestion 2: Based on their experience and perceptions, what do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 believe are the factors that result in social exclusion?

Participants included individuals with a residence in the targeted impoverished neighborhood because it was the perspective of this specific population this case study aimed to explore. A secondary perspective was solicited through professionals and community leaders based on their role in the community and the likelihood that they would know the case. To obtain the multiple perspectives needed to answer the research questions in this study, I conducted focus group interviews, with an average length of 70 minutes each, among two target populations. The first population of people, those currently living in the adjacent impoverished neighborhood, provided the perspective of those impacted by community severance. Interview questions focused on soliciting

participants' feelings and perceptions related to Highway 74. The second population

consisted of people with external knowledge and perspective on the issue. These were

social service providers, city officials, and other community leaders. This group provided

maximum variation and vastly different perspectives (see Marshal, 1996). I interviewed

26 people from the two focus group populations, providing an adequate amount of data to

provide the in-depth understanding necessary for a case study (see Rudestam & Newton,

2015).

Setting

All focus group interviews were held at a community center located in the

targeted neighborhood. This location was selected to facilitate ease of access for those in

the targeted neighborhood. Interviews were conducted in a secure and private room

within the community center that was reserved before holding each focus group

interview. No refreshments were provided. Masks were required of all participants due to

a county health order requiring masks in all public places during the COVID-19

pandemic. Seats were also separated 6 feet to comply with recommended social

distancing guidelines. All focus group interviews occurred without any incidents.

Demographics

Participants were recruited according to the criteria described in Chapter 3.

Participants were grouped into two distinct target populations, one being individuals

living in the targeted neighborhood whose lived experience set the context for this study,

and the second being those with an external perspective on the topic (primarily

community leaders and professionals). Demographic information was not collected prior

to the focus group interviews. According to researcher notes based on observations during the interviews, there were diverse demographic characteristics among both focus group populations. These included age, gender, and ethnicity. Participants of the focus group with people from the targeted neighborhood self-identified that they lived in that neighborhood.

Data Collection

Following the data collection procedures outlined in Chapter 3, three focus group interviews were conducted. The first focus group consisted of eight participants identified as community leaders and professionals. The second focus group consisted of five participants living in the target neighborhood. This number was not sufficient to meet the minimum of eight participants for this target population, so a third focus group was conducted. The third focus group had 13 participants, for a total of 18 participants in that target population. The total number of focus group participants was 26.

All focus group interviews were held at a community center located in the targeted neighborhood. Interviews were conducted in a secure and private room within the community center. All focus groups averaged 70 minutes. Interviews were digitally recorded using two separate recording devices to mitigate the risk of possible equipment failure causing data to be lost.

All focus groups were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which required compliance with social distancing guidelines. Also, a local county ordinance required wearing masks in all public spaces. However, the masks, in addition to the increased spacing of participants, made it difficult to hear and understand participants. This

required additional verification and clarification of participant messages to reduce any uncertainty in their answers.

I considered whether to conduct the focus groups in person or to pivot to a virtual environment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were concerns about access to the internet for the low-income target population, which could have prevented participation in the focus group. I chose to conduct the focus group in person using recommended safety precautions. Each group began by me welcoming them and providing an overview of the study, including consent for participation and collection of any remaining consent agreements that were not provided electronically. Participants briefly introduced themselves if they chose to. Audio recording began after introductions were made. Notes were kept during each focus group interview to keep track of any potential follow-up questions. Before beginning each focus group, I acknowledged my leadership role in the community, explained my role related to the study, and ensured participants that there was no connection between my two roles. I also explained that everything discussed would be confidential and no participant names would be used. Interview guides (see Appendix A and B) were used to guide questions asked.

Data Analysis

The findings were obtained from analysis and interpretation of the data collected, including the transcribed interviews, observations, and reports generated in NVivo. I began data analysis by transcribing the audio recordings over 2 weeks. The coding process occurred over a 6-week period. The first 3 weeks involved a first cycle coding by theming the data contained in the focus group interview transcripts, in which the

participants described their perspective on Highway 74 and its relation to community severance. I analyzed each focus group interview to extract themes developed through lists of statements, repeated words, or phrases that emerged throughout the interview. I used these first cycle codes/themes as nodes in NVivo, which provided the basis for queries in NVivo. I developed these first cycle codes and themes further during the next 2 weeks, in which I continued to pore over the transcripts, audio recordings, and reports generated in NVivo.

The hand coding process continued with the development of categories and subcategories in a second cycle coding process, using focused coding. I collated the initial key concepts and codes into larger groups of ideas and themes that the participants conveyed about community severance and Missouri Highway 74, looking for how ideas were connected. The coding process was open, axial, and selective. In Table 2, the first cycle coding/categories are listed in the left column. A more focused second cycle coding appears in the middle column, grouping participant statements and including the frequency of those statements, and the final themes appear in the last column. During data analysis, 13 first cycle codes emerged and were reduced to three themes and six subthemes, capturing the perceptions of the participants.

