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Intraracial, intergenerational conflict and the victimization of African American adults by African American youth

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Walden University
2010

Abstract

Intraracial, Intergenerational Conflict and the Victimization

of African American Adults by African American Youth

by

Katherine E. James

MA, Ashland Theological Seminary, 2002

BS, Spring Arbor University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

November 2010

Abstract

Black on Black victimization amongst inner-city African American youth is a well-documented phenomenon. Less understood are the shared lived experiences of inner-city, middle-aged African Americans who have been victims of crimes perpetrated by African American youth. The purpose of this study was to understand the lived, shared experience of this population. Social ecological theory, psychological sense of community, and crisis theory served as the theoretical frameworks for the study. A qualitative method of phenomenological inquiry was used to gain insight into the meaning ascribed to the victimization experiences, as well as the resulting thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and life-impacting implications. In-person, audio-taped, semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 victimized, middle-aged African Americans. Data were analyzed using Moustakas' method of data analysis. The study produced seven major themes: (a) physical, psychological, and emotional responses; (b) coping, (c) hopelessness, (d) betrayal, (e) traditional values, (f) societal issues, and (g) disengaged acceptance. The data analysis indicated that African Americans residing in this metropolitan location struggle with myriad intraracial and intergenerational challenges; approaches to addressing the challenges were reflected in the seven major themes. The results of this study may contribute to an enhanced understanding of the effects of intraracial, intergenerational victimization, leading to the ability of the mental health community to effectively address the physical, psychological, and emotional outcomes of this victimization experience. This study may also lead to a decrease in mental health related issues and costs, as well as serve as a catalyst for conversation amongst stakeholders.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my greatest cheerleader, my mom Yvonne Woods, who passed away on June 29, 2008. Momma, without you, none of this would have been possible. Life without you is perplexing and quite painful. For 45 years, I was blessed with a precious gift, having the perfect mom for me. I am tremendously grateful to God for blessing me with you. Momma, I miss and love you more than words can express! Thank you for always being proud of me and for always showing that you were happy to see me—that helped me to feel very special throughout my life. Your unconditional love, unwavering acceptance, and dedication to those you loved and countless others, allowed me to become who I am today. Thank you a thousand times over for positioning me to be me. The unparalleled blessings of having had a mom like you are priceless. I love you!!!!!

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a way of helping to get students as close as possible to this reality. He indeed is an advocate and a tremendous blessing. I send blessings back to him, and to his present and future dissertation students.

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Finally, appreciation to all the participants. Thank you for affording me the privilege of experiencing your journey through the story telling process. Without these stories, this process could not have been completed. I am grateful for your willingness and continue to pray for your wholeness and healing.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction to the Problem

Residing within America's inner cities exposes one to poor public services, limited community involvement, substandard public school systems, poverty, and increased criminal activity (United States Department of Justice, 2008; Valdez, Kaplan, & Curtis, 2007). In comparison to suburban residents, inner-city dwellers are forced to continually contend with these unique challenges. As a result, social disorder is a common feature of inner-city life (Ross & Mirowsky, 1999; Ross, Reynolds, & Geis, 2000; Skogan, 1990). Of particular concern is the well-documented phenomenon of inner-city violence and criminal activity. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's 2007 crime report showed disturbing rates for actual reports of violent crimes within metropolitan statistical areas: 49,735 for Michigan; 68,528 for Illinois; 76,431 for New York; 46,597 for Pennsylvania; and 187,861 for California. The estimated numbers are somewhat higher than the actual reports for each state because, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, it is believed that a great deal of crime goes unreported.

African Americans are disproportionately exposed to violence and crime because many of them reside within inner cities (Anderson, Dyson, & Grandison, 1998; Schiele, 2005). In particular, acts of aggression, home invasions, car thefts, shootings, drug trafficking, and vandalism are common occurrences within the collective realities of inner-city African Americans. African American youth, in contrast to other groups racial groups, are reported to be considerably more responsible for perpetrating these violent crimes (Bolland, Lian, & Formichella, 2005; Brunson & Miller, 2006; Spano, Rivera, &

Bolland, 2003). It has been suggested that early exposure to violence, common to inner-city youth, is linked to early and frequent engagement in violent behavior (Brunson & Miller; Cross, 2003; Spano et al., 2003), low academic achievement, and victimization— initially as a victim and later as a perpetrator (Bolland et al., 2005; Evans, 2004). According to Parker (1991), certain groups are also unevenly burdened with victimization. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice (2008) indicated that African Americans are victimized at twice the rate of their European American counterparts. Green and Pomeroy (2007) suggested that criminal victimization–a common phenomenon of inner-city–is amongst one of life's most stressful events. The previously mentioned studies show the unique experiences of individuals residing within America's inner cities. A more extensive discussion of the research literature will be covered in chapter 2.

Inner-city violence amongst African Americans, often referred to as "Black on Black" crime, continues to occur at an alarming rate (Cross, 2003; Parley et al., 2007; Valdez et al., 2007). The preponderance of the literature discussing Black on Black crime is focused on youth to youth violence, and has shown that robberies, assaults, physically aggressive encounters, and homicides are common occurrences amongst African American youth (Aldridge & Daniels, 2001; Anderson et al., 1998; Brennan, Molnar & Earls, 2007). This focus on youth to youth, or peer to peer, engagement neglects other groups that are impacted by inner-city African American youth violence, such as elderly, physically or mentally challenged, and able-bodied, middle-aged African Americans. Particularly relevant to this study are the violent encounters that are occurring between

inner-city African American youth and middle-aged adults. The knowledge gap in the literature was the unique experiences of able-bodied, middle-aged African Americans who are the victims of aggressive or violent acts at the hands of African American youth. Theoretical foundations designed to inform this phenomenon of African American adults who have experienced victimization perpetrated by African American youth were social ecological theory, psychological sense of community, and crisis theory.

Background of the Problem

A unique aspect of inner-city living is the astronical numbers of victims. Criminals within America's inner cities often prey on their own community members. In particular, Black on Black crime is an insidious plague that threatens a majority of inner-city residents (Anderson & Smith, 2005; Uniform Crime Reports, 2002). Home invasions, property damage, car thefts, car jackings, robberies and assaults are common occurrences for many inner-city African American dwellers. Further complicating this issue is the fact that, at times, one's neighbor's child or relative is the criminal element within the community (Xie & McDowall, 2008).

Many studies have found that inner-city African American youth are at highest risk of being victimized (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Kilpatrick, Saunders, & Smith, 2003). Risk of victimization, however, is not limited to youth but extends across generations. An intraracial, intergenerational conflict occurring within America's inner cities is a prevalent phenomenon, and yet Black on Black crime is predominantly discussed from a peer to peer vantage. This phenomenon is not limited to youth experiences; according to the U.S. Department of Justice (2008), able-bodied, middle-

aged, inner-city African Americans are also victims of a myriad of criminal acts perpetrated by African American youth**.**

Miller (1998) stated that more than most traumas, violence that occurs at the hand of fellow human beings robs one of a sense of safety and security. Becoming a victim leaves one in a state of bewilderment and disrupts personal equilibrium-as well as the equilibrium of those around the victim (National Organization for Victim Assistance [NOVA], 2009). As indicated by Green and Pomeroy (2007), victimization is one of life's most stressful events.

For many inner-city African Americans, the likelihood of having their daily living experiences interrupted by victimization is greater than that of their suburban counterparts. For example, African Americans are more likely than European Americans to become victims of robbery, and are more likely to be subjected to overall violence than all other races (United States Department of Justice, 2008). In 2007, an estimated 29% of middle-aged African Americans found themselves victims of violent and property crimes, according to the 2008 National Crime Victimization Survey (United Stated Department of Justice, 2008). Although there is a wealth of literature that discusses the realities of violence and criminal activities within America's inner cities, the focus of these studies is primarily on youth experiences (Aldrige & Daniels, 2001; Bolland, 2003; Bolland, McCallum, Lian, & Baily, 2001), with fewer studies focusing on the elderly (Acierno, Rheingold, Resnick & Kilpatrick, 2004; Beaulieu, Dube, Bergeron & Cousineau, 2007). Because the preponderance of studies on inner-city, Black on Black crime is from a youth perspective, the literature fails to discuss the unique experiences of middle-aged African

American victims. This study was intended to provide insight into the experience of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who have experienced victimization by African American youth.

Statement of Problem

The feeling of hopelessness, increased stress, and disruption in overall psychological wellness amongst inner-city African American youth have received considerable attention and research (Cross, 2003; Bolland, Lian, & Formichella, 2005; Guinote, Brown & Fiske, 2006). Youth exposure to these negative forces is associated with increased levels of violence (Brennan, Molnar, & Earls, 2007), as seen in the epidemic of crime that occurs amongst African American youth. Peer to peer violence among African American youth has led to astronomical numbers of incarcerations, violent assaults, and deaths. A growing phenomenon is the presence of maimed and crippled youth. Increasingly, these individuals require public assistance as their involvement in inner-city life came at the cost of disfigurement (Devlieger, Albrecht, & Hertz, 2007). The preponderance of the research discussing Black on Black crime has primarily focused on this particular group of young African Americans who engage in or found that they were victims of criminal or violent acts. The literature has not been equally inclusive of the other generations impacted by the crime and violence.

Although violence is a common feature of African American inner-city life, it is not limited to youth to youth interactions; in particular, able-bodied, middle-aged African Americans may also become victims of violent or illegal acts perpetrated by African American youth. As previously mentioned, the literature is saturated with discussions of

youth to youth violence, and scarcely covers other vulnerable populations, such as the elderly (Johnson-Dalzine, Dalzine, & Martin-Stanley, 1998) or disabled. The 2008 National Crime Victimization Survey reported a substantial number of middle–aged adults who were victims of crime and violence, and yet, the literature neglects to discuss this phenomenon in relation to this population (U. S. Department of Justice, 2009). Virile African American adults have found that they too may become victims who must protect themselves, their loved ones, and their investments from neighborhood youth. This phenomenon of intraracial, intergenerational conflict warrants further investigation. The overall research question, which was designed to provide insight into these victimization experiences, follows in the next section.

Research Questions

The central question for this study was, "What is the experience of able bodied, middle aged, inner-city African Americans who have been victimized by African American youth?" Deriving from the central question, the complete listing of interview questions was posed to the participants and utilized to ascertain major and subthemes. provided in Appendix C.

Themes

The following were identified as themes: (a) What is victimization, (b) Coping with victimization, (c) Perceptions of African American youth, (d) Perceptions about inner-city living, and (e) Victimization prevention. Examples of questions used to measure the themes include: (a) Describe your victimization experience. (b) How did you cope with the experience? (c) What does it mean to be violated (robbed, vandalized,

verbally abused) by African American youth? (d) Discuss your current thoughts and feelings about living in Detroit. (e) What do you think is necessary to reduce the occurrences of violent encounters in Detroit?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to understand the experience of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who were victimized by African American youth. It was hoped that the ensuing discourse would further the conversation on African American violence by viewing it not from the normal lens of youth to youth or adult abuser to victim, but rather from an alternative perspective of the victimized adult. The primary goal was to bring awareness to an increasing phenomenon, neglected in the literature, by describing the essence of the lived experience. Ultimately, it was hoped that gaining insight into African American adults' thoughts and beliefs about and attitudes and reactions towards the perpetrators (African American youth) would lead to a reduction in the negative interactions and an increase in positive dynamics between these two generations. There are also positive implications for policy makers, community stakeholders, and educators who hold a vested interest in the healthy interaction of African American community members.

Theoretical Framework

For its theoretical foundation, this study relied on Brofenbrenner's (1977) social ecological theory (SET), McMillan and Chavis's (1974) conjecture of psychological sense of community (PSOC), and crises theory as espoused by Lindemann and Caplan (1986).

Social Ecological Theory

SET informed this study as it provided a framework for understanding the interrelatedness of effects within one's environment (Brofenbrenner, 1977). SET suggests that to achieve an understanding of human behavior, one must view it through an environmental contextual lens. This theory helped to establish a context for the violent and aggressive behavior that epidemically occurs within America's inner cities. SET was useful to this study in that it connected common elements of inner-city living, such as poverty, substandard public services, limited community involvement, inferior education and medical services, and poor nutritional practices, with common outcomes of inner-city life, such as elevated incarceration rates, high numbers of single parented households, reduced graduation rates, increased crime, vandalism, violence, and victimization Valdez, Kaplan, & Curtis, 2007. Children reared within impoverished conditions and high crime environments are at increased risk of engaging in criminal behavior within their communities (Li, Nussbaum, & Richards, 2007).

Social ecological theory's focus on embedded systems and dynamic interaction (Jakes & Brookins, 2004) offered a conceptualization of the complex interactions among individuals, family, community, and societal risk factors for the occurrence of violence and victimization. This theory helps to explain the increased risk of victimization, violence and vandalism for African American youth crime. It further elucidates the presence of negative occurrences between able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans and African American youth.

Considering the present state of America's economic system, this theory also offers an explanation for the possibility of increased negative interactions amongst these two groups. Michigan's high unemployment rate of 12.9% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2009) leaves fewer avenues of legal gainful employment for the undereducated and those with criminal records. Hunt (2009) predicts an increase in criminal and illegal activities in impoverished communities as unemployment rates continue to rise.

Psychological Sense of Community

Psychological sense of community, as introduced by Sarason (1974) and expanded through the work of McMillan and Chavis (1986), was also applicable to this study. Their collective research spoke to members' sense of belonging, influence, safety and need fulfillment. African Americans share a unique and troublesome history that provides for common psychological, environmental and sociological experiences or perceptions of such (Johnson, 2006; Spear, 2007). Due to the disproportionate number of African Americans who reside in many of America's impoverished inner cities, also shared is this commonality of shared community. Viewing the interplay of the intraracial and intergenerational conflict through McMillan and Chavis's assertion of psychological sense of community offered the potential to provide insight into the experience and impact of the conflict.

Crisis Theory

Lindemann and Caplan's theoretical contribution of crisis theory provides insight to the potential for human growth and hope inherent in traumatic encounters (Gilliland & James, 1997). Crisis theory provides a potentially useful model for understanding and

responding to the needs of individuals who are under extreme stress (Davis, 2009).

Response to crisis generally occurs in three predictable and sequential stages: (a) the

acute stage, which is the immediate response to perceived danger; (b) the adjustment

stage which involves attempts to regain control over events and reestablish a sense of

normalcy, and (c) the integration stage, which includes efforts to understand that which

has occurred and to reduce the possibility of a reoccurrence (Callahan, 1997; Herman,

1997, Yassen & Harvey, 1998).

Operational Definitions

Able-bodied: refers to a physically or mentally fit individual (State of California,

2007).

Crisis theory: Crisis theory is a theoretical framework that looks at the human

response to crisis - a state in which a person's usual coping mechanisms fail to be

sufficient (James, 2008).

Social ecological theory: Social ecological theory is a framework that looks at the

effects of multiple levels of influence (e.g., individual, dyad, family, peer/community and

social system) on behavioral outcomes (Brofenbrenner, 1979).

Intergenerational: common language referring to experiences between different

generations (Bijleveld & Wijkman, 2009).

Intraracial: common language referring to experiences amongst a race of people.

(Batmon, Qian, & Litcher, 2006).

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD): PTSD is

an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal

in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Traumatic events that

may trigger PTSD include violent personal assaults, natural or human-caused

disasters, accidents, or military combat. (National Institute of Mental Health

[NIMH], 2009, p. 27)

Psychological sense of community: Psychological sense of community is a feeling

that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the

group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to

be together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Victimization: the experience of having a crime or an attempted crime was

committed against oneself, family member or close friend (National Organization for

Victim Assistance [NOVA], 2009).

Assumptions

It was assumed that African American adults residing within Detroit would have

victimization experiences with African American youth. As such, phenomenology was

employed in that the goal was to gain insight to the lived, shared experiences of

individuals (Sadala & Adornao, 2001). The study also assumed that some African

American adults who experienced victimization, perpetrated by African American youth

would perceive themselves as victims. Additionally, it was assumed that participants

would be able to articulate their emotions, thoughts, recollections and conclusions about

the victimization experience; Chaney (1994) cautioned about the potential of flawed

recall. Additional assumptions included the willingness of participants to provide honest responses to the presented research questions and the usefulness of conclusions drawn from data analysis efforts. Finally it was assumed that personal encounters of violence and crime would be experienced differently than non personal encounters.

Limitations

This study was limited to a self-identified group of middle-aged, African American Detroit residents who believed they had been victimized by African American youth.These individuals participated in face-to-face, audio-taped interviews, providing them an opportunity to tell their victimization story. The act of self-reporting was a limitation to this study. It was possible that participants would not be willing to tell the truth about their experience, or their recollection of the victimization encounter could have been flawed. Chaney (1994) indicated self-report errors may include errors of omission, errors of bias, and errors of telescoping. Another limitation included the use of semistructured interviews. There was also the possibility of influnces through the interviewing process. Creswell (2003) discussed the possibility of influence occurring in the interviewing process. As the participants' could unintentionally be influenced by the interviewer. The potential for participants' failure to recall or share pertinent details of their victimization experiences existed. Restricting participation to those with victimization experiences occurring within the last year presented another limitation of the study.

Scope

The scope of the study included African American adults who were between the ages of 35-60, who resided within Detroit, Michigan, and who had experienced victimization by African American youth.

Delimitations

Delimiters were represented by the potential relevance of findings to other communities or people groups. The study may be relevant to other populations who share similar conditions, such as those who experience traumatic encounters, dwell within an urban community and experience within ethnic group violence and crime, individuals suffering with Posttraumatic Stress or other emotional challenges due their exposure to community violence and crime, as well as those who continually contend with poverty and the effects of it.

Significance of the Study

This study added to the body of literature that discusses the violence that occurs amongst African Americans who reside within America's inner cities–often referred to as Black on Black crime (United States Department of Justice, 2007). More specifically, it helped to fill a gap in the literature that neglected to discuss the experiences of inner-city, middle-aged African Americans who have been victimized by African American youth. Positive social change implications may be experienced as a better understanding of the effects of intergenerational, intraracial victimization is achieved. Victimization can lead to loss of well-being, representing multifaceted costs to the victims (Dolan, Netten,

Shapland & Tsuchiya, 2007). One such cost is an increase of mental health issues. Arboleda-Florez and Wade (2001) discussed major depression as a potential risk of victimization.

The potential for decreased mental health issues, related to one's victimization experience has added value for stakeholders –victims, their interpersonal communities and the mental health community. Miller, Cohen and Rossman (1993) reported a cost of $145 billion in reduced quality of life in 1989, as a result of crime and victimization. Green and Pomeroy (2007) stated "ensuring quality of life for victims of crime in society today is a major challenge facing policy makers and helping professionals. For this reason, a better understanding of the factors associated with positive adaptation following a crime event has become a growing concern for researchers" (p. 64).

Summary

Inner-city life is characterized by impoverished living conditions, low community involvement, inadequate housing, substandard public services and frequent criminal and violent acts (Jipguep & Sanders-Phillips, 2003). Historically, America's inner cities have been largely inhabited by minorities, particularly African Americans. Research showed that there are some life-inhibiting dynamics that are common to inner-city life. Widespread amid these is the preponderance of violence and crime that occurs amongst African Americans, commonly known as Black on Black crime. Well documented were countless tragic encounters that occurred between African American youth. Such endeavors like gang related activities, drug trafficking, drive by shootings, robberies, home invasions and car jackings, often led to incarcerations, loss of limbs or even loss of

life. Research vividly highlighted these treacherous encounters amongst the African American youth population, but neglected to discuss another inner-city phenomenon. That is, the intraracial, intergenerational conflict between African American youth and able bodied, middle aged African Americans. This proposed study sought to provide insight to the experiences of African American adults who had been victimized by African American youth. Following will be a review of the pertinent literature in chapter 2, the research design in chapter 3, results in chapter 4; and summary, conclusions and recommendations in chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who were victimized by African American youth and expounds on the myriad implications of an ensuing intraracial and intergenerational conflict within America's inner cities.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research strategies employed while conducting the literature search. Following this is a focus on poverty and its impact on inner-city life–specifically on African Americans residing within America's inner cities. Next, a discussion on the epidemic occurrences of violence and crime within America's inner cities is presented; then the chapter focuses on victimization and coping with victimization. Poverty, crime, violence and victimization adversely impacts community life and psychological sense of community. Each is discussed in the next portion of the literature review, and they serve as an introduction to the theoretical constructs that supported this discussion.

The next section introduced social ecological theory discussing the interrelatedness and realities of interactions between individuals and their environment. Following this section, a discussion on crisis theory offered the possibility of hope as a possible response to a victimization experience. The final section of this chapter provides a brief overview of phenomenology as the chosen research approach for understanding the lived experiences of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who experienced victimization by African American youth.

Research Strategy

The literature research was performed utilizing multiple sources of information. Walden's Thoreau 360 link database search process was employed for each initial search, providing for a broad return of possible sources. General search terms were *inner city*, *poverty*, *violence*, *youth violence*, *crime*, *victimization*, *urban*, *community*, *crisis theory*, *sense of community, psychological sense of community* and *social ecological theory*. Expansive returns were reduced to workable numbers of information by limiting the search to peer-reviewed and full text articles. Additional articles were located by reviewing the references utilized by the authors of the originally located articles. A majority of the articles were located through Walden's online library services. In addition, the interlibrary loan agreement with Indiana University Library was useful in obtaining some information, along with the University of Michigan's Dearborn Campus Library Services. Articles not located through these avenues were retrieved through Michigan's Electronic Library (MEL), Wayne State University's Purdy/Kresge library, Spring Arbor University's online library services, the OHIO Link and Ashland University's online library service and Wayne County Community College District's online databases. The databases employed to conduct the literature review included ProQuest, Wilson Select Plus, SocINDEX, PsychINFO, PsychArticles, SAGE, Academic Search Complete, Gale and ERIC.

Review of Literature

The extant and possibly growing intraracial and intergenerational conflict amongst able bodied, middle aged African Americans and African American youth of this nation's inner cities have far reaching implications for American communities at large. Mears and Bhati (2001) echoed this sentiment as they indicated that conflict for any race of people is a problem for all. The following literature review provided insight into the experience of inner-city life and a discussion of the theoretical constructs that were employed to ground this study.

Poverty

The challenges that exists within America's inner cities, sometimes referred to as ghettos, are exacerbated by impoverished conditions. Ellwood (1998) conceptualized a stark reality about inner-city life, "Ghettos are disastrous places to live. The worst problems of society are found in disproportionate numbers there" (p. 12). Poverty, a prevalent problem within America's inner cities, is a common element in the African American experience. In comparison to their European American counterparts, African Americans disproportionately reside in and contend with impoverished conditions (Brown, Meadows, & Elder, 2007). The U.S. Census Bureau (2005) reported that 24.7% of African Americans lived in poverty compared to 8.4% of European Americans. Poverty is not limited to African Americans, though research showed that it is more prevalent amongst this racial group. In 2006 the percentage of children who lived in poor families by race was 12% for Asian Americans, 10% for European Americans, 27% for Hispanic Americans, 33% for African Americans and 40% for American Indians

(National Center for Children in Poverty, 2007). More recent statistics and salient to this research, are socioeconomic statistics for Michigan. In 2007 24.5 of African Americans lived in poverty compared to 10.2% of Asian Americans, 8.2% of European Americans, and 21.5% of Hispanic Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). This disparaging reality of economic inequities is visible in housing, employment, education, health care and health related issues, recreation, and community involvement - every facet of daily life. While commenting on education in America, Weinstein et al. (2004) discussed advantages such as state-of-the-art facilities, educational programs and more than qualified teachers–afforded to those who are economically privileged; countering those who reside within America's inner-cities. The latter, as purported by Belle and Doucet, 2003; Ginsburg, Alexander, Hunt, Sullivan, and Cnaan, 2002; are forced to contend with chronic poverty, high crime and violence, joblessness, unsafe living conditions, high stress and constant disorder.

Particularly, for African Americans residing within America's inner-cities, the disparities culminate to daily life impacting challenges unique to urban life–of particular importance to this research study is social disorder (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009; Ross, Reynolds, & Geis, 2000; Skogan, 1990). The experience of African American adults who have a victimization encounter with African American youth conceptualizes a type of interchange that is common within these impoverished communities and contributes to the already prevalent social disorder. Poverty has a direct correlation to this negative interchange. The absence of adequate employment opportunities, substandard school

systems and limited resources (Evans, 2004) fosters an atmosphere conducive to counter-productive and often violent engagements amongst inner-city dwellers.

In a dated and yet relevant 1998 article sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Teitz and Chapple provided eight hypotheses for the causes of inner-city poverty. That is, inner-city poverty is the result of the following: structural economic shifts, a reflection of the inadequate human capital of the labor force, results from the persistence of racial and gender discrimination in employment, a product of the complex interaction of culture and behavior; the outcome of a long, historical process of segregation that led to spatial mismatch between workers and jobs and results from migration processes that remove the middle-class and successful members from the community, indigenous growth deficits and public policy that further pigeon holds the impoverished into their present social economic status (Teitz & Chapple, 1998). Literature supported Teitz and Chapple's hypotheses. Scott (2009) and Scott, Salas, Campbell and Faux (2006) discussed the globalization of the economy and its negative impact on manufacturing jobs in the inner-city, and the working class in general. The role of socioeconomic status and its effect on academic achievement and consequent relationship to human capital–referring to growth in productivity of workers (Teitz & Chapple, 1998), is highlighted in literature as well (Fauth, Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Sirin, 2005). Socioeconomic status creates the pathways for access to viable educational opportunities and subsequent employment opportunities.

African Americans share a long history of myriad inequalities. Discrimination is a debilitating reality throughout many facets of African American life (Weinstein, 2004;

Weinstein, Gregory, & Strambler, 2004). Consistent and adequate employment is particularly elusive as discriminatory acts (U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2005) have both a precursor and immediate effect: precursor in that substandard education limits one's ability to be considered for employment leading to upward mobility and immediate in that it determines current living conditions and frames opportunities. Whether or not African American culture is responsible for the plight of inner-cities continues to be a hotly argued debate (Ellwood, 1998) that has roots in response to immigrant populations residing in America's early ghettos (De Forest & Vieller, 1903). Brofenbrenner's ecological view however, recognized the inaccuracy of belief that the answer to poverty lies with any one agent or process (Evans, 2004). Spatial mismatch theory offered further explanations about the employment realities for many African Americans. It posited that due to discriminatory housing practices and mobility limitations, minority workforces were unable to follow low-skilled manufacturing jobs as they exited from the inner-city to the suburbs (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2006). Migration of the middle-class to suburban areas negatively impacts community stability, erodes economic bases, and opens neighborhoods to those without the resources to adequately contribute to its economic betterment. Some suggested that support for local enterprises is the answer for viable economic development within America's inner cities (Blakely, 1989; Porter, 1995, 2008). Teiz and Chapple (1998) referred to this idea as endogenous growth deficit, a deficiency of economic growth from within the community. Through the development of highway construction and provision of federal aid for home buying, public policy is highlighted as being a culprit for sustaining inner-city poverty.

These acts aided in the middle-class exodus of inner cities. Teiz and Chapple also

reported that the 1949 Housing Act intended to eliminate poor housing, in many cases,

rebuilt slums; and welfare payments failed to match rising unemployment rates. Despite

the intent of the 1949 Housing Act, Purcell (2006) purports that poverty and

impoverished conditions continue to plague inner-city communities, increasing the

likelihood of violent and criminal acts.

Violence and Crime Within Inner-City Communities

The inner-city offers myriad avenues for illegal gain. Many, unfortunately,

consider violence and crime to be a viable path to economic gain (Mehlum, Moene &

Torvik, 2002, 2005), poverty experienced within America's inner cities has far reaching

implications for inner-city dwellers as well as the American public at-large. Mears and

Bhati (2006) suggested that "resource deprivation is considered to be a powerful

predictor of homicide" (p. 510). Though homicides are generally committed within close

spatial settings, the impact is not limited to those lacking life enhancing resources. The

violence that ravages urban life, in countless ways, negatively impacts and costs all of the

American public. Kuther and Wallace (2003) contended that the nation cannot afford to

wait for the development of theory to address the problem of inner-city violence as it is a

pressing national problem. Some assert that violence can be attributed to personal or

biological factors (Ellwood, 1989), while others purported that it is a learned behavior

fostered from within one's community (Evans, 2004; Raneri & Wiemann, 2007; Spano,

Rivera, & Bolland, 2006). Understanding the nature of violence and crime is a

prerequisite to reducing their incidences and negative consequences that permeate America's inner-city residents.

Violence and crime in African American communities is a well documented phenomenon (Bingenheimer, Brennan, & Earls, 2005; Bolland et al., 2001; Cross, 2003). Crime statistics indicate that African Americans residing within inner cities are exposed to more criminal and violent acts than their suburban counterparts (Anderson, Dyson, & Grandison, 1998; Evans, 2004). Even more disturbing is the fact that a disproportionate number of serious crimes are committed by African Americans against African Americans (Kilpatrick, Saunders, & Smith, 2003; Valdez, Kaplan, & Curtis, 2007). Few if any areas of inner-city life escape the influence of criminal activities. A primary concern of Keith Johnson, the newly elected president for Detroit Federation of Teachers, was the safety and well-being of the teachers that he represented (American Federation of Teachers, 2009), as this is a factor that hinders teaching and learning at optimal levels. Kuther and Wallace (2003) indicated that many of America's schools are exposed youth to violence. Drive by shootings, gang related activity, assaults and robberies are common occurrences within inner-city school environments. Communities are filled with drug trafficking activities, home invasions, car thefts, robberies, prostitution, vandalism and innumerable reckless and violent activities (Bolland, 2003; Thompson & Massat, 2005). These types of activities are counter-productive to optimal life development and securing viable life sustaining employment. The experience of crime and violence within African American communities, significantly exact negative influences on the well-being of its members (Voisin, 2007; Walker, Maxson, & Newcomb, 2007). Children who reside

within these communities often join the criminal element that so threatens their very

existence (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004; Lord & Mahoney 2007).

Bolland et al., (2005) offered insight into the deleterious behavior that often results from

long-term exposure to violence.

Exposure to Violence (ETV) literature offered a unique aspect about experiencing

violence. It posited that exposure only has a short-term effect on violent behavior (Spano,

Rivers, & Bolland, 2005). Whereas there may be some validity to this notion as one

considers extinction from the lens of Pavlov's classical condition or Skinner's operant

conditioning (Corey, 2009), it is necessary to factor in the effect of the timing and on-

going exposure to violence. For African Americans who reside within inner-cities,

violence and crime are perpetual phenomena that forces one to recurrently contend with

myriad negative repercussions. Kuther and Wallace (2003) indicated, "The experience of

community violence is a significant influence on children's day-to-day lives and has

profound implications for optimal development including the development of sociomoral

reasoning or children's understandings of justice, respect, and relationships" (p. 177).

The results of exposure to violence cannot be underestimated in the lives of inner-city

youth or adults.

Being a victim of violence is possible without personally experiencing the actual

event. Kuther and Wallace (2003) introduced the vicarious nature of exposure to

violence through the idea of covictimization. This phenomenon is an indirect mode of

violence because it is not personally experienced. One can be victimized through

witnessing violent acts in that viewing it can be traumatic experience as well. To that end,

covictimization is particularly problematic for African American youth. Myers and

Thompson (2000) reported that a majority of a sample (91%) African American youth

from a low-income, inner-city community in Detroit reported witnessing some form of

violence, and 85% personally experienced community violence. An equally disturbing

fact is that Black on Black crime rates continues to increase within America's inner-cities

(U. S. Department of Justice, 2007). Given that African Americans are disproportionately

represented in crime ridden communities (Brennan, Molnar, & Earls, 2007), this notion

of covictimization is particularly salient for this population of American citizens.

The insidious crime and violence that exists within America's inner cities cannot

be ignored. The toll on lives and economics is staggering (Braga, 2003; Macmillan,

2001). There appears to be no adequate approaches to effectively managing it, as poverty

and crime within America's inner cities are complex issues (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport,

2006; Kposowa, Tsunokai, & McElvain, 2006; Teitz & Chapple, 1998). Significant to

this study was the role that violence and crime play in the disruptive encounters between

African American adults and youth. Indeed children are being psychosocially and

physically affected by what they hear, see and do within and around their urban

experiences (Evans, 2004; Purcell, 2006; Thompson & Massat, 2006)–as are their adult

counterparts. Family violence, community violence, and witnessing violence are

important variables that must he examined on a greater scale in the future (Thomson &

Massat), particularly from the lens of the able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African

American adults and the affect on community life.

Victimization

Being a victim can substantially interfere with one's normalcy. Green and Pomeroy (2007) poignantly stated that the victimization experience is one of the most stressfully and potentially traumatizing human experiences that one can have. In 2007 the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) reported approximately 23 million violent and property victimizations (United States Justice Department, 2008), with a disproportionate number of the criminal acts occurring within inner cities (Anderson & Smith, 2005; Uniform Crime Reports, 2002). Ellwood (1998) stated that residing within America's inner-cities offers countless opportunities to experience life challenges, including that of becoming a victim. Research supported the assertion that youth are at greatest risk of being the perpetrator or recipient of criminal and violent acts (Siegfried, 2007; Voisin, 2007). Violence and crime within America's inner-cities is not limited to youth–as previously stated–but negatively impact residents of all age groups.

Miller (1998) indicated that violence perpetrated by our fellow human beings robs us of a sense of safety and security and is perhaps one of the most traumatic events experienced. Erika Harrell in her Black Victims of Violent Crime Special Report supported the prevalent presence of victims within urban areas. In 2005, African Americans experienced 805,000 nonfatal violent crimes and 5000 homicides; 37.3% violent victimizations and 64.7% robberies represent incidences for urban Americans, European American suburbanites experienced 21.0% violent victimizations and 41.0% robberies. The 2006 United States Department of Justice, National Crime Victimization

Survey indicated that 18.2% of urban dwellers experienced household crime, in comparison to 12.7% for suburban dwellers.