Table 2

Key Concepts and Themes

First cycle coding/ categories	Second cycle coding/ sub-categories (items coded)	Themes
Sense of community	Neighbors (1), community (4), connectedness (1), family (2), sense of ownership (2)	Discarded
Division	Northside/southside, this side/that side, down there, over there (19); forsaken, forgotten, isolated, lonely (10); separated, segregated, cut-off, redlined, like a wall, them/they (20) feels sad, numb, heartbroken, numb (6)	Highway 74 created a division
Stereotypes	Unsafe, dumb, poor, crime, profiled, looked down upon, will trash anything, predominately black neighborhood, don't live there	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood- sub-theme: stereotypes
Highway 74- dangerous	Traffic (8); access to get away during the crime (1); crosswalk (2)	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood
Since highway 74	More: worry about children crossing (3); displaced people (3); created a barrier, separated (3); created a barrier (3)	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood
Changes in neighborhood	Used to be: less crime (4); nice houses (3); more open streets (3); more businesses (4); more things for kids to do (1); community school (1); used to look out for each other's kids (4)	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood
Police interaction	Response to crime (9); profiled by police (4); police/community relations (3)	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood- sub-theme crime/police interactions
Highway 74- access	Exits/entrances to the neighborhood (5); bus stops (3); crosswalks (3); general access (5)	Move to perceptions of south cape neighborhood- sub theme: lack of access
Neighborhood conditions	Dilapidated/run down houses/buildings (11); poor lighting (10); trashy/dirty (4); lack of sidewalks (4); lack of parks/green spaces (3); lack of business/economic growth/resources/investment (20); lack of activities for kids (11)	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood
Crime	Outsiders (3); general crime activity/shooting (12); response to crime from the police (5); worries about crime (8); crime all over (4), unsafe (4)	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood - sub theme: crime
City interaction	"they don't care" (7); lack of investment (17); lack of citizen engagement (3), poor representation (8), poor policy (3)	City interaction
Landlords	Landlords not taking care of homes (12)	Perceptions of south cape neighborhood - sub theme: housing/ landlords
Comparison	Compared lighting (4); sidewalks (1); business development (2); city investment/city upkeep (10); houses (1); parks (4); access (2)	Highway 74 created a division

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I aimed to ensure that trustworthiness was an intentional focus throughout the recruitment, data collection, and data analysis process. The focus on trustworthiness included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

I secured IRB approval on July 17, 2020, and followed the IRB guidelines throughout the data collection process. The collecting of documents and focus group interviews from different groups allowed for data triangulation and increased authenticity of the data. I promoted credibility by employing initial hand coding followed by computer software (NVivo) coding for data analysis. Researcher observations were kept in a journal, and observations were recorded during all focus groups. Interview transcripts were reviewed multiple times to ensure data were thoroughly coded. Lastly, I shared copies of the transcripts with each participant via email and allowed each participant to review the transcript for accuracy and provide any feedback. All participants accepted the transcripts.

Transferability

In Chapter 3, I described the data collection and analysis process to ensure the transferability of this study. Details of the purposeful sampling process, including criteria used for identifying participants, allows for potential follow-up studies. A thorough accounting of the recruitment process, research setting, and data collection process of this study further enhanced transferability.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, I followed proper research practices to give future researchers a guide by which to do repeat studies. I also demonstrated my learning development through the adaptation in the collection process and the multiple phases of coding and theme development. Lastly, I discussed my role during the informed consent process to limit any perceptions of biases or authority.

Confirmability

Objectivity, according to Patton (2002), is not attainable; rather, fairness in reporting research should be the aim, requiring a reasonable account for any potential researcher bias. In the actual data collection process, I conducted transcript review to allow participants to check the data for accuracy. I also employed open-ended questions to encourage authentic responses from the participants. Finally, I used personal reflection in journaling to monitor my involvement and biases in the data collection process.

Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the effects of community severance on impoverished neighborhoods, focusing on the perspective of individuals living within the impacted area. In asking questions, I was interested in understanding the impact of Highway 74 on the residents of the adjacent low-income neighborhood. The central research question for this study was the following: What is the lived experience of individuals impacted by community severance, specifically those living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74? I also asked "what emotions and thoughts do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent

to Missouri Highway 74 have about living in the neighborhood?" and "based on their experience and perceptions, what do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 believe are the factors that result in social exclusion?"

From three focus group interviews with a total of 26 participants, I obtained over 130 meaningful pages of dialogue addressing community severance and perceptions of Missouri Highway 74 and its impact on the South Cape Neighborhood. The synthesized themes emerging from my analysis of participant responses to the focus group interview questions are described below.

Theme 1: Highway 74 Creates a Division

This theme was discerned from review responses to multiple questions asked in each focus group where there were multiple references to divisive language throughout the entire interview data, from both those living in the targeted neighborhood and from those offering an external perspective on the issue. Words and phrases that alluded to division were coded and subsequently provided the basis for this theme. Responses to being asked to describe the South Cape Girardeau Neighborhood as defined as south of Missouri Highway 74 included multiple references to "down here" and "this side," supporting a clear geographic separation, often referred to as the "north side" and the "south side." There were multiple references to segregation and redlining. Highway 74 was frequently described in terms of a barrier, referred to as a wall, as evidenced by the following samples of participant quotes:

"You're separated by the barrier." (Participant 4, Focus Group 3)

"It is cut off from the rest of the town." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"Is this section of town, is it still redlined or whatever you would say? Is it still more difficult to get financing (Participant 4, Focus Group 1-External Perspective) "I don't think they can legally do that anymore?" (Participant 3, Focus Group 1- External Perspective) "So that's not… I mean there's practice and then there's reality." (Participant 4, Focus Group 1-External Perspective) "It is not spoken." (Participant 2, Focus Group 1-External Perspective) "It is not blatant." (Participant 3, Focus Group 1-External Perspective) "It's not as spoken and blatant, but guarantee you it is." (Participant 2, Focus Group 1-External Perspective)

"I remember when it (Highway 74) was built as a kid. And I remember being cut off from the rest of town because my parent's thing was don't cross any major streets." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

> Gosh, it's just like back in the day when they said they used to take the railroads
> and put through the towns to provide that side of a population up. The low income
> but they run it through that part of the town to separate people and that's kind of
> what you've got with this highway. (Participant 3, Focus Group 3)

Aside from language used that describes the geographic separation caused by Highway 74, participants described the neighborhood as "forgotten" and "overlooked." Participants described feelings of isolation and loneliness, often expressing frustration exhibited through expletives, raised voices, and other non-verbal cues. There was overwhelming evidence that Highway 74 creates a disconnection between those living in the South Cape Neighborhood and the rest of the Cape Girardeau community, as

expressed by both those living in the target neighborhood and those with an external

perspective on the issue. A sampling of participant quotes below indicates a disconnect:

"To me, it's forgotten about. It's a forgot about area." (Participant 3, Focus Group

3)

"You're cut off. It's like they've forgotten about this side of town." (Speaker 5,

Focus Group 2)

Like it's forsaken. It's just a forsaken neighborhood and they're making the most

disenfranchised group come up out of a neighborhood to try to get anything,

anything at all. So, I feel like it's just a forsaken part of Cape. (Participant 7,

Focus Group 3)

"It is almost like a forgotten land over there." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"It's disconnected." (Participant 1, Focus Group 2) "Disconnected, yes."