The statistics showed that a disproportionate number of inner-city African Americans are at risk of contending with the fall out of being a victim. National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA, 2009) indicated that everyday wellness is disrupted once an individual is victimized,both the victim and those around them are often left in a state overwhelming cloudiness. Responses to victimization occur in both the physical and emotional realms. Bodily reactions range from physical shock and disorientation to flight responses; while some common emotional reactions include shock, disbelief or denial (NOVA, 2009). Victims may sustain physical, emotional, financial or social injuries from their experience. Physical injuries include those that are considered minor, to life threatening or life ending. They often involve weapons of some sort normally, nonlethal objects such as the perpetrators hands or feet, to lethal weapons such as guns and knives (United States Department of Justice, 2006). Emotional injuries range from minor slight sleep disturbances to psychological illnesses such as posttraumatic stress disorder (Foster, Kuperminc, & Price, 2003). The lost of work time due to recovery or other needs, replacement of damaged or stolen property, investigative or court costs, medical expenses, or cost incurred in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of another victimization experience, all represent possible financial injuries (National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards [NACVCB], 2009). Social injury is unique to those previously mentioned, in that it is exacted by those not directly related to the victimization experiences. A social injury can be caused by anyone. It is purported

(NOVA, 2009) that social injury occurs when there is insensitivity of treatment experienced by the victim, when the victim believes that no one cares or is unable to get needed help.

Inherent in the victimization experience is the presence of emotional or psychological stress. Individual experiences cover the gamut from slight to tumultuous emotional disturbances (NOVA, 2009). A victim's response to victimization is determined by many preceding factors, along with their unique victimization experience. Preceding factors may reference one's personality type, coping abilities, support system, access to resources and view of personal control (Brewin, Andrews, & Rose, 2003; Harne, 2002; Holohan & Moos, 1987; Starzynski, Ullman, Filipas, & Townsend, 2005). Siegfried (2007) discussed emotional sequelae to victimization from the vantage of the event, more traumatic, violent or prolonged victimization possibly introduces life inhibiting factors. Green and Pomeroy (2007) indicated that psychological consequences may not be limited to a few days or weeks, but could significantly exist for an extended period beyond the victimization event. Andrew, Brewin, Rose, and Kirklan, (2007) suggest for some, trauma experiences lead to an onset of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

According to the 4th ed., text rev.; Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM) –IV–TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000, PTSD is the development of particular characteristics occurring in response to extreme trauma that involve actual or perceived threats to self or others (2000). Clawson, Salomon and Goldblatt-Grace listed characteristics of PTSD as: "Intrusive re-experiencing of the

trauma, avoidance or numbing of trauma-related, or trauma-triggering, stimuli, and hyper arousal" (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2008, p. 45). A preponderance of inner-city dwellers are at great risk of witnessing or experiencing traumatic criminal or violent events. The 2007 NCVS substantiated the likelihood that this group of U.S. citizens will have numerous traumatic encounters during their inner-city tenure (United States Department of Justice, 2008). Andrew, Brewin, Rose and Kirklan (2000) identified Post-traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] as a possible consequence of traumatic events. Thompson and Rippey (2005) indicated that witnessing acts of violence can lead to PTSD. PTSD has been touted as being a common result of violence exposure (Dempsey, Overstreet, & Moely, 2000; Mazza & Overstreet, 2000; McCloskey & Walker, 2000; Slovak, 2002; Widon, 1999). Child abuse victims, those who experience rape and victims of multiple traumatic encounters are at increased risk of having to contend with PTSD (Schumm, Briggs-Phillips, & Hobfoll, 2006). Traumatic experiences are a common element within inner-city life. One vital revelation about trauma is the role of PTSD in the lives of those exposed to trauma experiences through crime and violence. PTSD literature was salient to this discussion as it recognized the likelihood of residual effects that victims may experience as a result of their personal encounters with violence and crime. Literature supported the idea of PTSD being a common result of exposure to violence (Dempsey, et al., 2000; Mazza & Overstreet, 2000; McCloskey & Walker, 2000; Slovak, 2002). Thomson and Massat (2006) found PTSD to be a factor in the lives of sixth grade school children in the inner-city of Chicago. Another study found that adolescents constantly exposed to violence are at risk

for developing significant psychological problems, amongst them being PTSD (Foster, Kuperminc & Price, 2004). Schumm et al. (2006) study focused solely on experiences of women in their early 20s. Missing from the studies is the prevalence of PTSD symptoms on able bodied, middle aged African Americans residing within the inner-city and an understanding of their unique experiences of traumatic encounters with African American youth. As a focus on this particular group and their unique experiences was absent from the literature, so was a discussion about their recovery experiences.

Coping with Victimization

Recovery from victimization is mitigated by multiple factors. The criminal justice system can act both as a catalyst or hindrance towards recovery. The response, or lack thereof, of law enforcement sometimes leaves the victim feeling re-victimized (NOVA, 2009). The National Center for Victims of Crime [NCVC], (2007) indicated that feelings of empowerment often ensue when victims are kept well informed and feel that they have a voice. This allows the victim to regain control in this particular area of life. John W. Gillis in his message from director of the First Response to Victims of Crime Guidebook for Law Enforcement pointed out the law enforcement role in response to victimization as being critical in that officers are often the first to make contact from the criminal justice system (United States Department of Justice, 2008). NOVA indicated that when treated with respect, dignity and compassion, victims learn to more effectively cope with being a crime victim. According to the NCVC, (2007) a positive exchange between the victim and law enforcement can aid in faith restoration of the human race as victims' faith in their fellow human often wane after a victimization experience

Support of family and friends, along with those within the mental health community also provides victims with a bridge towards equilibrium. Each victim's road to recovery is different, often shared however, is the reality of recovery taking on the appearance of a roller coaster ride. Regaining one's equilibrium or some semblance of normalcy is generally not a direct path, but may take on a meandering effect (NOVA, 2009). Post victimization resources greatly influence the recovery process (NCVC, 2007). Where one's pre-victimization state was resource (finance, social, emotional, physical) deficient, recovery from victimization is likely to require more time than those whose state was resource sufficient (NCVC, 2007)). Residing within America's inner cities places one at greater risk of living in a resource deficient state (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2007) and lacking in a sense of community.

Community and Psychological Sense of Community

Exposure to violence erodes feelings of safety, belonging and trust and in-turn disrupts individual and community relationships and deprives residents of a collective sense of community (Sparks, 1994). Community is the set of people and common elements that vary in context (Obst &White, 2007). Community is often viewed as a buffer of which one derives support for facing life challenges, whereby one can find an avenue for developing and sustaining meaningful relationships (Fisher & Sonn, 2002). Obst and White introduced the idea of choice to belong, as a primary factor in determining one's PSOC and social identification. Sarason's seminal work on psychological sense of community posited that one's sense of identity is closely aligned with their community status and experience (Sarason, 1974). Building on Sarason's

seminal work, David McMillan and David Chavis' approach to psychological sense of community is touted as being the most widely agreed upon integrative theoretical explanation (Fisher & Sonn, 2006; Obst & White, 2007; Obst, Zinkiewicz & Smith, 2002). McMillan and Chavis' theory of psychological sense of community consist of four elements: (a) membership, (b) influence, (c) integration and fulfillment, and (d) shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). It suggested that the elements work in tandem to foster and maintain an overall sense of community (Obst & White, 2007, p. 65). Elements of psychological sense of community are delineated as:

> Membership, referring to a shared membership, feelings of belonging and identification. Influence, suggesting a reciprocal process whereby individuals are influenced by the group having the ability to exert influence into the group. Integration and fulfillment asserts the notion of rewards gained from group membership in order for the group to maintain positive sense of togetherness; And, shared emotional connection refers to shared history, developed bonds and a positive sense of community interactions. (Obst & White, 2007, p.78)

Sense of community is often referenced from a positive stance. It is noteworthy to highlight that sense of community is not a static reality, but is affected through social development and technological advances (Fisher & Son, 2002; McMillan & Chavis, 1986) and sometimes have negative effects. Identification of membership for African Americans has been a dichotomous experience throughout American history-incorporating both elements of pride and shame (Rosenthall & Wilson, 2008; Schiele, 2005). Whereas sense of community can function as a buffer against life's challenges, the

potential to operate as a challenge itself also accompanies the construct. The inability to

fully identify with the primary culture of American people (Schiele, 2005), the continued

juxtaposing of negative icons with the African American community, the systemic

exclusion from certain social group opportunities (Weinstein, Gregory, Strambler, &

Weinstein, 2004), and the perpetual intraracial destruction (Halliday-BoYou Knowins &

Graham, 2001); all potentially act to hinder African Americans from achieving elements

of the theoretical construct of psychological sense of community. PSOC is useful for

scientific investigation and providing a framework for intervention (Chavis, Hogge,

McMillan & Wandersan, 1986). It can be utilized as a tool for gaining insight into the

experience of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city, African Americans who have been

victimized by African American youth. The interplay between humans and environment

create a reciprocal dynamic that leads to affect and being affected. That is, individuals

influence and are influenced by their environment. Social ecological theory thoroughly

delineates this dynamic.

Social Ecological Theory

Brofenbrenner's (1979) theory of ecology of human development provided a

framework for unpacking the interrelatedness of systems to the experience of able-

bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who have been victimized by African

American youth. Urie Brofennbrenner proposed the conceptual notion of ecology with

embedded systems and dynamic interactions (Jakes & Brookins, 2004). From an

ecological perspective there are multiple levels at which the individual and environment

interact, and these are referred to as systems. The micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems makeup Brofenbrenner's five environmental systems.

Livingston and Nahimana (2006) discussed the impact of America's environmental systems–as outlined by Brofenbrenner–on the young African American male. A disproportionate number of African American youth reside within inner cities; they are forced to contend with prevalent life defeating issues (Brown, Meadows, & Elder, 2007). "Chronic poverty, early school failure, high rates of school drop-out, joblessness, fatherlessness, and increasing urban incarceration have taken a staggering toll upon young Black males in America" (Livingston & Nihimana, 2006). Residing within the inner-city places both the African American adult and youth within the same context and fosters interaction. For better or worse these two groups interact within the environment at the micro- and mesosystem levels. The April 2009 the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the unemployment rate for African Americans as 15%, compared to that of European Americans at 8%. This has a direct impact of living environments and micro- and mesosystem dynamics. An increase in unemployment rates greatly impacted the African American community, as resources viable and lawful employment opportunities are limited. Given the limitations inherent in dwindling community resources, the instances for critical and sometimes deadly clashes amongst these two groups are likely to increase. For instance, home invasions are common occurrences within America's inner-cities. Particularly within the Metropolitan Detroit area the Uniform Crime Statistics report (Michigan State Police, 2008) showed a 3.4% increase in burglaries. Due to the increased loitering of young African Americans within inner-city

communities, it is believed that they are increasingly the perpetrators of these and other crimes within their own communities. This is in direct correlation to economic downturns and spatial proximities.

Michigan's economy, in particular, was devastated by the drastic increase of crude oil cost, which led to high gas prices at the pump (Energy Information Administration, 2009). Brofenbrenner's (1979) exosystem level encompasses the socioeconomic context of an environment. From this vantage one could see the impact of corporate and governmental decisions on the micro and meso-systems. For instance, global automotive trade agreements led to a drastic reduction in factory jobs (Scott, 2009) that once belonged to Michiganders as they have been outsourced to Mexico, Canada and Japan. Many of those displaced workers are African Americans who migrated from the oppressive south in the "migration run" of the 1940s and 1950s (Library of Congress). Not only does outsourcing and globalization equate to a lack of jobs, but it also means fierce competition for the scare remaining employment opportunities (Scott). The limited employment opportunities within inner-cities often lead to hopelessness and disparity (Kposowa et al., 2006), and fosters illegal activities amongst the unskilled and uneducated–particularly disillusioned youth. Evans (2004) highlighted realities of poor neighborhoods as having fewer social resources and diminished capacity for informal social controls.

Historically, America's poor neighborhoods have been inhabited by minorities. African Americans have always been a major component of the residents within inner-city ghettos and impoverished communities. Brofenbrenner's delineation of the chrono-

system offered an explanation as it accounts for ideologies and practices that influence the distribution of wealth, opportunities for upward mobility and likelihood of culturally mixed communities as a normal phenomenon in American life (Brofenbrenner, 1979; Jakes & Brookins, 2004). Social ecological theory not only offers insight into the disproportionate number of African Americans who live in impoverished conditions, but additionally aids in understanding the exodus of those who move to suburban America. Overall, Brofenbrenner's model allows one to conceptualize and examine the major interacting influences on life and assess subsequent affect (Livingston & Nihimana, 2006), such as an intraracial and intergenerational conflict.

The notion of interacting influences is a component of Brofenbrenner's ecological system. This offered hope for those residing within impoverished conditions and in conflictual existences, as there is potential for positive efforts to be interjected into an environment often replete with pathogenic influences. Raneri and Wiemann (2007) supported the idea that each part of the ecological system influences the other in that there are bi-directional interactions continually occurring, with the closest proximate concentric circle exerting the most influence. Welch (2008) indicated that "individuals exert influence on one's environment through choices to compliance or rebellion, agreement or disagreement, expression our views, hopes, and desires" (p. 38). African Americans residing within impoverished inner-cities have the potential to exert positive influence within their local communities and combat many of the horrific conditions that exist. Welch (2008) delineated dichotomous possibilities resulting from one's influence on the environment; all have the potential of being a catalyst for what Myer and Moore

(2006) referred to as the growth potential–the possibility of growth being resident in every crisis experience. Those living within America's inner-cities are positioned to experience ongoing crisis.

Crisis Theory

The state at which a person's normal manner of coping and problem solving fail to effectively meet their need, launches that individual into a crisis scenario (James, 2008). Lindemann's contribution to understanding human response to crisis was fostered in response to the devastating Coconut Grove fire of 1947 in a Boston, Massachusetts night club establishment that killed over 490 persons. Lindemann's observation of the survivors' responses to their grief led to his seminal work in the development of crisis theory. This theoretical framework offered insight to the crisis experiences of victimized individuals, particularly individuals residing within the inner-city of Detroit, Michigan. It was purported that individuals react to their crisis experience in three predictable and sequential stages: (a) cognitive confusion, (b) adjustment, and (c) integration (Callahan, 1997; Herman, 1997; Yassen & Harvey, 1998). The immediate response of intense physiological symptoms, psychological reactions and cognitive confusion is considered the acute stage (Davis, 2009), which occurs in response to one's shock and confusion initiated by a crisis event. An example is that of a 45-year old African American woman who returns home from work to find her home having been invaded and responds with continued utterances of shock, disbelief, and fear, and is temporarily unable to make decisions. Erik Erikson referenced this as a state of disequilibria (Turner & Avison, 2003). Adjustment is the next stage in human response to crisis, and it is characterized by

the individual's attempt to regain control and reestablish a sense of normalcy (Davis, 2009). The integration stage follow, where attempts of understanding the crisis event are exacted and efforts to ensure that there are no repeat occurrences are put forth.

Gerald Caplan's contribution to this discussion suggested a four-stage response to a crisis event as (a) an initial rise of tension, followed by (b) feelings of helplessness, leading to (c) pulling from one's deep inner resources of strength and possibilities and if resolved (d) leading to a redefinition of one's role and modification of identity. Conversely, when the crisis goes unresolved, anxiety leads the individual to irrational thoughts, ineffective and socially unacceptable behavior (Caplan, 1961). Another example is that of a 45-year-old African American woman who experienced a home invasion and found herself stalking the teenage boys who she believed to be the culprits. Crisis theory was useful for providing insight into the responses of the victimized and a framework for crisis intervention and recovery work (Davis, 2009).

Although generally discussed from a human developmental perspective, Erikson's contribution to the conversations on normative life crisis was credited for the central propositions of crisis theory (Turner & Avison, 1992). Erikson (1968) proposed crisis as occurring through the resolution of normative developmental processes. Crisis here connotes more of an opportunity for growth than the notion of threat or catastrophe (Erikson, 1968). Erikson suggested that when a crisis is successfully resolved, the individuals may emerge from these engagements with new skill, confidence or other enabling qualities that are transferable to successive life stages. This idea is in concert with crisis theory as purported by Lindemann and Caplan in that a primary proposition

drawn from crisis theory is the growth potential (Myer & Moore, 2006). Able-bodied, middle-aged African Americans residing within America's inner-cities are afforded crisis opportunities covering the gamut, from emotional and psychological intimidation to life threatening altercations. There is the potential of personal growth and development from these crisis events. A deciding factor however, is the psychological arsenal that one brings into the crisis encounter. As indicated by Myer and Moore (2006), the likelihood of successful crisis resolution greatly depends on one's history of successes and failures engaging similar events. Added to this list would be the differences in the availability of social resources, one's social status and consideration of mastery or personal control (Turner & Avison, 1992). Seligman's contribution to the conceptualization of learned helplessness and victimization is similar to crisis theory, its explanation of human response to victimization sometimes involve emotional numbing and maladaptive passivity (Peterson & Seligman, 1983). Inner-city residents who experience repeated victimization and crisis scenarios may fit Seligman's conceptualization of learned helplessness. Conversely, Rotter's (1989) locus of control assertion offered insight into maladaptive and regressive response to victimization and inner-city crisis. Middle-aged African American adults, who function from an external locus of control perspective, will lack the internal fortitude to successfully navigate this life crisis and consequently fail to function from a growth potential perspective. Several authors (Myer, 2001; Myer & Moore, 2009; Myer, Moore, & Hughes, 2003) recommended assessing the affected life system of an individual or system in order to establish the meaning assigned to the crisis event. Myer (2001) categorized this system into four life dimensions that has the

potential to be affected in a crisis: physical, psychological, social relationships, and moral/spiritual. For example, individuals who have experienced a home invasion for the first time may assign contrasting meaning to their crisis event than those who have encountered multiple home invasions. In this contrasting scenario, the potential for the divergent responses to crisis events is great. Brewin (2001) discussed the idea of degree of change which suggested that to understand the impact of a crisis event one must comprehend the amount of disruption caused in both short- and long-term functioning.