(Participant 4, Focus Group 2)

"It just further deepens the fact that it's disconnected from the rest of the town."

(Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"I don't know, it almost seems, it's almost as if the disconnection is known, seen,

and felt." (Speaker 3, Focus Group 2)

The analysis also found that throughout the participant's descriptions of the

neighborhood and its conditions there were comparison references of "this side" and "that

side" throughout. Participants provide a wealth of comparisons, from economic

development activities to road repair. Participants provide multiple examples that they

perceived to distinguish the South Cape neighborhood from the rest of the Cape

Girardeau community. Most notable was the perception of lack of investment in the neighborhood, comparatively, which lends itself to Theme 3 regarding interaction with the City Comparison language was not inclusive of those living in the target neighborhood and was reinforced by comparisons made by the focus group consisting of those with an external perspective. Nearly every comparison made by those living in the target neighborhood was likewise mentioned by those with an external perspective. Comparison language is revealed in the following sample of participant quotes:

"It (South Cape neighborhood) looks substantially different than the rest of Cape Girardeau." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

I mean it doesn't have the same things that the rest of Cape has. It has a park, but that park is not in any shape anyway, and how near the other parks in Cape Girardeau. It's basically a shelter, a swing, and a ridey horse, which that's not considered a family park. So, you don't even have the same quality of living that you would have on the other side of 74. (Participant 2, Focus Group 2)

"That's a major difference. There are no green spaces." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"You can walk four blocks over that way and see a whole new world like it's a great big, beautiful town." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"Everything's over there, nothing's over here." (Participant 6, Focus Group 2)

I mean it looks different. Even though there has been a light audit in South Cape, it's still darker, physically darker on the streets in South Cape versus the rest of Cape Girardeau. I mean most places (outside of South Cape) are at least

beautified or kept to a different standard. They work on sidewalks and streets in

sections over here but on the other side of town, you'll see them take out the

whole block and make you go around a detour. They work on it all in one wop.

They don't do that over here. They just fix a hole every now again or a pipe when

it busts or a piece of a sidewalk when somebody complains too much. But as far

as anything else, I mean they don't come and fix anything. (Participant 7, Focus

Group 3)

"There is less money spend on this side." (Participant 4, Focus Group 3)

Theme 2: Perceptions of South Cape Neighborhood

This theme and subsequent sub-themes derived from participant's continued

descriptions of the South Cape neighborhood, providing insight into the lived experiences

of those living in the target neighborhood, their thoughts, and perceptions about living in

the neighborhood, and the factors that contribute to those perceptions. Multiple words

and phrases were referencing negative neighborhood conditions, with initial coding of

crime, police interactions, access, housing, landlords, stereotypes, city interaction, and

general neighborhood conditions. Continued theming of the data resulted in grouping

these codes into multiple sub-themes of the theme- negative neighborhood conditions.

Crime and police interactions were combined into one sub-theme and housing and

landlords were also combined into one sub-theme.

Subtheme A: Crime, Police Interactions

The dialogue throughout all three focus groups was marked with references to

crime, both as an effect of Highway 74 and a factor in the negative perceptions of the

neighborhood. South Cape neighborhood was frequently described as "Dangerous,"
"Unsafe," and where all the crime occurs. "I don't know what the reality is, but the
perception is for sure that there's way more crime." (Participant 5, Focus Group 1-
External Perspective) Although not discussed in the focus group providing external
perspective, both focus groups consisting of those with the lived experience in the target
neighborhood, described several negative police interactions and the response to crime in
the South Cape neighborhood. A sampling of participant quotes below describe these
concerns and interactions:

"I really think its…74 is really dangerous and when things happen on the
Southside of town, they have access to get away before the police even find them, and it's
really dangerous down on this side." (Participant 6, Focus Group 3)

"One going to the graveyard, one going to the penitentiary. That's it." (Participant
9, Focus Group 3) "That's it" (Participant 6, Focus Group 3)

"I personally don't like anything about it (South Cape) because now you can't let
your grandkids out to play. After 9:00 they start shotting. When the police come, didn't
see them." (Participant 3, Focus Group 3)

"That's the main reason why I don't get out after work. I come right home and
that's it. I just don't want myself in those situations at all. I mean, it's just so
unpredictable." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"You can't leave your doors unlocked no more." (Participant 1, Focus Group 2)
"Lock your car doors, too." (Participant 4, Focus Group 2)

"I rode to Save A lot and rode there on a bicycle. They left me alone over there. Shoot, I got two houses down from where I lived, and the police pulled me over. I mean and I live there, and they don't even know it. It's like they don't care." (Participant 9, Focus Group 3) "And they're nosy." (Participant 6, Focus Group 3) "I said, 'why'd you stop me? I am on a bicycle.' I had lights on and everything. He said, 'well, you fit the description of someone we're looking for." (Participant 9, Focus Group 3)

People are getting beat up by the police. It doesn't matter if you're on the north or Southside. And it doesn't matter. [inaudible] if you're doing something wrong as you long as you did what the police said anyway, you'd be all right. Well, that ain't the case, and I know why people are scared of them. I'd be afraid to raise my kids down there. (Participant 4, Focus Group 3)

When my brother moved here, he was walking down the street and with his girlfriend. And a cop stopped them walking, with his lights on. And stopped them and literally asked him "What is you doing in this neighborhood? Are you looking for drugs?" I mean, literally asked him that. (Participant 5, Focus Group 2)

And then the other thing is the police. They assume because you're on the south side, or you're from the south side that you're doing something wrong. You've got drugs on you, or you're on your way to a dope house. (Participant 5, Focus Group 2)