Myer and Moore (2006) suggested that crisis theory's individualistic focus fails to consider the contextual aspects of crisis situations, they propose a contextual model. Crisis in context theory (CCT), also salient to this research for two reasons: (a) it combined two of the theories chosen to frame this study–crisis and ecological, and (b) it brought into the discussion the notion of context, relevant to the context of inner-city living. The combination of the two theoretical concepts led to a road map for conceptualizing the impact of crisis. As purported by Myer and Moore, these can be viewed in three key premises as: (a) layers of a crisis–indicates that the crisis is experienced in layers which include one's physical proximity to the crisis and the meaning assigned by the individual, (b) reciprocal effect–focuses on the impact on primary and secondary relationships and the degree of change resultant of the crisis, and (c) time factor–references time passed since the crisis and special occasions that can be attached to the crisis event. Insight into the affect of a crisis is achievable through the gaining insight into the experience of those impacted by the crisis event. Gaining an

understanding of the lived experience of a victim is achievable through the use of the phenomenological approach.

Phenomenological Theory

Phenomenology has a rich history that predates the 18th century. One can see notions of it in writings of Kant and Hegel. Edmund Husserl however, is heralded by some as the father of phenomenology (Brennan, 2002). He asserted that people have a certainty about their individual experiences and suggested that phenomena are equated to reality. Husserl, along with others–Brentano, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, explored ideas about the essence of experiences, meanings and one's lived-world (Groenewald, 2004). Hycner (1999) suggested that the question or phenomenon dictates the method of inquiry. As such phenomenological is best positioned to provide insight into the lived experience of a victim. Nastasi and Schensul (2005) purported that overarching the schism which exists in the debate over a priori of quantitative over qualitative, is discovering the question at hand and selecting the better method to answer the question. Wertz (1985) stated quantitative studies provide figures and probabilities concerning victims, but it failed to provide insight on what it is like to live through victimization.

African American adults who experienced victimization by African American youth have a story to tell about their lived experiences. Moustakas (1994) stated that Husserl's approach to research utilizes data available to the consciousness and thus is so called phenomenology. The lens and voice of the individual is necessary if one is to gain insight into the lived experience of a phenomenon (Sadala & Adornao, 2001). Husserl suggested that arrival at pure phenomena is achieved when one ignores that which occurs

outside of the immediate experience and treats reality as pure phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Comprehending perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular phenomena, is the goal of the phenomenological inquiry approach (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). According to Moustakas "For Hegel, phenomenology referred to knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience" (p. 26). Moustakas echoed Husserl and Hegel as they recognized the need to look inside of self in order to discover the nature and meaning of things, as in the question, what is the experience of African American adults having been victimized by African American youth? According to Dukes (1984) human experience can be consciously expressed by those who have the experience as it makes sense to them. Giorgi (1989) suggested that phenomenological methods aid in the discovery of subjective understandings and implicit meanings that individuals may have about their victimization experience.

Summary

A review of the literature provided a poignant description of the life inhibiting experiences of African Americans residing with America's inner-cities (Jipguep & Sanders-Phillips, 2003). Inner-city life is characterized by impoverished living conditions, low community involvement, inadequate housing, substandard public services and frequent criminal and violent acts. Few, if any, escape the realities of a chaotic existence as exposure to negative elements are common to urban life (Lambert, Brown, Phillips, & Ialongo, 2004; Spano, Rivera & Bolland, 2007). Black on Black crime, particularly youth to youth violence was thoroughly covered in scholarly literature

(Bolland, 2003; Evans, 2004; Howard, Kalijee, & Jackson, 2002; Kalogerakis, 2004). There was ample research to support the need for intervention amongst this peer group as many experience or engage in crimes, as well as risky behaviors such as promiscuity, unprotected sex, alcohol and drug use and school failure (Kuther & Wallace, 2003). Violence was also a well documented phenomenon amongst African American youth (Berman, Silverman & Kurtines, 2000; Jipguep & Sanders-Phillips, 2003). As countless numbers of inner-city youth are frequently exposed to and often become victims of crime, the likelihood of their becoming perpetrators of violent and criminal acts is elevated, in comparison to their suburban counterparts.

Though inner-city violence and crime was well documented, a gap was revealed through the review of the literature. Studies related to the experiences of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who found themselves as victims of African American youth were absent. Much of the literature focused on vulnerable populations as victims, such as youth, elderly, mental or physically disabled and the abused–predominantly partner abuse.

Prevalent topics gleaned from the literature review included poverty, violence and crime within inner-cities and amongst communities. The conceptual frameworks: psychological sense of community, social ecological theory and crisis theory were deemed relevant to support this research study through the literature review; each offered a unique perspective of the vicissitudes of inner-city life. Phenomenological inquiry was the best approach to provide an understanding of the lived experience of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who have been victimized by African

American youth (Creswell, 2007 & Groenewald, 2004). Being a descriptive technique (Giorgi, 1989), individual stories were told and their lived experiences unpacked.

Chapter 3 will provide a more detailed explanation on the choice of qualitative research method–particularly phenomenological inquiry, as the best approach for this study. The choice of participants, data collection techniques, data analysis plans and my role as researcher will also be discussed.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This chapter details the design of the study, a description of the participants, data collection techniques, analysis procedures, and ethical protection of participants. A qualitative method design using a phenomenological strategy of inquiry guided the investigative efforts. Overall, the methodological design sought to expand on the existing literature, which explores the victimization of inner-city African Americans, by (a) limiting the focus of the victims to middle agers (35 – 60 years), (b) limiting the focus of the perpetrators to youth (under 18 years), and (c) exploring the victims shared lived experiences. This research project utilized the phenomenological strategy to explore the shared experiences of African American adults who have directly experienced victimization perpetrated by African American youth.

A discussion on the use of qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative, and justifications of its use will be presented. This will be followed by a discussion justifying the rationale for the selection of phenomenology as a research strategy over other qualitative strategies: narrative, grounded theory, ethnographic or case study. The remainder of the chapter will present research methodology and design, participants of the study, measures, research questions, ethical protection of participants, procedures, data analysis and verification of findings.

Research Methodology

Human investigation can take on many forms. Creswell (2007) maintained that specific approaches are warranted when addressing certain types of social research

problems. Quantitative approaches are employed when seeking to identify factors that influence outcomes, interventions or understanding predictors of outcomes (Creswell); whereas, a qualitative approach is better suited when seeking insight into a phenomenon or lived experience (Bogan & Taylor, 1975). Qualitative methodology derives logically from the research question because the lived experience is best understood from a constructivist rather than the quantitative postpositivist approach (Cheek, Onslow & Cream, 2004). While quantitative paradigms are more accepted for their objectivity, qualitative approaches are gaining momentum as the investigation of some phenomena is more conducive to qualitative investigative efforts. Qualitative methodology seeks to explore a phenomenon that needs to be better understood, by discovering and describing its essence (Hanks, 2008). Wertz (1985) stated that while quantitative studies provide extensive contributions to the characterization of victims–age, sex, race, and so on–the question of the quality of the experience is left unanswered by this approach. For this reason, a qualitative research method was selected to better understand the lived experiences of African American adults who have been victimized by African American youth. Research existed on the topics of Black on Black crime, inner-city violence, drugs and impoverished living conditions and victimization. However, much of the research focused on the youth to youth experiences, the victimization of protected populations (children and elderly individuals), and spousal or child abuse–generally linked to poverty. All were associated with residing within the inner-city. The research failed to discuss the disheartening interplay that is occurring between an unlikely group of victims (normally

functioning African American adults ranging between the ages of 35 – 60 years and the perpetrators, African American youth under 18 years of age).

The particular phenomenon calls for investigation. Creswell (2007) stated that qualitative research is conducted when a problem or issue is in need of exploration. Mears and Bhati (2001) indicated that societal attention is warranted where there is conflict amid people groups. In light of the intraracial, intergenerational conflict between these two groups, and the absence of a discussion about it in the literature, research was warranted. In addition to gaining a better understanding of this phenomenon, and possibly discovering methods for reducing these conflict occurrences through this approach, the victims had an opportunity to tell their stories.

Research Design

This research study sought to gain insight into the experiences of middle-aged African Americans who were victimized by African American youth. I investigated this phenomenon by seeking to understand the victims lived experiences. As such, the phenomenological approach was the most appropriate research method for answering this question. Phenomenological interests seek to gain insight into the experience of individuals who have these types of encounters. To accomplish this, it was important to fully understand their psychological, emotional and physical responses. Creswell (2007) stated that, the purpose of phenomenology is to arrive at a description of the universal essence of a phenomenon through a reduction process. In short, what is the essence of this experience for those who have been victimized, as defined in this study? The

phenomenological approach seeks to have the participants share their outlook and meaning about the encounter.

Other methods of qualitative research fall short of providing insight into the essence of the participants' lived experiences. The narrative approach explores an individual's life and tells the story (Creswell, 2007), but neglects to provide an avenue for the discussion of meaning derived from the experience. Grounded theory seeks to develop a theory grounded in the views of the participants, which is not a goal of this research project. Many theories, including the three chosen to provide a theoretical framework for this study, adequately explain the phenomenon. As such the development of a new theory is not a goal. Ethnography describes and interprets culture sharing groups; while, a case study seeks to develop an in-depth description of a case or multiple cases" (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology, however, seeks to understand the lived experience of a small number of individuals who share the same phenomenon. This occurs through prolonged engagement which allows for the development of patterns, themes and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). To that end, the phenomenological approach was chosen with the goal of gaining, from the rich descriptions, the individual meanings ascribed to the participants' lived experiences.

Participants of the Study

Upon approval to conduct research from Walden University's Internal Review Board [03-23-10-0254771], I immediately began the research phase of the study. The intended sample included individuals who are able-bodied, African American Adults, ranging in age 35–60 years. These individuals were required to reside within the inner-

city of Detroit, Michigan; and, they needed to have experienced victimization perpetrated by African American youth. The sample size was 10 participants; this allowed for the collection of data until saturation occurred. Moustakas (1994) suggested 8 to 10 participants for a phenomenological research study to achieve rich descriptions of experiences.

Participants were chosen using purposive sampling, particularly the homogenous strategy, in which participants are selected from individuals who share common backgrounds and experiences (Walden, 2008). A mixed sampling strategy was not necessary as purposive sampling provided the required number of participants.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the experience of African American adults who have been victimized by African American youth. For this study, victimization was defined as the experience of having a crime or an attempted crime committed against oneself (NOVA, 2009).

The central research question was, "What is the experience of able bodied, middle aged, inner-city African Americans who are victimized by African American youth?" Deriving from the central question, the complete listing of interview questions posed to the participants and utilized to ascertain themes are provided in Appendix D. Following is a list of themes and sample questions that were posed.

Themes

Through the literature search, the following have been identified as themes: (a) what is victimization, (b) coping with victimization, (c) perceptions of African American

youth, (d) perceptions about inner-city living, (f) victimization prevention. Examples of questions that measured the themes include: (a) Describe your victimization experience. (b) How did you cope with the experience? (c) What does it mean to be violated (robbed, vandalized, verbally abused) by African American youth? (d) Discuss your current thoughts and feelings about living in Detroit? (f) What do you think is necessary to reduce the occurrences of violent encounters in Detroit? A complete listing of interview questions is provided in Appendix D.

Ethical Protection of Participants

Individuals who participated in this study did so voluntarily, as I did not personally approach anyone nor did I directly solicit participants. Participation was initiated as a result of the participant's response to a flyer (Appendix A). It was not expected that harm would occur as a result of participating in this study. However, in the event that participants reported experiencing difficulty, referrals to a mental health professional were provided. Individual signatures were collected on the Informed Consent form (Appendix B) prior to the interviews. Informed consent forms, audio tapes and transcripts were kept in a locked file cabinet located in my home office, while computer files were password protected. No other persons had access to these documents or computer files. The collected data will be maintained for a period of 5 years and then destroyed. Direct identifiers were not recorded in the transcript, instead, pseudonyms were used throughout.

Procedures

The study's procedural steps outlined the recruitment process, participant informed consent procedures, collection and analysis of data and validation of findings. In keeping with ethical guidelines, no coercion of research participants occurred (National Institutes of Health [NIH], 2008). To elicit participation, a flyer (Appendix A) providing a description of the study and participant criterion was posted in Detroit area libraries, medical centers and clinics, community centers, churches, college and university commons areas, neighborhood town halls and police stations.

In response to the flyer (Appendix B), I was contacted via phone or e-mail by individuals expressing their interest of participating in the study. A date, time and location were established to meet with the potential participants, to provide further details about the research study and informed consent. The preliminary meeting was important as it allowed for a detailed explanation about the informed consent process; delineating potential risks and benefits, and allowing for choice of the cessation or continuance of participation. The informed consent process provided the potential participants with adequate information and ample time to make an informed decision about their participation in the research study (NIH, 2008). Participants wishing to proceed with the research study were instructed to complete and sign an informed consent document. This paved the way for the face-to-face interviews of those who wished to continue with the research study.

Since I previously experienced victimization by African American youth, it was imperative that I bracket my experiences prior to the data collection process. Moustakas

(1994) asserted that epoch is a preliminary step that initially occurs prior to the interview. Through this process, I was able to transcend preconceived notions and stances, and thus freshly perceive the subject lived experience while conducting the interview (Creswell, 2007). Conducted in a semistructured, face-to-face format, a 60 minute interview was captured via audiotape. A complete listing of interview questions is provided in Appendix D.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred through audio taped, face-to-face interviews and the collection of field notes. Note taking was an integral part of the interview process as it enabled me to recall important details of the interview that could have been lost or skewed due to errors in memory (Moustakas, 1994). Schensul et al., (1999) indicated that field notes are written observations of what occurred in the field. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) also stated that "field notes are produced in a quiet place away from the site of observation and interaction with people in the field" (p. 18). Field notes were a vital part of the analysis process, they along with the participant responses to the interview questions, (Appendix D) helped to garner the participants' experiences in rich detail.

Creswell (2007) indicated that a phenomenological study calls for indepth interviews with as many as 10 participants. It was expected that data saturation would occur with a maximum of 10 participants for the study (Moustakas, 1994). Triangulation of data and member checking are methods of achieving credibility of one's findings (Guba, 1981). These, aforementioned elements, were achieved through the process of comparing field notes from various interviews and data from the audiotaped interviews

(triangulation), and by providing participants with a transcript of the interview–allowing them to review for accuracy of the representation of their experiences (member checking). These steps aided in achieving credibility of findings within this phenomenological research study.

Follow-up interviews were scheduled when information uncovered through the review of transcriptions and coding or categorization of the initial interview data required clarification.

Data Analysis

Data analysis requires the careful adherence to a well established process. Moustakas (1994) provided a structured method of data analysis. Beginning with the my personal experience of this phenomenon, was a vital step. Highlighting particulars such as being a 45-year-old African American female, residing within the inner-city of Detroit, Michigan and having been a victim of home invasion at the hands of some African American youth was a relevant step in the data analysis process. It was imperative that I remained cognizant of the possible influence of these experiences on the research process. As such, I was required to set aside all preconceived ideas or notions about the phenomena of African American adults experiencing victimization by African American youth. Moustakas's bracketing process increases the likelihood that the focus will be directed on the participants' experiences, and not one's own. Epoche, the first step of the research process, calls the researcher to document their assumptions about the phenomena of study. This process increases the likelihood of approaching the study with an openness, having an unfettered stance–by bringing biases, prejudices and viewpoints

to awareness (Moustakas, 1994). To avoid taking a position or making predeterminations about the phenomenon of study, one intentionally brings to the forefront that, which is personally understood, believed and experienced (Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Next these personal views are purposely set aside or bracketed, allowing the participants' experiences alone to receive the researcher's focus.

A transcription of the interview audiotapes and field notes were developed. Transcriptions are defined as the development of a record or chart of every expression relevant to the phenomenon of study (Creswell, 2007). These efforts led to the retrieval and collection of significant statements. A list of non-repeating, non-overlapping statements was created. Moustakas' seven step analysis process called for the seeking of invariant material. Transcribed data was searched for significant statements, which were then clustered into the core themes of the particular study–referred to as "meaning units." Themes were depicted by using verbatim quotes from the participant. As they emerged participants' descriptions of their experiences were clustered into textural or structural descriptions. These then were appropriately categorized with like data.

Moustakas's seven step analysis process was applied to the transcribed data. Horizonalization calls for the gathering of significant statements about the participant's experience with the phenomenon as identified. These verbatim statements were gathered from the transcriptions and plotted into a table. At this stage each statement was considered to have equal value (Moustakas, 1994). Next, reduction and elimination sought out invariant constituents. Invariant constituents were identified and tested in this phase of analysis. If the statement represented a horizon or a significant statement, it was

labeled as it was considered to be essential (Creswell, 2007). An avoidance of

overlapping and repetitive statements was observed during this phase of the process.

Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents was the next phase of the analysis

process. This step uncovered the core themes presented in the data. Significant statements

were grouped into "meaning units" or themes (Urdahl & Cresswell, 2004). A continued

discovery process occurred during the final identification of the invariant constituents and

themes by application. Themes not explicitly expressed or compatible to other identified

meaning units were eliminated. A next step was a compilation of verbatim examples of

what the participants of the study experienced with the phenomenon. This is known as

individual textural description (Moustakas, 1994). Both textural and structural

descriptions represented the final phase of Moustakas' analysis process. As purported by

(Moerer-Urdahl & Cresswell, 2004), a composite (the essence of the experience for all) is

achieved in this final phase. When the need arose to clarify information gathered during

the initial interview, a follow-up interview was scheduled.

Verification of Findings

Trustworthiness of qualitative research is established through credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981). The participants' rich

descriptions, audiotaped face-to-face interviews, follow up interviews (as necessary), and

the field notes were the sources of data that were utilized to achieve triangulation; while

checking with the participants to ensure that the essence of their experiences were

effectively articulated and interpreted (member checking), representing the participants'

true experiences. Accurate, clear and detailed descriptions of the environment (inner-city

of Detroit, Michigan) and participants (African American adults ranging in age 35 – 60,

living within Detroit, Michigan and having been victimized by African American youth),

assisted in establishing transferability within the population sampled in this study. The

development of an accurate description of each component of the research study,

participants, context and experience, will assist others with possible transferability of the

research. Dependability and credibility was established through the field notes and face-

to-face audiotaped interviews. Elements of the study were informed by the various

theoretical lenses: Brofenbrenner's social ecological theory, McMillan and Chavis'

psychological sense of community and Lindemann and Caplan's crisis theory. The

presence of the theories helped to establish referential adequacy (Neuman, 2002) as

analysis, and interpretations were tested against these conceptual frameworks.

Summary

This chapter discussed the qualitative methods and processes employed in this

research effort. Described was the phenomenological methodology chosen to investigate

the lived experience of the phenomenon of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African

Americans who were victimized by African American youth. Further discussions

explored the research design, participants of study, research questions and themes derived

from the analysis process, and, sections on procedures, data collection, data analysis and

verification of findings were offered. The data collected through the face to face

interviews and findings gained through the analysis process will be reported on in the

following chapters.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

A gap in the literature existed to explain how able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans experienced victimization when perpetrated by African American youth. The purpose of this research was to gain insight into the lived experience and meaning ascribed to the aforementioned phenomenon. As such, a phenomenological study was chosen to describe the essence of this population's victimization experience. The goal of this chapter was to report the findings of this research study. Data collection processes are discussed. Methods used for locating research participants and individual profiles are provided. A delineation of the research questions and participant responses is reported. Major themes, subthemes and discrepant and nonconforming data will also be reported. Finally, evidence of quality is addressed through a review of trustworthiness, member checking and triangulation of data. The chapter will conclude with a summary.

Locating Research Participants

I personally distributed flyers (see Appendix A) to all Detroit area libraries, neighborhood town halls and police stations. To the extent that access to local churches was available, flyers were also posted within them. In an attempt to maximize the distribution of the flyers, individuals were recruited to post flyers in their local churches and community or recreation centers within their neighborhoods. In keeping with protocol, requiring the avoidance of coercion, I avoided personal solicitation of participants..

Surprising were the turn of events relative to participant acquisition. It was anticipated that all, or at least of majority, of the participants would be self identified as a result of seeing the flyers. In contrast, no participants responded to the flyer and made initial contact. In most cases, the participants' initial awareness of the study was as a result of an acquaintance or family member becoming aware of the study, surmising that the participant met the criteria and had possible interest in the research study. While explaining the dissertation focus to an office manager, I was overheard by a co-worker who readily identified herself as being a candidate for the research effort, and expressed interest in participating. This is one example of participant acquisition.

Acquiring participants was without difficulty. An unfortunate reality of residing within Detroit is the astronomical numbers of individuals and families who meet the research criteria as being victims of criminal activities of African American youth.

Data Collection Processes

As the purpose of this research study was to gain insight into the lived experience of African American adults who have been victimized by African American youth, it was necessary for the victims' stories to be told. The phenomenological approach (Giorgi, 1989) allowed for this method of data collection (story telling) through the use of personal interviews.

All interviews were conducted in the metropolitan Detroit area over a 6-week period during April and May 2010. Adhering to confidentiality protocol, participant names were not included but replaced with unique identifiers. Additionally, identifiers of locations were eliminated as well. The venues included local churches, libraries,

educational institutions, and homes, and were determined by the comfort levels of both

the participant and myself as the researcher. The length of the interviews ranged from 20

minutes to 150. The dramatic difference is explained as some participants were very

talkative , expressed gratitude for being able to tell their stories, and seized the moment;

while others simply answered the questions without adding additional information.

Semistructured Interviews

Initial meetings were scheduled with the intention of providing participants with

detailed explanation about the informed consent process and ample time to make an

informed decision about their participation in the research study. However, each

participant decided to forego and additional meeting. As such, participants were

reminded about the purpose of the study, further conversation on informed consent was

held, followed by an execution of the signed agreement. Next the recording and

questioning process was explained, along with the possible need to prompt or ask

clarifying questions. Once the participants' acknowledged their understanding and

agreement with the instructions and clarifications, the interview began signaled by the

tape recorder being turned on.

Participants were asked to respond to each question but were assured that no

pressure would occur if they neglected to respond to any question. As warranted,

participants were prompted to expand on or clarify statements.

Researcher's Journal

The journal served as an integral part of the interview process. Representative

data maintained in the journal included a log of all participants, assigned identifiers,

contact information, date of interview, and notes which served as reminders of salient participant statements. Interview reflections and observations were noted. The journal assisted with researcher continuity and served as a single location for recording both germane and tangent thoughts relative to the interview process. The journal was divided into multiple sections including: (a) a complete chronicle of all activities directly relating to the research effort, flyer duplication and distribution, participant contact and interview scheduling, transcription processes, theme identification and coding evolutions; (b) participant interview details and, (c) researcher notes and observations.

Data Maintenance and Security

The interview journal also served as a research log that included participant information, interview details, and my experiences. The research log, digital audio files and transcriptions (when not in the my possession) were secured in my home office under lock and key. All computer files were backed up on an external hard drive, updated after every change to the data and maintained at my home office in a locked desk. Computer files were password protected. A unique folder was created for each participant, with all files (transcriptions and digital voice files) being maintained in the participant respective folders.

<p align="center">**Research Participants**</p>

All participants were African American adults between the ages of 35–60, resided within Detroit, Michigan, and experienced victimization by African American youth within the last 12 months. Victimization experiences varied between one to three and

more, and occurred in multiple venues. Victims included both male and female adults.

Table 1 provides an overview of all participants.

Table 1

Participant Overview

Participant	Age range	Location of event	Number of events	Gender
P1	35 – 40	Work	1	M
P2	45 – 50	Home	3+	F
P3	56 – 60	Work	1	F
P4	56 – 60	Work	3+	M
P5	35 – 40	Home	3+	F
P6	46 – 50	Home	3+	M
P7	46 – 50	Home	1	F
P8	41 – 45	Home	2	F
P9	45 – 50	Grocery Store	1	F
P10	45 – 50	Home	2	M

The dialogues of the participants were themed with the use of P followed by the number of the interview. For instance participant 9 was represented as P9. Researcher dialogue is represented by the letter R for researcher. The interview protocol as identified in Appendix C was meticulously followed for all 10 interviews, with no exceptions.

Research Question

The central question asks, "What is the experience of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who have been victimized by African American youth?" Deriving from the central question, the complete listing of interview questions was posed to the participants and utilized to ascertain themes, provided in Appendix D. Following is a list of themes and sample questions that was posed.

Interview Questions

Prior to the start of the interviews a discussion was held with each participant detailing informed consent, confidentiality and compensation while also affording opportunities to build rapport and allow the participant to ask possible lingering questions about the study or their participant role. Following a request for the participant to provide a thorough description of their victimization experience, the subsequent questions guided the study:

1. Describe your victimization experience.

2. What was your immediate physical, psychological and emotional responses to the experience?

3. What is your present physical, psychological and emotional responses to the experience?

4.   How did you cope with the experience?

5.   How do you cope today?

6.   How has your life changed since the experience?

7.   Prior to the experience, what was your view of African American youth?

8.   What is your current view of African American youth?

9.   What are the major differences from your pre-victimization view of African

        American youth?

10.   What does it mean to be violated (robbed, vandalized, verbally abused) by

        African American youth?

11.   What is your response to seeing African American youth walk down the street?

12.   What is your outlook for the future of African American youth?

13.   Prior to the experience, what were thoughts or feelings about living in Detroit?

14.   Discuss your current thoughts and feelings about living Detroit?

15.   What explanation could you offer for the violence occurring within your

        community (why is it happening)?

16.   What is the community doing about violence?

17.   What do you think is necessary to put an end to the violent encounters?

18.   Is there more that you would like to discuss about your experience, something that

        has not been covered or fully discussed?

In-depth Interviews and Coding

I began the interview by thanking the participants for taking part in the study.

Immediately following, the interview protocol (see Appendix D) was read, reminding the

participants of their rights, the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and their choice to

end the interview at any point-assuring them that there would not be a negative recourse.

Strict adherence to the data collection protocol provided constancy to the entire process.

The data collection efforts yielded an extensive amount of information. This included

over 11 hours of digitally recorded interviews, leading to 163 pages of transcribed text,

and substantial data gathered from field notes via the research log. Moustakas's seven

steps for data analysis (as outlined in Chapter 3) led to the development of themes and

subthemes.

In most instances, immediately following the interview, the digital voice

recordings were imported and the data was transcribed. This afforded me opportunities to

take advantage of the fresh experiences of the interviewing process–capitalizing on the

information readily available on the mental registry, not yet deteriorated by time (Hunt &

Ellis, 2004). Some themes were easily identifiable at initial reviews and others surfaced

overtime through recurring reviews. Each interview was played back a minimum of three

times to verify transcription accuracy. Groenewald (2004) discussed the importance of

repetitively listening to the interview in order to get the gestalt of the recording.

Transcripts were read a minimum of five times in order to identify significant

statements and concepts that were represented in most or all of the interviews. Initially,

all expressions relevant to the experience were listed. Moustakas (1994) discussed this

step as preliminary listing and grouping. Caution was taken to avoid placing greater

weight of one statement over the next, while working towards the development of a list of

nonrepeating, nonoverlapping statements (Creswell, 2007). Significant statements were

then grouped, leading to the identification of meaning units. This detailed process was carried out for each of the transcripts. A full submergence into each individual victimization experience, without consideration of the previous or upcoming victimization experience, allowed for the development of significant statements solely based upon each unique experience. I remained with one transcript until there was no further emerging of significant statements.

Next, significant statements from each transcript were viewed from the lens of all other transcripts. Finally, an amalgamation of significant statements was the outcome of a comparison process of similarities and variations of each victimization experience. This entire process afforded the opportunity to further explicate the data, leading to the development of major themes and subthemes based upon responses to interview questions. It was predetermined that major themes would be represented by a citing from at least 8 of the 10 participants, while subthemes were represented by 6 of the 10 participants. Table 2 provides a listing of major themes and subthemes.

Table 2

Major Themes and Subthemes

	Research Questions	Themes	Subthemes
1	2,3, 6	Physiological, Psychological	Anger
		Emotional	Fear
			Ponder
			Adrenaline
2	4,5	Coping	Religious Beliefs
3	7,8,12	Hopelessness	Helplessness
			Intraracial Destruction
4	10	Betrayal	Disrespect
			Bewilderment
5	15	Traditional Values	Heritage of Faith in God
			Community Responsibility
			Group Pride
6	15	Societal Issues	Poverty
7	16	Disengaged Acceptance	Submissiveness

Findings

Verbatim samples of participants' responses, including grammatical errors and slang usage, are provided to increase accurate representation of the participants lived experiences. The exception is the removal of pauses represented by "ummm."

Research questions 2, and 3. What was your immediate physical, psychological and emotional response to the experience? What is your present physical, psychological and emotional response to the experience?

Theme 1: Physiological, psychological and emotional responses. Participants in this study were asked about the presence of physical, psychological or emotional responses to their victimization experiences. All 10 of the participants acknowledged the presence of these types of responses. While some primary physiological responses were displayed (racing heart, heightened sense of awareness, rapid breathing), psychological and emotional responses were present as well. Examples follow:

P3. felt victimized when the student just stood up there and acted like nothing had happened, as if she had amnesia, that she, she declared she did not curse us, she did not threaten, she did not hit. None of what we said happened, happened. So that in itself, to me was like a slap in the face; in lieu of what we had just gone through, me and another person trying to restrain and bring control and order.

P5. My stomach dropped, I felt like physically ill. And all I could do was say Jesus, like I just couldn't believe it and I just felt like it was so personal. Like invaded. Like how dare you. That's how I felt, like you know why would you, why me. Why would you want to take something from me? I don't bother

anybody. So I felt violated and so that's, that's, that wouldn't be my physical response.

P8. I was in disbelief and had to pinch myself, to make sure it wasn't a dream. Well, I thought if I catch them, I will … I remember thinking I can't do anything my hands are tied. I wanted to do something bad, to retaliate against them. I still want to find the person who did it. To help them know not to steal to teach them a lesson.

Research question 6. How has your life changed since the experience?

Theme 1: Physical, psychological and emotional responses. Unanimously, all participants experienced some type of physical, psychological or emotional change post their victimization experience.

P1. My life it hasn't changed at all, still the same as usual.

R. So it didn't change the way that you did anything?

P1. I mean, you know, like I say, it makes me be more aware. It makes me be more aware to you know, not, don't underestimate you know, anybody and carryin on. You know next time when the instance come on like that, you know, if I got to go through it I just raise my window down a little bit instead of raisin it all the way down, and carryin on. Because it was the fact that I raised it all the way down that it was able to get me like it did.

P2. Yes, me and my family just doing the home repairs and to the home and improving the home. I placed windows in the home. We had windows in the home, we had block windows in the basement, to get more lighting into the home,

side door and umm the back of the house because it's really dark in the back, and we have a brand new roof on the home, remodeled the kitchen. Everything that you do when you live in the home, but now I refuse to put any more money into the home, to make it look worth its while. I refuse to do that because of the fact of the matter you know, someone coming in to that and I removed myself, you know removed myself from the home. And with my son calls me paranoid. But when he's at home alone, if my husband is working, my son is home alone. Eighteen years of age. But, I don't like him even being at home, because if there is no vehicles at the house during the time when my husband is working and I'm away, and it's just knowing. Because each time they came into the house there was no one there. By him being in the house, I just, I just don't feel comfortable with him in there by himself; the fact of them coming in on him. Even though there is an alarm in the house. My son says you're just paranoid, but it just reminds me you know, it just reminds, it just reminds me of that situation you know.

P4. I don't think it has, I just watch out more closely now than I probably did then. So you look for stuff like that before it happens, before it can jump off. But then still you can't really do anything so you just prepare for it.

P6. My life hasn't changed at all other than my hyperawareness of my surroundings, that's it.

P9. You know, I don't think it's changed a lot. The only thing that I have done a little more than other times was a little. Is being a little more vocal when it comes to a young black teen? But it's usually someone I am familiar with. And I just

encourage them to do their best when it comes to school, when it comes to them

and to think outside of the block. Which is where they are living at, at that time to

know that there is other places. You know other venues, a whole nother world and

don't just settle for where you are or what you have.

Subtheme 1: Anger. Individuals reported that they were angry with self for not

being more careful and placing themselves at risk. Others were angry at the perpetrators

of their victimization experience. Some however, found their anger directed at third

parties–often the law enforcement, for not providing adequate protection or responding in

an acceptable manner or timeframe, or other individuals who in some way passively or

actively aided in their victimization.

P2. It really angered me when the insurance company you know, because my

deductible was a certain amount, had to make sure that the valuables that they

stole out of my house was over my deductible in order for my insurance company

to reimburse me. I was like, you know damned if I do, and damned if I don't.

P8. I just want to teach them a lesson, to retaliate, to get them back. They need to

learn a lesson. I am angry a lot, all the time. Because of them I need to find

somewhere else to go. The police in my neighborhood are no help at all.

P10. What do you think my emotional response was? I was so pissed off and

ready to hurt somebody. Mad at everybody. The police are worthless, and the

families of these idiots need to be lined up and caned. Don't mention what I think

about the thieves. This will never happen to me again, I bet you that.

Subtheme 2: Fear. A primal response to perceived threat (fear) is a basic survival mechanism that can occur as a result of a present or future event. Most of the participants fell into both of these categories as their fear responses were reported in relationship to the actual victimization experience, as well as possible future occurrences. The latter was unanimously discussed from the stance that prior to the experience none thought it could happen to them. Although all resided in the inner-city, a high crime area, and knew of other victims within their neighborhood, none of the participants actually anticipated becoming a victim.

P2. My psychological and emotional response is fear, uncomfortable no longer wanted to stay in the home after this. The second time within that year, the way they just came in it seemed to me more personal, like they went through all my personal stuff, everything the house. Where normally, the time before when they broke in my home they only entered the bedrooms, but this time, they entered the living room. They flipped the, ummm they just did everything you can imagine, they flipped the couch cushions, knocked down plants, it's a three bedroom home, it's a colonial, two bedrooms on the first level and a third bedroom on, umm you know the second level and they went through the whole (sic). Opened up the closets, threw everything down, flipped the mattresses upstairs, went through everything, everything and I just didn't feel comfortable.

P3. Some fear, because of being out of control. The situation was out of control. Yeah, yeah, ummm not the fear where I began to feel the pins and needles, but

yeah. I'm vulnerable right now, I'm vulnerable right here. Vulnerability, there.

Yeah. The unknown (laugh) the unknown.

P5. Oh yeah, oh yeah it's pumping, your adrenaline's pumping. You're scarred you

know. It's like a feeling of being violated, you know. You know what I'm saying.

It's a feeling like when you come... Like most people wouldn't even know what

this feeling is. It's like after somebody breaks in your house and you come into the

house and it's like somebody been touching all your stuff, you just feel violated

you know. So yeah and the, and the, and the fear is like you know to the point

where every day when I was coming up. I got, I, I, I, carry every day, every day.

Every day when I pull up in that yard, don't even sneak up on me. Make yourself

known of who you are. Michigan is an open carry state you know.

P7. Things have really changed now. The comfort that used to exist for me is a

thing of the pass. I'm fearful when I see youth gathered. I have to tell myself it is

ok and keep moving as normal. Since that day, I haven't entered my home

without contemplating and being prepared to either see the house ransacked or to

defend myself. No one should have to live like this. But, I am not going anywhere

either. So where do we go from here?

Subtheme 3: Ponder. From considering how this might have happened to

contemplating next steps, each participant described activities of deliberation–thinking

about the event, recalling moments preceding the victimization experience and planning

for stabilization (attempts at returning to normal). A keen awareness of one's present

environment was continually discussed amongst the participants, along with a

consciousness about planning. One participant recalled the exorbitant amounts of energy that went into next steps in terms of self protection.

P3. In my mind, that's where I wanted to go, I kind of got off track. Just I would find myself from time to time just really looking at what happened, how does this thing continue to happen? What can we do to get through to them we've been talking. When are they going to get it?

P6. My goal was to stabilize my home. What do I need to do to be safe, to keep my family and my property safe? I knew that things weren't as secure as they needed to be, why didn't I do something different?

P9. It started to sink in when things quieted down that day. Are they going to find out where I live? You know. I have my license, but what was in my wallet. Will it lead back to me? They took all my keys, you know they may come in the house so I had to go and get locks for all the doors, change all the locks that day. But I was listening out you know hoping that nothing happened in the interim with that.

Subtheme 4: Adrenaline. Upon becoming aware of their victimization episode the participants reported the presence of adrenaline.

P1. Just, it was like, what would you call it? Adrenaline rush, that's what it was adrenaline rush and carrying on that came down upon me and carrying on. You know that when you, your all your guards come up or what you supposed to do to protect yourself? Sometimes we do some things foolish and sometimes we do the right thang. You know what whit me I shouldn't have ran off and chased them and carryin on (cough). Even though I didn't get hurt in the instance, but the spray in

my eyes. But still the point is you shouldn't be out there doin nothing like that to the individuals.

P3. In lieu of how I eventually took her down, I know it was adrenaline. And being able to straddle her and subdue her. By being able to just hold her arms and her not with all the fighting and the kicking and the failing. Just being able to keep her pressed to the floor I know that was adrenaline. I remember thinking when she pushed me the second time, thinking I've got to, I've just got to snatch this girl to get her and I felt myself snatch as if I had been lifting weight as if I had taken self defense lessons and in one swoop it was grab, bop on the floor and I'm on however. I have problems with my knees; I have a problem being on my knees at long periods of time. I don't know how long I was down there. I did not feel it, with the little boney parts of my knee I did not feel it and all the pressure, after it was over, things that I felt. After everything was over and the release of getting up off the floor for a time I still, it was like I had not been on my knees and experienced the pain that I had done in other occasions, even if I was just getting down to pray, not being able to stay there long period of time on the carpet. But this was on a tiled concrete floor, so it had to be adrenaline, it had to be adrenaline.

P7. I just kind of went into action. Everything seemed to be moving fast but in a kind of slow motion. I knew what I need to do and just did. Now when I think about it, it was kind of foolish, I just responded to what was happening on the inside and went searching after the teens who broke into my house. I actually

followed them throughout the neighborhood. I would never do anything like that

under normal conditions, but I believe I was functioning on pure adrenaline. I

guess adrenaline can be a dangerous thing. If you just respond to it and don't

really think things through.

Summary of theme 1: Physical, psychological and emotional responses. All

the participants in the study reported physical, psychological and emotional experiences

during their victimization experiences. Common amongst all of the participants was the

presence of need for self protection and automatic responses to being victimized. Some

were surprised at their automatic responses such as chasing and subduing the

perpetrators.

Emotional responses were wide spread. From sadness for self and perpetrators, to

anger and rage, to fear and bewilderment, participants experienced the gamut of

emotional responses. Psychologically, individuals attempted to make sense of what had

just occurred. In some instances, they wondered why me? Or self blamed, asking how did

I allow this to happen to me and what did I do? Some experienced a deep sense of loss;

loss of security and safety, normalcy, and connection to the community.

In many instances, the victims were not aware of the specific identity of their

perpetrators. They simply knew them to be young African Americans. For some time

after the victimization incident most of the participants acknowledged being hyper-

vigilant about personal safety and property protection. All reported going to extra efforts

to secure their property (home and car alarms, enhanced locking devices and security

cameras). Participants reported their need to survey areas such as their driveways or

neighborhoods before entering the premises or areas. Some described the sense of seeing a possible threat on every corner as their eyes surveyed the neighborhood, landing on potential home invaders or robbers.

Research questions 4 and 5. How did you cope with the experience? How do you cope today?

Theme 2: Coping. Participants were asked to discuss how they coped with their victimization experience. Eight out of ten of the participants reported that talking to others about their victimization was their primary form of processing and coping.

P3. Well, the, the, I had reminders, after everything was over the next day and probably for two weeks after, I had reminders in the aches in my back (chuckle). You know I felt the physical, my hands were very sore, my wrist, my fingers from the grip that I had to hold, you know to hold her down. So I begin to feel things in the physical man. But, basically just being able to vent, vent to co-workers, vent here at home.

P5. Just talk, a lot. On the phone with my girls, you know. Just doing a lot of talking. A lot of talking. You know, you know just, just talking and let them know how I feel. And my friends say, girl if you need me to come pick you up, you don't have to be stuck in the house or whatever. Yeah that type of thing.

P7. I've been told that I'm an external processor. So, I excessively talked about my experienced. I talked to my family, my friends, neighbors, co-workers. Basically I talked to anybody who would listen. I would find myself in the

grocery store talking to strangers about the break-in. It took a long time before I

stopped talking about it.

P9. It was just a day by day experience. Talked with my family and my friends.

You know, but at a point, I just needed to just be quiet, because everyone was

sharing what they thought, what they felt, and their views. What should have

happened, what could have happened and it was just starting to jut overcrowd my

brain. And I just needed quiet time. So I just started to be less vocal.

Subtheme 1:Religious beliefs. Participants looked to their religious beliefs to

carry them through challenging times and they uttered their beliefs that seeking the aid of

God (through prayer) would provide answers to problems. Additionally, the participants

of this study (often feeling hopeless and desperate in relation to the plight of African

American youth) were relegated to interventions from God as the sole remaining

solution. Many uttered, "it will take a miracle from God to positively change the plight of

inner-city African American youth and African Americans in general."

P1. You know God missing. God missing. Don't nobody have no respect for God

no more, you know. See, you cause, we, you know, it's like I think it say, we walk

by, sight and not by faith, or something like that and carry on.

P3. Oh, I, I, I know at least once a week in my mind, I'm saying God if you don't

do a miracle. I don't believe that you're going to let this, this generation be lost. I

can't believe that's going to happen, I have to believe that there's a change that's

going to come.

P4. You know one of the things that impressed me a lot as a youth was the fact
that every Sunday, I had to go to church. There was a lot of TV stuff that I wanted
to watch and everything like that. But my grandma insisted on going to church.
And that gave me a different kind of moral. I see a lot of kids today, they never go
to church. If, if, if my parents wasn't going to church I saw my sisters and brothers
at church because they had to be there.

Summary of theme 2: Coping. The participants all shared family and friends, in
common, as a resource for coping with the encounter. All of the participants discussed
the need to talk about their victimization experiences with members of their communities
(family and friends) in order to move beyond the initial stages of shock and disbelief and
to regain some personal power. Regaining equilibrium and a sense of control was
important to all of the participants. Whereas all of the participants employed talking as a
coping mechanism, 3 of the 10 participants also opted to leave the community; in a sense,
escape or flee from the violence, crime and future victimization experiences.

Also shared amongst the participants were references to God. Discussions along
the line of God being an intervener or God as a cure to the ails of their communities were
common.

Research questions 7, 8 and 12. Prior to the experience, what was your view of
African American youth? What is your current view of African American youth? What
is your outlook for the future of African American youth?

Theme 3: Hopelessness. The participants were asked about their views of
African American youth from a pre and post victimization perspective, as well as their

outlook for the future. Nine out of 10 (90%) of the participants were hopeless about present and future realities for African American youth.

P4. Wow, that's hard. I don't know, we. Without hope, without help and hope, you know you just, it's a vicious circle. So, I'm a criminal, so when my kids grow up, they look back, well my father did this. Either it's going to push them to do better or just tell them. Well I'm in jail so it's ok for you to come to jail too. Ummm, you know. Hopefully we're going to say my father is in jail I don't want to go that way. I want to better myself.

P6. Disenfranchised, no direction, no leadership, broken homes, not good. They don't want anything, they don't have any, and this is not all African American youth. But most of them don't want anything, they don't have anything and most of them want to take what you have worked hard to achieve. If some things don't start to change in the next 5 to 10 years they are going to be in trouble. We've got to get them in school. We've got to get them from dropping out of school. Because the African American youth that are breaking into the houses, who victimized us, victimized me was between 14 and 17 years old. They should have been in school. Had they been in school this, that incident would have never happen, because they would have been in school learning, versus on the street stealing. My outlook for them is not good. What do they have to look forward to? I know for a fact that the youth that were arrested came from broken homes, there was no males in the house. That's number one, number two they weren't in school. So if you are not in school and have no male influence in the house, and

no education, you only setting yourself up for failure. So they had been set up to fail. So that's why they turn to a life of crime, because they want things and the only way they know how to get them is to take from somebody else. They haven't been taught the basic values of being a human being. If you want something you go out and get a job and you work for it.

P7. Prior to my victimization experience I was often saddened when I considered what I like to refer to as my babies. After the experience, I was even more convinced that except for a miracle, they are lost. Of course I don't mean all of them, just the majority of them. Then what does that mean for the rest of us if we have lost an entire generation of us. It just seems too big to tackle. We need a miracle.

P9. My view was that they are an endangered species. And that has not changed. What I felt then is what I feel now. I feel that they have very little direction. There future is bleak. If nothing happens soon, it's bleak. And with the age group that we're discussing to depend on them in our old age as we become older and senior citizens, it's really scary. And it, it really makes me a little fearful for the future. And it's like I'm going to fight for my youth tooth and nail because I'm scared to depend on them to care for me to run a computer or hit a switch or anything. So it's bleak not only for them but for me.

P10. There is no hope for these sub-humans. One might as well line them up in front of the firing squad. It is either them or us and I for one intend for it to be

them. They will never change, they are just animals. There is no hope for them or

their families.

Subtheme 1: Helplessness. These participants found that they were in

uncontrollable environments, and were limited in their ability to effect change. A sense of

helplessness was their outcry to this reality. Repeatedly, the participants reported being

exposed to the ills of living in Detroit, and the experience of being personally or

vicariously affected by it. Generally they expressed their exasperation with being unable

to effectively address their concerns. "This is just the way it is" is an example of the

wording used to reflect the participants' sense of helplessness. However they generally

expressed helplessness continued to have some idealistic commitment to the city of

Detroit.

> P6. I refuse to give up on the city. I am committed to it, I believe in Detroit.
>
> Other major cities have similar problems. I don't know what to really do to stop
>
> all the violence and killing that is normal to us. Something has got to be done
>
> though.
>
> P7. It's too big for one person to do anything about. But it doesn't seem like the
>
> police are doing anything about it either. There block clubs exists in some
>
> neighborhood, but they are too few. The children gather on the block and
>
> basically take over. They are running people out of the neighborhoods. I know of
>
> a person who just walked away. She was so tired of being victimized by home
>
> break ins and things, that she just walked away from her home.

P8. I'm moving. The only thing that I can do is move. It is just too many of them to do anything about it. You leave your car in front of the house before goin to bed and wake up and it's gone. I don't know, I just don't know. Things used to be different for us as a proud people.

Subtheme 2: Intraracial destruction. Intraracial destruction was highlighted as prevalently occurring amongst this population of African Americans who dwelt in Detroit, Michigan. The participants discussed the destruction of properties (home, vehicles, businesses), negative effects on psychological and emotional states, and the toll exacted on physical bodies, that were common occurrences amongst Detroit dwelling African Americans. This destructive interplay, perpetrated by African American youth, was shown as having far reaching, negative implications for the well being of Detroiters.

P2. Well lately let me put it this way, with the robberies and, you know, going into the home, home invasions, that has increased over the last three years or so, and it really took, a big turn last year. Working over in this area, I have seen and heard of a lot of citizens and break-ins, break-ins is on the rise you know. I'm not for sure if it's because no more longer a big thing with the drug activities and that's what makes the big thing is these break-in into the homes. That has increased and seeing more of the age range is getting younger. It's like 13 come into your house. I heard couple of xxx working in the area couple of the citizens coming in and said their home being burglarized. One citizen come in she told me that the young man who entered her home, she was actually in her home he entered her home, with thoughts of no one being in the home, and she had to just

get him at gun point and found out that he was 16 years old. See they are smaller,

they can come into smaller windows, and I think too because once they are

arrested they go to juvenile court. To me is just a slap on the hand. And you know

and they are not actually doing any time, probation time. But in the meantime

they still do the same situation.

P10. If we don't do somethin to them, those sub-humans are goin to do somethin

to us. They are already doin it. They come into our homes, steal our cars, and hurt

or kill us if we let them get close enough. I say they need a bullet put through

their heads before they put one in ours.

Summary of theme 3: Hopelessness.This question presented a challenge for a

majority of the participants, as they struggled with sharing that which they believed to be

the future or lot of African American youth. Throughout the interviews the participants

were challenged to speak positively about the youths' present or future state. Many

elements were identified in explanation of their hopeless state from poverty to crime and

violence, to a breakdown of family structure. Most, hesitantly offered their thoughts and

beliefs about African American youth, while two of the participants were forthright with

their answers. The mental struggle was apparent as each participant submitted their

hopeless verdicts.

In all cases, hopelessness was offered with a caveat, except for a miracle.

Participants classified the level of violence occurring in Detroit to be at epidemic

proportion, having gone unabated in spite of varying efforts to sway it. The participants

recognized the enormity of the state and were challenged to arrive at an answer, with the exception of there being a miracle.

Research question 10. What does it mean to be violated (robbed, vandalized, verbally abused) by African American youth?

Theme 4: Betrayal. Ninety percent of the participants either directly mentioned feelings of betrayal or alluded to the presence of the emotion. All except participant 7 assigned these feelings to intraracial victimization. Participant 7's feelings of victimization was not limited to being an African American who was victimized by another African American, but saw it from a larger vantage of human to human. She stated, "I have a problem with it being done to me by any human. We shouldn't treat each other in this manner."

> P1. Meaning does it have for me. I mean I call it the meaning of disrespect. Because when you look at me you see yourself. I am you and you are me so when you do something wrong to me, you do something wrong to yourself. You may not actually see it that way but that's the way it is.

> P5. Yeah. You know we supposed to be family. You know what I'm saying. You know. I mean I know if I'm out there and I see, I would look out for you. I would look out for you and yours. I would look out for and yours. You, you, how you gone take my car, you now. I, I, would do that for you. You know, I probably walked your little sister home from school. You know, zipped her coat up on the way out.You know. Exactly! Like how could you do this to your own people. You know. You know and what, what, what frame of your mind is this ok. How

do you make this ok? You know. How do you make this ok? You know. And but, in some ways they make it ok, but then trying to figure that out. We sitting up here living in the pit. We living in it. And it's just, it's just time.

P7. Mostly when I think about African American youth in general, I am saddened. Same here. It's very challenging for me to phantom someone robbing, attacking or stealing from anyone, but especially not from your own. You should see your mother, aunt, or grandmother when you see me. If not, why not? If so, how can you harm me? It's so scary. It's like they have no conscious at all. They only want what they want and it doesn't matter who you are. If you have it and I can get it, I am going to take it from you.

P10. If I considered them to be like me a proud, responsible, productive African American, then I would likely feel betrayed and maybe even some sympathy for them. But since I view them as being subhuman and not only not a part of my community, but belonging to the animal kingdom. Then in that light, I would have to say I don't feel betrayed.

Subtheme 1: Disrespect. Participants unanimously described a sense of being disrespected by Detroit dwelling African American youth. Reports of inconsideration covered the gamut. Incidences of vulgarities (language and acts); intrusions (obstruction of vehicles and persons), playing loud music or making obnoxious sounds with one's vehicles were common. It was reported that retaliatory acts often occurred when the disrespect was noted. It is important to be noted, the level of disrespect was correlated with age. The greater the age difference between the youth and adult, the more incensed

the adult felt. One participant reported being "cussed out" by a 10 year old boy for asking him to move from her lawn. She indicated that this was a normal occurrence for the adults living on her block.