Subtheme B: Access

There were multiple references to Highway 74 limiting access to a wide variety of things, including businesses, employment opportunities, healthcare, schools, friends,

family, resources, and parks. There was some conversation about the intentionality of the placement of 74 and even references to redlining. This was outside the scope of this research and not explored further. Walkability across 74 was brought up frequently, with remarks on the limited options to cross over it. It should be noted that upon review of the Environmental Analysis completed by the Missouri Department of Transportation as part of the planning efforts around Highway 74, there were recommendations to have multiple access points or connecting streets across Highway 74. However, these were never completed. The below sampling of participant quotes indicate limitations on access:

"They can't even walk and get an ice cream unless you got to go up there by 74. Nobody wants their kids up there by 74." (Participant 5, Focus Group 2)

"You got to get over the highway and then cross a major street just to get something from the store." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"There are no sidewalks but one place. There's only one place to cross from there to there. And that's right there at the main." (Participant 6, Focus Group 2)

If you want to be technical you can only leave from Sprigg or the 'rust bucket'. That's your only option of coming off of this side of town. I mean, you can walk all the way around this way, but the [crosstalk]. Come on, who's going to walk down west end with no type of sidewalk or anything and they speed. (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"One way in, one way out." (Participant 1, Focus Group 3)

"They tear everybody away and then they blocked us off." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"The houses are better, access to medical, access to quality grocery stores. Those are the differences. Access to restaurants. Access to shopping." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

They just need more ways to cross. They need more ways to get over, that what it's all about. More ways to get across, safe places for the kids to be able to get over there. Everything's over there, nothing's over here. (Participant 6, Focus Group 2)

You have no access to any type of education. You have no access to know how to communicate or get the resources that you need to get the education. You have so many people over here who can't even make it to the school board to speak on behalf of their children who they know need more help, but they can't even get there to get them that help. You are disconnected completely. That is a huge psychological barrier when you feel like you can't get the help because you can't get there without having to come completely out of your way or pay for a taxi, or get a cargo, which is a ridiculous amount, or come up with gas money for somebody. (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"But if you live on this side of town it makes it harder to get a job, it makes it harder to go places. It just makes that barrier there." (Participant 6, Focus Group 2)

I think there's no businesses over 74 in Deep South. I think that as soon as you hit that little turn over there by Mobile going into 74. You get to that next stoplight, it looks like a whole different town because it's lit up, it's beautiful. But you come back around that corner and you've got raggedy houses, houses being torn down,

banquet centers being turned into bars and residential neighborhoods. You've got

a lot of shooting at those bars and no regulation. 74, I mean for what it's worth

it's great that we got a new bridge, but it segregated the city and therefore

segregated work and businesses. Nobody over here can get a job in their

neighborhood. Nobody over here can go to school in their neighborhood.

Everybody has to come out to do anything of any type of quality outside of the

South Cape neighborhood. Even to go to the elementary school, you still have to

come out of the South Cape neighborhood. You have to cross over 74.

(Participant 7, Focus Group 3

"No jobs. No businesses. No access." (Participant 7, Focus Group 3)

"The crosswalks. We need some… They need to be lit up. We need safe

crosswalks." (Participant 10, Focus Group 3) "There's only one crosswalk. But there's

only one crosswalk, isn't it?" (Participant 8, Focus Group 3) "There's only one and that's

the one that goes over 74." (Participant 10, Focus Group 3) "Everybody can't go across

that bridge." (Participant 9, Focus Group 3) "You have people running around here that

can barely walk. They can't walk up that." (Participant 9, Focus Group 3)

My experience living, my father used to live on [inaudible] by the school. You

could easily ride your bike down the streets that were not major freeways,

fairways. So now, kids cannot do that. They are going to have to go through not

only just the neighborhood, Sprigg Street, which is a very busy truck street. And

then, they're going to get to a highway that they have to cross. So, it's not as

easily walked or traveled or whatever. (Participant 3, Focus Group 1- External Perspective)

And I think there needs to be noted that there is no food in that area. The only way you can get to a grocery store if you don't have an automobile is to walk across that highway, which is dangerous, but that's the only way to get to the closest grocery store." (Participant 8, Focus Group 1- External Perspective)

"And you are right, (deleted for anonymity), there's nowhere for those individuals if they don't have an automobile transportation to go just walk to the corner grocery store or whatever it might be." (Participant 4, Focus Group 1- External Perspective)

Subtheme C: Housing, Landlord

In describing the South Cape neighborhood, there were significant mentions of poor neighborhood conditions, including trash, brush, potholes, broken sidewalks, and dilapidated houses. The neighborhood was described, overall, in terms of decline and rising deterioration. Discussions on overall neighborhood conditions, particularly in references to housing, brought up multiple statements regarding perceptions of landlords who owned property in the neighborhood. Landlords, as participants described, were to blame for the poor conditions of rental property. The following participant quotes describe participant perceptions of the South Cape neighborhood:

"The houses are run-down. The upkeep is not there." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

"There's an abandoned home every three homes over here, four homes. And if they're not trying to do nothing with them, what do you think people are doing with these abandoned homes?" (Participant 6, Focus Group 2)

Now you got Rent Semo and Jason Coalter buying up all the properties over here, and they're not doing shit with them. They'll make them livable to get you in there, but then that's it. They're not painting anything; they're not cleaning the outside of the homes. They're not doing any of that. They're just putting people in there, poor people. As much as they can. (Participant 6, Focus Group 2)

Most of these people are not homeowner's in this area. Most of these people are renters. For most of these people, it's not their responsibility to take care of the land and the homes that are on it. We need to start holding the landlords responsible. But then they say "Oh, they trash our houses." When nine times out of 10, most of the people that rent over there, the houses were trashed before they got there. (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

Yeah. Because there's really nothing here but the people that are making money is the landowners and the landlords which are part of the cause of the problem of depreciating property value because they don't fix their houses up. They charge the same amount of rent. Their house is paid for that they bought cheaply, and it doesn't matter if they fixed it up or not. People are still going to rent it. (Participant 4, Focus Group 3)

"Well, the landowners, well they call them slum lords a lot and I met a few of them, and they are responsible for a lot of it." (Participant 4, Focus Group 3)

But one of the things that I would say to your point that you said a while ago about property owners. I've driven down Sprigg lots of times going to different meetings and stuff. There are people that I've seen homeowners who you can tell they have a big sense of pride in their property, they take care of it. They're sitting out on their porches.