P5. Pause, because most of the time they're males and because I have three sons, I feel like boy I could just whoop your, you know what I'm saying. I want to just, just jack them up. Like are you serious. You know. Are you serious? Like when, when, when they stole the van the last time and ran it into a tree. I was praying that I saw blood on the, on the thing. I'm like hope they busted they grill out. It wasn't no blood, but still. You know, I don't know. You just feel like, I don't know. It's just like how dare you. Who is your mother? You know. Who is your mother, where is your people at? You know. Can they park they car outside? Because I can't. And now I want to move somewhere where I can park my car in front of the house when I come from Michaels and then look outside and the car is still there. That's all I want. That's something real simple. Yeah. you know we supposed to be family. You know what I'm saying. You know. I mean, I know if I'm out there and I see, I would look out for you. I would look out for you and yours. I would look out for and yours. You, you, how you gone take my car, you now. I, I, would do that for you. You know, I probably walked your little sister home from school. You know, zipped her coat up on the way out. You know. You show no respect for me being a woman, a mother, or anything.

P8. The kids these day, don't show respect for nobody, not old people, adults, not even their own parents get respect from them. They walk down the street and cuss and spoke weed right in front of the elderly sitting on their front porches.

P10. These dogs don't respect their selves, or anybody for the fact. They don't even know what respect is. They walk around with their pants hanging off their butts looking like fools, doin nothing with their lives but messin up other people's lives.

Subtheme 2: Bewilderment. The state of being confusion or perplexed by the phenomenon of African American adults being victimized by African American youth was prevalent amongst the participants. Although it surfaced in varying forms, the message was clear that this group of individuals were confused on two fronts: (a) How they (African Americans) had arrived at a place where there appeared to be a total lack of respect for elders and for self (youth), and (b) what could be done to restore that which has been lost?

P6. What happened that we lost this generation? My generation still respects elders and takes care of young people. We still adhere to those themes of ethics. This group doesn't have a theme of ethic. How did this happen? Did they get too much? With my son we made sure to balance gifts and that which he had to earn.

P7. I don't want to give up on us. But, I know I keep sayin this, I don't know what to do. Instead of improving and launching from the shoulders of our ancestors, we are bringing shame and disgrace to their struggles of equal rights and freedom.

Just think about voting. So many died for our right to vote and yet too many

young people, people (black) in general don't exercise that right.

P8. The kids just don't have no direction. I don't have an answer for what to do

to stop it, which is why I plan to leave. I don't know if I believe it, but when we

had to fight for equal rights we were on the same side.

P10. How did we get here? I think we got greedy and forgot who we were. Who

speaks for Blacks today, nobody? Martin Luther King's and Malcolm X's are

gone. Other than arming myself, I just don't know.

Summary of theme 4: Betrayal. Most of the participants continued to connect

with belonging to the African American racial group, but they struggled with what it

meant to belong to a group that they identified as perpetrators of such violent and

criminal acts. The notion of being important to one another is of great concern, as African

American youth (according to the participants) failed to show concern or value for self or

others. All of the participants, when considering their victimization experiences,

identified their rights and privileges as being stripped from them, through these

experiences.

Expressed amongst the participants was bewilderment at the youth's lack of care

for others, particularly for other African Americans. There was an expressed belief that

this sense of community had been lost on this generation and ambiguity as to what could

be done to restore respect across the generations.

Research question 15. What explanation could you offer for the violence

occurring within your community, (why is it happening)?

Theme 5: Traditional values. In response to the question of why the violence is occurring and what one thinks is necessary to bring it to an end, 9 out of 10 (90%) of the participants mentioned the absence of traditional values, such as community living (the village), pride, hard work, discipline, and spirituality.

> P1. You don't see a lot, you don't see you know, people of the old like back in the day like I tell young guy, people I say when I was growing up, everybody was my momma. When I walked down the street shoots (*sic*) my boy you bet not I will knocked you upside you damn whoop (*sic*) ok, ok I understand everybody knew that you did something wrong, you may not get it from that particular ones, but they called down the street. Like I seen your little bad ass son down here doing whooooooooo (*sic*). Even when you get home, you be like, how did you know? Yeah cause I got a call from Irene and told me I know. You know, like it say, it takes a village to raise a child. And if everybody is not involved, you know we gone keep sitting out rotten seeds. They gone sit along the soil and they just gone rot you know.

> P2. I think why it is this happening, starts with the home. Ok, it starts with the home; starting with, members in the home there. You know if it's, what type of lifestyle does she have? What is she doing you know? Is he a drug addict? Is she just one of those welfare recipient moms, whose not trying to get anywhere? What type of people is she bringing into the home? What type of man are you bringing into the home? Alright, what type of man you bringing into this home?

Is this man being a man to these children or is he just looking for a place to stay?

Because he's in the system somewhere ok.

P4. Again, hope (chuckle). Everybody wants stuff, you know it's marketed. You

want the flat screen TV, you want the big house, and you want the fancy car and

everything. How am I going to get that in this neighborhood, when the jobs here

are paying minimum wages or whatever? I will never be able to buy a Rolls

Royce with minimum wages. I will never be able to buy a big house with

minimum wages. So how do I get that stuff? I have minimum wages, no

education and no hope, so what am I going to do? Unless somebody has instilled

something in me to make me a go getter, my. . . What's the other option, but to

steal from somebody else?

P6. Back in the day, you had a grandmother and a grandfather which is still your

positive male and female influences. There are countless times when the African

American mother went on drugs and the grandmother, aunts, uncles and

community snatched the kids up and said we are not going to let the kids go to

waste. The community used to help raise your child back in the day. You know

you had neighbors. I remember one time I went to the store and I was cursing and

he grabbed my arms and twisted my arms and said James what are you doing in

there cursing? And that doesn't exist anymore. So the community used to help

raise the child.

P8. I really don't know. You know I could say lack of jobs, I could say low

economic status. I could say you know there are people hungry. But as a Black

community we've had harder times than this. And we made it and we were strong you know. We welcomed each other to what we had you know. If you had it and I needed it you shared it, same with whomever. We looked out for one another, so it wasn't about I and me, you know it was us and we. So I really can't explain you know why this is occurring, except that we have weakened ourselves as a people. We've diluted what we were, we were strong, we were proud with whatever we had, we stood strong, firm and now (chuckle) I, I, just don't know.

Subtheme 1: Heritage of faith in God. The participants spoke about a heritage amongst the African American community; where it was expected that one would actively attend church, share a belief in God amongst their family members and utilize the church community as a means for social engagement and advancement. This belief in God and adherence to Christian tenets was discussed amongst the participants as greatly diminished amongst the 21st century African American community. One participant stated, "I believe a majority of the problems to lie in the fact that we as Black people don't attend church like we use to." Another participant shared, "There is no fear in our community, not of the law, not of consequences in general and mostly not of God. This is the primary problem. We no longer fear God or live by Biblical principles."

P3. Along with the influence from media, and illiteracy, God is missing from our homes. If the parents haven't introduced their children or exposed them to God then they are lost.

P4. You know one of the things that impressed me a lot as a youth was the fact that every Sunday, I had to go to church. There was a lot of TV stuff that I wanted

to watch and everything like that. But my grandma insisted on going to church. And that gave me a different kind of moral. I see a lot of kids today, they never go to church. If, if, if my parents wasn't going to church I saw my sisters and brothers at church because they had to be there.

P5. Well, you know, you know, we just don't go to church like we used to do when we were young. You know, even if my parents, really my mother didn't go to church, she was generally too tired, she sent us. I don't think, you know there's no going or sending today.

Subtheme 2: Community responsibility. The Igbo and Yoruba proverb "It takes a whole village to raise a child" (Healey & Saalam, 1998) encompassed the methodology previously employed amongst the African American community in regards to child rearing practices. As reported by most of the participants, they had experiences of being cared for by many members of the community that were not their relatives. It was expected that they would give the same level of obedience and respect to the adults in the neighborhood as they would the elders within their families. Failure to do so would result in discipline from the neighbor. Once the neighbor informed the parents of the youth's infractions, resultant discipline would be executed by the familial elders as well. This assumed arrangement involved the neighborhood (as a whole) in the child rearing process. Few during this era would turn their heads to youth mayhem, but expeditiously address it. Participants reported being hesitant about approaching children in their neighborhoods today, out of fear or repercussions from the youth or their parents.

Though some participants reported their present day practice of community

responsibility, they acknowledged that they do so with trepidation.

P5. When we used to get, when I used to get it growing up it wasn't needed, to

that extent. We got it from everybody, if you did something wrong. You know

what I'm saying. But, I, I don't even think they are doing that now. I think its kids

raising kids, and it's like Lord of the Flies out here . . . The neighborhood used to

help, but now the kids are on their own. They don't need to all whoop the kids,

but they need to get involved to help them.

P8. Like in my neighborhood there are some ex-police who try to help, especially

help the senior citizens. A lot of senior citizens live in my area. But it's only two

of them and looks like hundreds of young misguided teens. More adults have to

get busy helpin.

P10. Our neighbor, coward neighbors need to stop turning their heads, running,

ducking and diving to the houses and get involved. When I was a young boy you

couldn't walk down the street without your goings on being told to your mother

and father. One wrong move and you had it comin to you from everybody. If you

did something, it wasn't in the neighborhood where you were known. Today these

things commit crime in front and for their so called parents. More of use must get

involved or we lose.

Subtheme 3: Group pride. Similar to the participants' discussions on

community responsibility, their dismay regarding the diminishing reality of group pride

among the African American community at–large was thoroughly discussed as well.

Participants struggled with the absence of a visual display of racial pride amongst the youth in their neighborhoods.

> P1. On yeah, basically it's that generations not passing on you know, was what one would call it good fortune or a way of life, a way how to act, a way to respect or have principles and values and have pride for who you are as a people. A lot of us don't even have principles or values that we stand by. We just live by the everyday of life that was given to us you know. We don't hope for nothing you know greater than what we already have you know, and things or that nature. They don't, by all these things, all these false images being thrown at em, they don't have enough room to give themself (*sic*) nothing to uplift themselves you know. They don't believe in themselves.

> P2. It means a lot. It hurts, it really hurts, and what it means to me is that where have we gone wrong as African Americans. We used to have dignity, we used to have pride, and we used to have respect for others. And, as an African American if some of these young people realized how hard it was for us to get to where we are now, I think they would take a second look at things and then on the flip side of that, we, some of us didn't want our children to work as hard, right. So we tried to give them things that we didn't, you know make it easy by giving them things that easy to them. So, but what end up happening is that they don't have any determination to do any better. They don't know what it means to work hard, because everything we're given to them. When things are not given to them, the first thing they do is take it. You know they don't understand, you know, like

minimum wage jobs all that's just a like, please, it like pennies to them, they don't say let me step in this door and work my way up to make myself a better person. No they want to start at the top level. So you think if they entering your home and several other people homes and stealing all this merchandise, and getting paid for that and step into a world of a working job. They are not getting much of anything. Now honest living to them is not worth it, to them.

P9. I really don't know. You know I could say lack of jobs, I could say low economic status. I could say you know there are people hungry. But as a Black community we've had harder times than this. And we made it and we were strong you know. We welcomed each other to what we had you know. If you had it and I needed it you shared it, same with whomever. We looked out for one another, so it wasn't about I and me, you know it was us and we. So I really can't explain you know why this is occurring, except that we have weakened ourselves as a people. We've diluted what we were, we were strong, we were proud with whatever we had, we stood strong, firm and now (chuckle) I, I, just don't know.

Summary of theme 5: Traditional values. The absence of traditional values was continually uttered by a majority of the participants. African American youth were described as lacking a work ethic, instead of diligently working through legitimate channels to acquire that which they desired. The youth continually opted to take from others, thus showing a lack of pride, honesty and care for others. Functioning without these primary human qualities allowed the youth to act at the expense of others; these were shown through ongoing acts of stealing, robbing, assaulting, and killing. The

participants questioned the absence of these traditional qualities in this generation of

African American youth; acquiescing to an apparent fault of the previous generation and

their failure to pass these qualities on. Participants were unable to identify a time in

history or a reason for the failure but unanimously recognized the absent of these

qualities in the present generation. Agreed upon however, was the glaring absence of the

African American community functioning as a village. "It takes a village to raise a child"

was touted as the concept that espoused the community having the collective

responsibility of caring for the children and in effect, the community itself. Whether it

was discussed from the standpoint of government being too involved in discipline of

children, the epidemic teen parenting or African Americans seeking the American dream

of suburban life at the expense of generational living; the primary concept was that the

waywardness of this generation of inner-city African American youth, was in a great part

due to the failure of the previous generation to continue to value and therefore practice

community living.

The participant's believed addressing the dilemma required the community to

return to a state where there was a collective value and practice of traditional values and

an intentional act of passing it on to the younger generations.

Theme 6: Societal issues. Societal issues were also touted as an explanation for

the violence, crime and victimization that is occurring within African American

communities, particularly Detroit. The primary societal issues discussed by the

participants were linked to poverty. It was seen as a primary contributing factor to the

waywardness of African American youth. Though, it was also mentioned that poverty is not new to African Americans.

P2. And then its' the employment. With the employment you have, you know, not everybody want to work at your fast food restaurants. But places you go, you see more seniors filling these positions then you find the youth. One the seniors are reliable. OK, that's one thing, but how we can get them of the track of working, you know holding some type of responsibility. And then that they are not able to come in.

P7. Adequate finances have not been allotted to these suffering communities. Without the finances, there are no jobs to help the parents who live in the community support their families, few outlets for the children (recreation or incentives to fight their way out of poverty) and horrific services (schools, first responders, city services in general). It's just plain ole boils down to money. You don't see these things in Grosse Pointe, Berkley or Birmingham. Why, because those communities have a substantially higher tax bracket that supports their daily living than Detroiters do.

Subtheme 1: Poverty. Participants discussed the impoverished conditions with which Detroiters continually contend. Mentioned amongst the participants was the absence of gainful employment for those with limited transportation. One participant discussed the fact that he is aware of jobs, but they are all across 8 mile or in other suburbs. Areas to which he does not have ease of access–given that there is no major transit connecting the suburbs to Detroit. The participants reported experiences of

residing within an impoverished city like Detroit, all highlighted such things as exposure

to high levels of violence and crime, contending with poor city services reflected in the

delayed response times of first responders, substandard education, and minuscule

community resources (adequate medical facilities, quality commerce–food, clothing and

general goods).

P1. It's a lot tied to that. I mean one is poverty. You know people don't have

nowhere to live, so people don't have nowhere to live or nothing to eat, what else

is they gone do. So that's basic. You know jobs, you know and carryin on, good

community leaders and stuff, things of that nature.

P6. Shoot, there aren't any jobs, finding employment is like a needle in a

haystack. When other cities were just learning about a housing crisis or

manufacturing crisis, Detroit had been experiencing it for a couple of years. It's

ridiculous that you can get a home for 35,000 in Detroit where you would pay

135,000 somewhere else. That's just how bad it is for us. You know, cause you

live in Detroit too. We are still suffering with no end in sight from the gas crisis.

The big three got hit hard and we have never recovered. An already poor city just

got poorer.

P8. There isn't anything for the children to do but steal and walk around all day

smoking weed. We need more recreation centers. We need to ask the kids, teens

what they would like to do and provide some of those things to them. But that's

not likely with the way budgets are around here. But I don't know why not, the

crooked politicians are using the money the way they want to anyway. Ain't that

something? We are a poor broke city and yet we are paying to convict those who were supposed to lead the city. That's a joke. They should have to come and live where we live.

Summary of theme 6: Societal Issues. Societal issues primarily fostered by poverty was touted as the culprit for the crime, violence and victimization occurring with Detroit. The participants viewed the lack of services and activities available to inner-city dwellers as a detriment to the community. A lack of services, exposure to positive influences and stimulating experiences and opportunities for upward mobility were identified as being problematic for the youth residing within Detroit. There was a sense of suffering noted throughout the participants' discussions. Suffering from a lack of community, adequate and affordable housing, opportunities for the youth are some of those discussed. Participants noted the absence of these resources as debilitating realities that youth in their communities contend with on a daily basis. They further explained the prevalence of illegal and dangerous opportunities of gain, leading to the inner-city African American youth as viewing an unlawful approach as their only viable option to betterment or gain.

Research question 16. What is the community doing about violence?

Theme 7: Disengaged acceptance. Participants in the study were asked to discuss their impressions of the community's response to the violence. Unanimously, the participants believed that the community at-large was neglecting to respond to the youth violence occurring within Detroit. Two participants thought that there was the possibility of some small groups attempting to address some aspect of the problem. Another

participant reported that a few ex-police officers who resided in her neighborhood were taking matters into their own hands and protecting the neighborhood. None however, could identify a collective community effort directed towards the youth violence and increasing victimization.

> P1. I don't see nothing happening, they leave, they sit and we don got lazy and they leaving everything up to the government. And then by you leaving everything up to the government, you leaving everything up to one world order, you know. Where you will be ran by that government. You won't even have your rights you know. People got to realize freedom ain't free. And once ones realize that they gone come astray, they gonna come and realize this ain't free. Is it, you got to do something, something going to change, something going to give.