And I think there does need to more of that. I think there needs to be like you said, the property owners who are renting out to tenants also need to have a sense of pride and caring about… (Participant 5, Focus Group 1- External Perspective)

Subtheme D: Stereotypes

There were a large number of statements made by participants that described stereotypes of the South Cape neighborhood, mostly regarding criminal activity and also racial make-up of the neighborhood. Participants reported the stigma associated with living in that neighborhood and examples of how that stigma was reinforced by police and city interactions. Below is a sample of participant quotes indicating stereotypes of the South Cape neighborhood:

I think there is an unfair assumption about the level of crime, the type of crime. Crimes are happening in other parts, but it may be some crimes that never hit the books where you see them at Cape County. But you're going to see them in a court, federal court, hello. Things like that, to where it has risen to the next level. (Participant 1, Focus Group 1- External Perspective)

I mean, I think the other perception in South Cape that we have experienced with our clients is that our white clients think that's where only black people live. And so, there is a perception of, 'that's not where I should be.' I don't know how else to say that. (Participant 5, Focus Group 1- External Perspective)

"I think there is a stereotype of on the Southside. I just think they think we're much poorer maybe than…" (Participant 2, Focus Group 3) "Dumber." (Participant 9, Focus Group 2)

So even coming here, not very long after being here, I was given the impression that that side of 74 is this, that, and the other and it was expressed not only in how [inaudible] said but in facial expressions. "You live over here and it's great but don't go over there." So, the whole expression changed and your attitude of it changed. (Participant 9, Focus Group 3)

If I could add to what (deleted) was saying, back where I previously worked, I kept locked lips because many times [inaudible] somebody else just handling the phone call. But people that are searching for cities to move to and they might think about Cape Girardeau, they would call in and they would ask what is the crime percentage in Cape Girardeau? What are the best schools? What schools are the best? The other question, what side of down should we not ... I heard [inaudible] 20 years. I heard many times because I work in community affairs. I heard many times that the information and those questions were answered with a negative response. Never once was it, even back in the old days ... Never once

was it a positive statement regarding the Southside. That was even before 74 and

after 74. (Participant 3, Focus Group 3)

"They give South Cape worse of a rap than any other place, even on Hanover and
Bloomfield, like you said. We all know that that is one of the worst places in town."
(Participant 3, Focus Group 3)

"I mean, I just think for lack of a better words, it just makes people feel poorer. I
mean, you know. It just automatically this assumption that if you live there you clearly
don't have any money." (Participant 1, Focus Group 1, External Perspective)

Theme 3: City Interaction

There was a clear negative perception of the city leadership by those living in the

South Cape neighborhood, with references to the City Manager, ward representatives,

and city employees. References to the city alluded to perpetuating the problem by lack of

action, lack of follow-through, poor policies, and poor representation. There was also

mention of the possible intentionality of the placement of Highway 74, by the city.

Although not further explored in this research, it indicates a deep disconnect between

those living in the target neighborhood and city leadership. The perceived disparity

between South Cape neighborhood and the remaining Cape Girardeau city was often

blamed on the city giving more attention to one side over the other. Ward representation,

or a perceived lack of, was mentioned several times. Additionally, participants referenced

examples of perceived disparity in communication tactics and overall responsiveness to

neighborhood needs. It should be noted, not surprisingly, that this was an area not

strongly reinforced by those with an external perspective. A sample of participant quotes

describing participants' perceptions of and feelings toward the City of Cape Girardeau are included below:

"The City Manager said he was going to put crosswalks and bike trails in South Cape and that was out of his own mouth." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2) "Right, the don't do anything. They do nothing. Absolutely nothing." (Participant 5, Focus Group 2)

"The City work isn't put into south of Cape as it is in the other alley areas of town. The lighting is different." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

Or what about how they (the City of Cape Girardeau) allow South Cape have all that brush growing over the sidewalks. So even when there is a sidewalk you can't get to the sidewalk because there's too many bushes and trees blocking the sidewalk." (Participant 11, Focus Group 2)

And there's a city ordinance that if there is a sidewalk, they didn't say anything about the brush, but if there is a sidewalk, and you walk in the street, doesn't matter if it's got a whole bunch of brush covering it up, you will be cited. You will get a ticket. (Participant 1, Focus Group 2)

"But there's also something that says the sidewalks shouldn't be covered. I mean, if they're going to make a rule they need to abide by their own damn rules." (Participant 3, Focus Group 2)

And one thing is different too because you got to think about the workers. The workers go everywhere. The city of Cape Girardeau on employees, public works, and all like that, they go everywhere in the city. So, they will respond or speak or act maybe a little different in different parts of the city versus over here. There is

a little more respect that is shown, where you talk about the signs don't get put

out and all that. They just do their stuff, and they get on, okay, okay. Signs get put

out. "Morning ma'am, how are you doing? (Participant 1, Focus Group 2)

There is a difference. So, then you have to look at the air. I don't even know how

to. The people are just the same people, the same employees but they perform

differently in the areas that they're in. Does that make sense? (Participant 1,

Focus Group 2)

"Yeah." (Participant 5, Focus Group 2) "Yeah." (Participant 6, Focus Group 2).

Am I making sense? Because I think where you're talking about feelings they too,

once they cross 74 feel a different way. Do you understand what I'm saying? So,

they perform in a different manner. They work in a different way. Versus going

out there where Doctor's park is or on Lexington. (Participant 1, Focus Group 2)

"They don't take the time to have a conversation, they just want to get it done and

get out. (Participant 5, Focus Group 2)

"I mean if the city would take care of South Cape like they do the rest of the

city…" (Participant 5, Focus Group 2)

The city needs to work on this area. The city needs to put more grants on this

area, build these houses up because a lot of people don't have money to build this

area back up over here. So, if they would put money into this area and build back

up over here, it would look better and people would feel safer. When it looks

good people feel better, they do better. So right now, I see that they don't care, we

don't care, and that's what I get from that. (Participant 3, Focus Group 3)

That's why it's most important when ... I almost said the word poor. But when

you are impoverished and you have lack of knowledge, it is so very, very

important to know who you vote into your ward. Who's going to cover your ward

because when you don't have the knowledge, the words to speak to go to the City

Council, that person that you vote in to be over your ward that you live in, that 74,

it is a divider. 74 is a divider. That ward person is supposed to speak for the

people. You voted them in. They should be able to get up there and open their

mouth and be a voice for you. Be a voice for you. (Participant 3, Focus Group 3)

Key Findings

Participants of this study had varied feedback describing their perceptions of

Missouri Highway 74 and its impact on the South Cape Girardeau Neighborhood.

Participants expressed their feelings on Missouri Highway 74, South Cape

Neighborhood, and the factors influencing their perceptions. The external perspective

provided by the focus group responses of city leaders and professionals reinforced the

shared experiences discussed by those living in the target neighborhood. The following

findings reflect the data collected from the study participants.

Finding 1

Missouri Highway 74 not only geographically segments the South Cape

neighborhood from the rest of the Cape Girardeau community-limiting access to

economic and social connections-, but also perpetuates the perceived division between

the two by creating sides of a community.

Finding 2

South Cape neighborhood is wrought with stereotypes that further divide the communities, and these stereotypes are reinforced by a hyper-focus on criminal activity in that neighborhood, overall poor neighborhood conditions, and perceptions of poverty.

Finding 3

There is a strained relationship between those living in the South Cape neighborhood and the City of Cape Girardeau, including city leadership and law enforcement. This is bolstered by the perceived disparity in the attention given to each neighborhood by city officials, including on sidewalks, parks, street repair, economic development, and overall upkeep.

Summary

In this Chapter, I provided results from the analysis of data collected, including from the transcriptions of three focus groups. The results answered the research questions as outlined previously. This chapter also described the setting, participant demographics, data collection, and the data analysis process. This chapter also discussed how I ensured trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Findings from this chapter support the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, further supporting the conceptual framework. Chapter 5 will provide an interpretation of the research findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Transportation-related infrastructure, such as highways and interstates, creates a barrier that can physically limit access to grocery stores, parks, and other essential services to those living in adjacent neighborhoods, a phenomenon known as community severance. In addition to creating a physical disconnect by geographically segmenting the neighborhood from the rest of the community, these infrastructures can leave residents feeling socially isolated and excluded from the rest of the community. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the experiences that people living in low-income neighborhoods have related to transportation infrastructure that geographically segments the neighborhood from the rest of the community. This study addressed a significant gap in the literature: the perceptions of low-income individuals at risk of social exclusion and experiencing community severance. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the effects of community severance on impoverished neighborhoods, focusing on the perspective of those individuals living within the impacted area.

This study included three focus groups. One focus group was conducted with eight community leaders or social service providers. This group was questioned about their perspectives on the impact of Missouri Highway 74 on the community, their professional involvement with clients and community members, and their views on the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood (see Appendix A). In addition, two focus groups were conducted with 18 individuals who self-identified as living or having recently lived in the targeted South Cape Girardeau neighborhood, selected based on their lived

experience in the target neighborhood and their perceptions of Missouri Highway 74. Each focus group lasted approximately 70 minutes, and responses were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Field notes were also kept regarding general observations and potential follow-up questions. The research questions were the following:

Question 1: What is the lived experience of individuals impacted by community severance, specifically those living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74?

Subquestion 1: What emotions and thoughts do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 have about living in the neighborhood?

Subquestion 2: Based on their experience and perceptions, what do individuals living in the impoverished neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74 believe are the factors that result in social exclusion?

The study results were obtained through an inductive review of focus group transcripts, identification of the frequencies of similar words and phrases, the establishment of categories and subcategories, and the development of meaningful themes elicited from the data. Major themes included Highway 74 creates a division, perceptions of South Cape neighborhood, and city interaction. Analysis of these themes yielded three key findings. In this chapter, I interpret the findings from this study, provide recommendations for continued research, describe implications for positive social change, and provide final thoughts.

Interpretation of the Findings

Finding 1

Missouri Highway 74 not only geographically segments the South Cape neighborhood from the rest of the Cape Girardeau community, limiting access to economic and social connections, but it also perpetuates the perceived division between the two by creating sides of a community. This finding was consistent with Delbosc's (2012) description of community severance in terms of physical infrastructures in transport systems interacting and influencing their environments. Anciaes et al. (2015) described community severance as a perceived or experienced physical or psychological effect caused by the division of space. In an extensive literature review, Quigley and Thornley (2011) provided multiple definitions of community severance, in which they cited a New Zealand report that defined community severance in terms of alienation felt by the community, which was also consistent with current findings.

Castells (1998) argued that income polarization can divide a population spatially, creating zones of exclusion. Bryne (2005) described this as spatial exclusion. The concentration of poverty within neighborhoods can lead to an increase in perpetuating exclusion (Lichter, et.al., 2012). The literature on the subject also indicated that poor neighborhoods are less likely to experience business development, housing development, and increased access to public goods or services (Department of Social Security, 1999). As the neighborhood continues to decline economically and to deteriorate physically, the more excluded it becomes (Department of Social Security, 1999). Delbosc and Currie (2011a) conducted research on transportation and well-being, which supported the

conclusion by many researchers that lack of access resulting from transportation barriers increases the effect of social exclusion. Highways can limit access to essential services, including jobs, health care, educational institutions, and social support (Lucas, 2012). In addition to the physical disconnect, highway structures can create a psychological severance (Quigley & Thornley, 2011) that leaves residents feeling isolated and cut off from the rest of the community (Lucas, 2012).

Finding 2

South Cape neighborhood is wrought with stereotypes that further divide the communities, and these stereotypes are reinforced by a hyper focus on criminal activity in that neighborhood, overall poor neighborhood conditions, and perceptions of poverty. Muddiman (1999) pointed out that although zones of exclusion often gain sensationalized attention through media coverage of the negative indicators of social exclusion, such as crime and deteriorating housing, they also result in the division of the neighborhood from the rest of the community.

Finding 3

There is a strained relationship between those living in the South Cape neighborhood and the City of Cape Girardeau, including city leadership and law enforcement. This is bolstered by the perceived disparity in the attention given to each neighborhood by city officials, including on sidewalks, parks, street repair, economic development, and overall upkeep. The literature indicated that relative deprivation is associated with perceptions of being unfairly disadvantaged, comparing oneself to a reference (Korpi, 1974). In the current study, the reference group was those north of

Highway 74. Consistent with relative deprivation, participants living in the target neighborhood expressed a great deal of frustration, believing they are being unfairly deprived of things that they see happening on the north side of Highway 74, including economic development activities, parks, repairs, and city attention. Runciman (1966) pointed out that it is not necessarily money or tangible items that a person may lack, but also power, recognition, or status. Participants in the current study described feeling powerless and lacking strong ward representation at the city level, feeling forgotten and overlooked, and feeling less than because of the stereotypes of living in South Cape neighborhood.

Highways have been purposefully designed to separate neighborhoods along socioeconomic and racial lines, with evidence of racial segregation caused by highways in urban cities across the United States (Fox, 2017). Silver and Miller (2003) argued that the perception of social seclusion denotes a tendency of pushing the poor and vulnerable persons away from corporate ambitions, marginalizing them from the greater community, and stripping them of their sense of belonging or connectedness. Although the current study was not intended to assess whether Missouri Highway 74 was purposefully placed in its current location, participants from both focus group populations mentioned redlining, segregation, and feelings that Missouri Highway 74 was designed to separate the low-income neighborhood from the rest of the community. Focus group data demonstrated that Missouri Highway 74 creates a division, both geographical and psychological, disconnecting the South Cape neighborhood from the greater Cape

Girardeau community. This outcome of social exclusion is supported in existing literature (Crisp, 2010).

Silver (1994) described social exclusion in terms of the included and the excluded, and the root cause of social exclusion is associated with institutionalized discrimination rather than individual discrimination. Madanipour (2011) similarly described institutions' role in limiting access to resources by the excluded group, which is typically visible in low-income neighborhoods experiencing spatial exclusion. Social exclusion has a spatial aspect in which groups of people are excluded, by law, from parts of the city and restricted to specific areas within the city (Madanipour, 2011). Similarly, landscaping and geography have been used to distinguish spaces, such as mountaintops of the gods, borders along countries, states, localities, and fencing around perimeters. Missouri Highway 74 provides an example of spatial exclusion, described by focus group participants as a barrier and a wall.

Madanipour (2011) described social exclusion in terms of economy and politics. Economically speaking, social exclusion refers to the lack of access to resources, most notably employment. Findings from the current study indicated that Missouri Highway 74 limits access to a wide variety of things, including economic activities and resources. In the political arena, social exclusion is evidenced by the lack of representation in decision-making activities. A prominent theme from the current study was a strained relationship with the city government. Participants mentioned not feeling well represented by their ward representative at the city council level. Madanipour (2011) further noted that attempts of negating spatial exclusion led to further exclusionary

practices, such as transportation infrastructure being built in low-income neighborhoods. The more spatial restricted a population is, the more socially excluded it becomes. Weck and Lobato (2015) described several spatial factors that lead to social exclusion, including the housing market, access to and availability of resources, and stigmatizing perceptions of a place. These factors were evidenced in the focus group narratives in the current study, confirming that the shared experiences of participants who live in the targeted neighborhood were consistent with the literature describing community severance and social exclusion.

Connection to Theory

The theoretical framework that provided the foundation for this study was the theory of relative deprivation, describing either an actual or perceived lack of resources when comparing oneself to another group (Runciman, 1966). Relative deprivation is predicated on the sense of frustration that one may experience when they believe they are being unfairly deprived of something, particularly if they see someone else with it and they feel they ought to have it too. The participant transcripts from the current study included language comparing the South Cape neighborhood with the rest of Cape Girardeau, especially in reference to city attention. Runciman (1966) also pointed out that it is not necessarily money or tangible items that a person may lack, but also power, recognition, or status, and that this can occur at both an individual and a group level. Based on current participant interviews, there was evidence of substantial frustration experienced by those who live in the South Cape neighborhood.

I used social exclusion, as referenced by Lucas (2012), as the conceptual framework in the context of transportation. The literature indicated that the basic determinants of deprivation in a society include alienation and lack of identification with similar members of a community (Knies et al., 2007). Results from the current study indicated that those living in the impacted neighborhood experience alienation consistent with the literature, and express feelings of being forgotten, segregated, and divided from the rest of the community.

Burchardt et al. (1999) offered an operational definition of social exclusion that was consistent with the purpose of the current study, in which the focus is a person's inability to participate in activities deemed to be normal by the community, such as access to parks, grocery stores, and other economic activities, as a result of factors they have no control over. Burchardt et al. also referenced a person's basic need to connect with their community. Findings from the current study were consistent with these observations. Participants referred to being disconnected from family, friends, and the rest of the community as a result of Missouri Highway 74.

Limitations of the Study

Given the relatively small sample size of participants in this study, generalizability may be difficult. Experiences and perceptions could differ in other communities around the United States. However, the results of this case study may be transferable to similar contexts and situations.

Using an interpretivist approach, I sought to understand rather than measure and to present the perspective of the participants rather than that of the researcher (see

Creswell, 2009; Holstein & Gubrium, 2008; Patton, 2002). As a leader of a large

nonprofit in the community where this research was conducted, I anticipated the

likelihood of being known by many of the participants, particularly in a professional

capacity. This proved accurate. I knew all participants of the focus group consisting of

those with a secondary perspective on the research topic. The potential for researcher bias

required me to be mindful of the possibilities of my prejudices, as well as my role as a

researcher compared to my role as a community leader where I have professional

relationships with the City of Cape Girardeau, local law enforcement, and local landlords.

Despite the threat of researcher bias, I did not refrain from including these participants. I

also attempted to minimize this bias through clarification of my role as a researcher

during the informed consent process and throughout the focus group interview.

Recommendations

In the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968, the initial requirement and subsequent

legislation prescribed environmental assessments of the social impact of transportation

infrastructure, in addition to an economic impact, on neighborhoods in the overall

decision-making process. However, there was little guidance regarding to what extent

and how social impact would be measured. Although public hearings were a requirement,

there was no minimum attendance to demonstrate sufficient public input and there was no

mandate that participation consists of those potentially negatively impacted by the

transportation development. Results of the current study demonstrated the potential for

significant negative implications of not giving sufficient consideration to the social

impact of transportation, particularly on impoverished neighborhoods. It is recommended

that future research focus on deepening and clarifying the definition and scope of the potential social impact of transportation for inclusion in future environmental assessments. For further academic research, I recommend an analysis of spending differentials in communities where community severance exists. This type of research may provide quantitative evidence of governmental spending disparities and may support the claim that a disparity exists.

Additional recommendations for future transportation development include increased intentionality of including vulnerable populations in decision making, rather than settling on minimum participation. For example, the Department of Transportation environmental analysis completed in the planning of Missouri Highway 74 indicated that less than a dozen people participated in a public hearing to discuss its impact. It appeared that most were community and government officials, with no mention of discussions about neighborhood-level effects.

Implications

The division of neighborhoods because of a highway or interstate development is an often-overlooked aspect in transportation planning. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to further understand the experiences and perceptions of individuals living in impoverished neighborhoods affected by community severance and subsequently at risk for experiencing social exclusion. It is anticipated that this study may contribute to the understanding of the overall impact that transportation-related infrastructure has on individuals living in poverty. Findings from this study may be used to improve the

understanding of the risk of transportation-related community severance, which may inform future community development policy and transportation impact assessments.

This research has the potential for influencing systemic policymaking activities, particularly in terms of transportation and city planning policies, both significant in the public administration field. Transportation policy is a significant policymaking activity, affecting nearly every person in the nation in some manner, both positively and negatively. Historically, transportation planning has demonstrated its ability to affect neighborhoods and people. Mohl (2002) described the displacement of primarily poor and minority communities in urban cities as a result of interstate and highway development as a strategy to clear out slums and blight. In the late 1960s, research on highway planning began to explore the social cost of interstate development but it was not until the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 that environmental assessments were required to include the social impact, not solely an economic impact, on neighborhoods in the overall decision-making process.

Transportation planning, considering effects that are not solely quantifiable, has great potential for positive social change. Socially conscious transportation development can create inclusive communities and foster well-being in individuals. Additionally, it can still generate the desired economic development benefits so important from the early years of transportation policy (Transportation Economics, n.d.).

Summary

This study intended to explore and better understand the lived experience of those individuals impacted by community severance, specifically those living in the

impoverished South Cape neighborhood adjacent to Missouri Highway 74. Focus group interview questions revealed a variety of thoughts and emotions about the highway and the South Cape neighborhood. Subsequent analysis based on their experience and perceptions gleaned from interview data revealed multiple factors resulting in social exclusion, including stereotypes of the neighborhood, general neighborhood condition, perceptions of disparity between the communities opposite the highway, and the highway itself. The findings from this study and subsequent recommendations have the potential to provide valuable information to transportation policymakers, contribute to the identified gap in the literature, and inform other communities as they explore transportation development opportunities, and thus leading to positive social change.

As a final takeaway, I end with one of the most powerful quotes from a participant that came when, at the end of one of the interviews, I defined community severance and asked if they believed that people that live in the South Cape neighborhood might experience community severance because of Missouri Highway 74. "Sure, but not just us. Not just us, and not just the people that live on the south side. Those that are on the other side feel it too because they don't come over there. They know. So, the whole city feels that. The whole city does" (Participant 1, Focus Group 2).

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Persons Living in South Cape Girardeau

Q1. Tell me about your experience living in South Cape Girardeau?

Describe South Cape Girardeau.

Describe a typical day in your neighborhood.

What things do you like about the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood?

What are things that make you worry about living in South Cape Girardeau?

What are some things that you would like to change about the neighborhood that might make living there more enjoyable?

What advice would you give to someone who just moved into South Cape Girardeau?

Can you describe any situation in South Cape Girardeau that you consider to be unsafe?

Q2. Can you describe any potential barriers that you may experience walking to places within your neighborhood?

Can you describe any potential barriers that you may experience walking to a place outside of your neighborhood?

How did this affect you?

Describe the ease or difficulty in accessing stores, by foot, from your home in South Cape Girardeau.

Describe what you would consider the physical boundaries of South Cape Girardeau.

Q3. Describe your thoughts or feelings when you think about Missouri Highway 74.

Do you believe that Missouri Highway 74 creates a barrier between the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood and the rest of the Cape Girardeau community?

Tell me more about that.

Can you give me an example?

How does this make you feel?

Describe the differences between the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood and the entire

Cape Girardeau community.

What are some of the reasons for these differences?

Define Community Severance

Q4. Do you believe that you or others living in the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood

might experience Community Severance as a result of Missouri Highway 74?

Explain why or why not?

Can you give me an example?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Government Officials and Social Workers

Define Community Severance

Q1. Do you believe that Missouri Highway 74 creates a barrier between the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood and the rest of the Cape Girardeau community?

Tell me more about that.

Can you give me an example?

How do you believe this makes people that live in the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood feel?

Q2. Do you believe that people living in the South Cape Girardeau neighborhood might experience Community Severance as a result of Missouri Highway 74?

Explain why or why not?

Can you give me an example?