> P2. Mainly, I just hear us talking about it. Just basically, we are just talking about It. I don't see anything that we are trying to do. I can't say, well then you have little small groups, would come in and try to grab you know.

> P4. I think the community has given up a lot of times because of what the media says. We've listened to the media and we just lost hope. But don't think we can afford to stay there. We got to get up and we've got to work to help these kids see there is a better way.

> P5. Nothing, they ain't doing nothing. Taking a bunch of public funds that could be used for fixing up the neighborhood and giving it to these nonprofit groups. They are not doing anything. Really not doing too much of anything. It's like you've got to know the right person to get the help. And if you don't know

somebody, who knows somebody, what do you got? You are out of the loop,

which most of them are. You know. You don't know what's going on. Which is

pretty much the jest of it?

P7. It's very sad. The community isn't doing anything that I can see. We seem to

be just running and hiding, putting more bars on our doors and windows, alarms

on our homes and purchasing guns. I think we are moving towards being like the

Okay Coral, always packing. I want to do something, but it all seems too

overwhelming. I have started going to block club meetings, but we just seem to be

more of us who are desperately trying to protect our self and things. It doesn't feel

more powerful being together. It just feels like I know more bad things that are

happening by going to the meetings. I don't know.

Subtheme 1: Submissiveness. A majority of the participants described their

present level of activity directed at addressing victimization within Detroit as non-

existent; yet all of the participants reported activities aimed at protecting self, loved ones

and property. With the exception of one participant who had taken arms and was in

effect, looking to aggressively put an end to the perpetrator's activities, there was no

reported effort of anyone working towards a solution.

P2. It's just the way it is. It is way too out of control and I don't even know if

something can be done. I am not the only person in Detroit who was forced to

leave their own property. It happens all the time.

P6. I've got to become more aware because before this happened to me, I wasn't

aware that it was practically an epidemic on my block. I just went to work and

came home and that was it. I don't know if I can really do anything about the violence and stuff, but I can talk to my neighbors more and protect my property. P9. I don't see it. I mean there may be certain communities or areas that's standing vigilant, I don't see it. And honestly I haven't done anything neither. You know initially, I said I'm going to the community meetings and I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that. And I went to one and it was like ok, maybe I will go to the next one and maybe I won't. And I never went back.

Summary of theme 7: Disengaged acceptance. All the participants in this study viewed the community as being uninvolved in addressing the prevalence of violent encounters occurring within Detroit at the hands of African American youth. A sense of frustration was recognized in all of the participants as they pondered the question and rested on the answer of "nothing, the community isn't doing anything." It was apparent that the participants wrestled with knowing what possibilities existed? What could be done to put an end to the violence; particularly what they individually could do? Unanimously there was a sense of being overwhelmed and paralyzed by the sheer massiveness of the problem. Though the participants had been negatively affected by the violence and expressed a desire to rid it from their communities, none of them were actively working to bring it to an end.

All of the participants worked to regain control, two participants by moving out of city, or making plans to do so, and others by becoming hyper-vigilant about protection of self and property. The participants response to the overall problem of crime, violence and victimization, is well encapsulated in the notion of an external locus of control

perspective. They viewed themselves as having some sense of control over their individual victimization situations, but failed to view that same power in the light of the broader problems of crime, violence and victimization. In fact, there was an apparent acceptance in the participants expressed belief that this is just the way it is in the city. The participants were reflective of the Detroit's African American community in that it is frustrated by the preponderance of violence, crime and victimization perpetrated by African American youth; moves in isolated pockets to put an end to it, lacking a collective effort, and is somewhat resigned to the notion that except for some major event (often referred to as a miracle), it will for the most part, remain as it is.

Structural Description

Victimization is intrusion into and can become a major disruption to one's normalcy. The phenomenological investigation of intraracial, intergenerational victimization of 10 Detroit residents led to the following major themes: (a) physiological, psychological and emotional (b) coping, (c) hopelessness, (d) betrayal, (e) traditional values, (f) societal issues and, (g) disengaged acceptance. All of the themes also had subtheme(s)–closely related issues noted by at least 6 of the 10 participants. The themes and subthemes displayed a continued struggle of intraracial destruction and potential for hope that exists amongst African Americans residing within Detroit, Michigan.

Physiological, Psychological and Emotional

Participants were emotionally, psychologically and physiologically impacted by their victimization experiences. Just as the individuals varied in makeup and background, so did their physiological, psychological and emotional responses. There was sadness,

anger, bewilderment, chaos, confusion, fear and even joy. Some temporarily loss their mental peace, while others have yet to regain it–as they continue to feel stuck in a perpetual place of ponder. Reflected by questions or statements such as, what could I have done differently to avoid this? If only I had done things differently. There were however, common elements to this theme. The reports of immediate physiological responses such as an excessively pounding or rapidly racing heart, diarrhea or upset stomachs and weakened knee reactions and the assumption of increased adrenaline were common amongst the participants. As an immediate response, the participants' victimization encounters coalesced to a crescendo of physical, psychological and emotional experiences; countered by present responses reported as being diverse and anti-climatic.

Coping

Learning to manage life post the victimization experience was a universal reality for all participants. Effective coping lead to the development of a new normal for participants, whereas ineffective coping hindered this process and often left the victims paralyzed in a vicious cycle of re-victimization. Sharing, the primary method of coping was greatly employed by all of the participants. Essentially, to the degree that victims were able to tell their story of being victimized to others–to their community–the likelihood of accepting that which occurred and moving beyond it was increased.

An additional tool utilized for managing the aftermath of victimization was the participants' adherence to their religious beliefs. There was solace in the belief that prayer and faith could positively affect the plight of inner-city African Americans. The

ultimate goal for this theme was normalcy. Whether one achieved it through sharing with loved ones or friends, or through engaging one's religious beliefs and practice, both were engaged with the goal of returning to a pre-victimization state.

Hopelessness

When asked about the possible future of African American youth, an astonishing sense of hopelessness was prevalent within the data. It was difficult for the participants to pinpoints elements of hope for the general population of youth. Acknowledged was the presence of scattered groups of Detroit dwelling youth with bright futures, but this was not able to be generalized to the masses. The idea of implosion was embodied by the immediate, seemingly uncontrollable destruction that was reported as coming from within; from Detroit dwelling African American youth to Detroit dwelling African Americans in general (not limited to youth).

Betrayal

A solemn sense of betrayal and being disrespected was prevalent amongst the participants. Collectively acknowledging the external entities that continue to actively hinder the progress of African Americans within the United States of America, and recognizing the aggressively destructive role of African American youth in this process, a tremendous sadness and bewilderment permeated the discussions. The sense is encapsulated in the following quote "it is as if my own flesh and blood is intent on destroying me."

Traditional Values

The loss of traditional values was keenly recognized and echoed throughout the participants' stories. Elements that were historically prized and religiously adhered to were acknowledged and in some cases discovered as being starkly absent for the African Americans residing within Detroit. Whereas belief in God, as demonstrated by a commitment to church attendance, was a normal part of one's life, it no longer appeared to take precedence within the community; particularly amongst the youth. Community responsibility and group pride were also highlighted as not presently being a prominent element of this community.

Societal Issues

A gamut of societal issues was raised. From the absence of a major grocery store chain being available to Detroit residents to the presence of drugs, out of control crime, sub-standard housing and education and poor public services, the evidence of poverty was poignantly presented. In essence the participants' explanation for the violence, crime and victimization epidemically occurring within Detroit, perpetrated by African American youth, is attributed to the impoverished conditions with which they are forced to contend. Detroit dwelling African Americans are often forced to live in poverty from the cradle to the grave. For certainty correlations can be made to the level of crime, violence and victimization that exists within Detroit and the levels of poverty that its residence experience.

Disengaged Acceptance

Essentially the participants failed to actively address the myriad issues plaguing their inner-city. There were deliberate and diligent acts directed at returning to normalcy and defense. However, these activities were limited to individual life, not extended to the community at-large. The participants, in effect, disengaged from the community as a whole, became more suspicious of the community post victimization and in a sense, accepted their present fate of victimization being a possibility for Detroit residents. The essence of disengaged acceptance showed that these victims, although they physically remained within the community, psychologically escaped to a place of submitting to the criminal, violent phenomenon by neglecting to engage and oppose its existence within their communities.

Summary

The major themes and subthemes developed from the participant dialogue portrayed an apparent intraracial, intergenerational conflict occurring amid Detroit dwelling middle-aged African Americans and African American youth. In concert, also is the potential for hope as the middle-agers resolve to remain Detroit residents and attempt to more effectively manage their lives as Detroiters.

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Discrepant and Nonconforming Data

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A majority of the discrepant data was derived from participant 10. Unlike the other nine participants, participant 10 no longer identified with this group of African American youth on any level. Although this participant is a middle-aged African American male, he was adamant about his view of African American youth who engage

in violence, crime and victimization as being subhuman. Resultantly, his responses to all of the questions were poles apart from all other participants. From the first to the very last question, the participant was quite belligerent about his experience with, and towards African American youth who participated in criminal or violent activities. In fact, when asked about his view of African American youth, he became almost hostile. He declared those who engaged in criminal or violent activities to be "sub-human dogs that cannot be considered along with those of us who are honest and hard working, normal people." He further stated, "not only are they subhuman, but their (expletive) families are as well for raising these (expletive)."

Unlike the other 9 participants, participant 10 showed no remorse for the plight of African American youth. He was adamant about the need to bear arms. This is not unique in that, other participants shared this belief. Participant 10's posture was aggressively hostile. He believed it not only necessary to arm one's self for protection, but to go a step further to "hunt them down and take them out. It is either us or them." This posture is possibly linked to participant 10's lone stance of failure to identify with the perpetrators.

Other discrepant data were derived from responses to research questions 13 and 14. "Prior to the experience, what were thoughts or feelings about living in Detroit? Discuss your current thoughts and feelings about living in Detroit."

As only 70% of the participants resonated to the notion of being loyal and committed to Detroit it failed to meet the criterion for major theme, but warranted mentioning as discrepant data.

These participants presented a resolve to remain in the city, in-spite of their
victimization experience(s). The impetus for the resolve was represented by family
connections and commitment to the city itself. In some cases, the commitment was based
upon a need to protect the city from external attacks and belittling. Thirty percent of the
participants simply could no longer stomach the crime and violence, ever present in
Detroit, and desperately sought some relief.

> P1. I always like Detroit I ain't never have nothing bad about Detroit. All the
> things people say bad about Detroit, and all the people. Right now see I'm forty-
> five years old today, and I sit back and I look and I see all the people who have
> moved out of Detroit, and you know went away. Some people's condition have
> got better and some ain't. They still in the same condition that they would have
> been if they would have stayed down here in Detroit. You know you just have to
> be, I'm a I'm considered as a survivalist, you know. I ain't tryin to run from you
> know a real good struggle, or a real good fight. I'm goin to sit here and plan it out
> until somethin change because somethin gone change eventually. So I ain't gonna
> run from you, know the fight that's goin on at this time, in an hour you know.
> But that's just me.

> P5. I made a decision to come to Detroit, to move my family here. I felt like I
> could come to Detroit and ummm, my kids could get an education and they could
> succeed. I still feel that way. I feel that if you, if we lay the groundwork for our
> children they are going to succeed, they are going to press. I, I, I feel like I did
> that so that my kids would succeed. I feel that if a child is giving the right

encouragement, they are going to make it. The experience didn't change that. I am still committed to Detroit.

P6. Oh I love the city. You not going to get me, nobody's going to get me to say anything bad about my city. Because in any urban environment and even in the suburb, bad things are going to happen. So I have a positive outlook on the city. We have some challenges to overcome, just like any other major city. In any city, I don't care in any suburb where you have a situation where there are no jobs, you are going to have crime and crime is going to rise. I not scare to be in my city. I walk the streets in my city. There are some places that I don't go by myself. But, my outlook for the city is good. The city has been good to me. I love the city.

P7. I am committed to the city. My husband and I have made a vow to remain in the city, although many of our friends moved out years ago. We believe in supporting the city and want to remain examples for children who otherwise may have no other examples of inner-city, African American adults who are productive, moral and successful. There are times when I long for the seemingly tranquility, well kept neighborhoods and responsive community services. But to date, I am yet committed to the city. I am here because I want to be, not because I have to be.

From within the data, one can also see the participant's affinity for Detroit as well as their commitment to the city. This resounded throughout a majority of the participant's discussions. Despite the fact that all had been victimized within Detroit proper, that they continued to struggle with poor city services and high tax brackets; or that crime and

violence was at an epidemic proportion, the participants were adamant about their affinity for Detroit and Detroiters. One participant stated, "I love my city, you can't get me to say anything bad about Detroit." Another participant said, "Detroit is just like Chicago or any other major city in America. There is going to be crime, violence and a whole lot of African Americans living there. And, why is it that Detroit always gets the negative attention?" There was a resounding dedication purported from the participants of this study, directed towards Detroit. This dedication could be gleamed from the protective stance that a majority of the participants assumed. The participants shared their dismay with mainstream media and its portrayal of life in the city as being dismal and lacking in hope. It was stated by a participant that "those who do not live within the city, have no right to pass judgment. If you live across 8 mile road, you need to reserve your opinions for the suburbs."

> P6. I love my city and don't plan on goin nowhere. Here is where I was born and here is where I will live the remainder of my life. I'm not moving because of criminals or poor city services or whatever anybody has to say negative about my city. That's the way I feel about it, it is my city and I am proud to be a Detroit native and current resident. I can afford to live across 8 mile or telegraph or in the pointes, I choose to live in Detroit. If we all live then what? Some upstanding citizens with a solid financial backing have to stay. If for nothing else, the kids need to see that not everyone is selling drugs or committing crime or on welfare. Some of us work for a living and make a good living right here in the heart of the city. I am one of those people.

P7. I live here because I want to. It is as simple as that. I get so sick and tired of

hearing the negative press. There are many positive things happening in Detroit,

but the press makes a living from negative press. For all the children that do not

graduate from Detroit high schools, many do, but do we see news reports on their

successes, no. I ask the question why not. Because for some reason and for some

entities there is benefit to seeing Detroit as the underdog.

P9. Prior Detroit was my home city. I'll be here till the death (excuse me). I feel

that way now if I could find an actual neighborhood, that is not run down, where

there is not houses boarded up or torn down or burnt out or drug houses set up,

where abandoned cars, decent police response time. Umm same with the Fire

Department. But yet I still have no yearning to be anywhere else. So it's just

hoping and wishing it would get better.

Summary of Discrepant Data.

Participant 10 provided substantial discrepant data as his views were very

divergent from the other participants. He primarily assumed an aggressively hostile

posture and appeared determined to personally address the issues of violence, crime and

victimization within his neighborhood. In other words, he seemed to "take matters into

his own hands."

A majority of the participants (including participant 10) had an affinity for

Detroit. Some intentionally remained in order to act as a positive influence for the city,

amidst the negative. Others, although they did not have the financial resources to

relocate, suggested that they would not depart if they were able to. They expressed their

dedication to the betterment of the city and its residents. There was as much of an

identification with the city (for 60% of the participants), as there was for the perpetrators.

Two common elements here, was that these victims had not given up on either the city or

on the criminal youth. Although 20% had chosen to leave the city, they yet had hope for

the youth. Participant 2 struggled to see hope for the future of African American youth.

Whereas participant 10 vehemently declared that they are a hopeless group. Yet, he

remained hopeful for the city, only to the degree that victims (in particular) and non-

victims take up arms and defend themselves and their properties.

Evidence of Quality

Qualitative approaches are chosen when the goal of the study is to gain a rich and

multifaceted understanding of a phenomenon. This method of inquiry seeks to explore a

phenomenon that needs to be better understood, by discovering and describing its essence

(Hanks, 2008). Trustworthiness helps one to evaluate the quality of a phenomenological

study and suggests that the research is worth paying attention to (Lincoln & Guba, 1999).

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are elements of

trustworthiness that were considered in this research effort.

Credibility

Since the participant alone is able to validate the credibility of findings based

upon reports from the interview data, member checking was an integral part of the study.

Each participant was provided a transcript of their interview for verification of accuracy.

Triangulation of data was employed for achievement of credibility as well. The audio

taped interviews, field notes and careful documentation of research protocol represented

data triangulation for this study. These efforts assist in establishing a favorable view of

qualitative research efforts. Davies and Dodd (2002) suggested the use of several kinds of

methods for triangulation to be a necessary practice in rigorous qualitative research.

Bracketing requires the researcher to set aside, as much as humanly possible, all

preconceived notions in order to understand the participant's perspective (Creswell,

2007). It was necessary to be intentional about bracketing as I fit the criteria for the

study–able bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African American, who was victimized by

African American youth. Through this experience I have preconceived notions about this

phenomenon, where if not bracketed, had the potential to hinder my ability to fully

experience the participants' victimization encounters. One method of bracketing was to

create a list of expectations prior to data collection. The following helped me remain

cognizant of preconceived notions, as they were expected to be found through the data

collection efforts: That the participants–able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African

Americans, (a) would generally experience anger with African American youth and no

longer identified with the youth, (b) would be in preparation to move out of Detroit, no

longer feeling an affinity for the city; (c) men would be more willing than women to

discuss their victimization experiences, (d) victims would not be difficult to locate, (e)

have an increase in take up arms in preparation of another victimization experience, (f)

would experience a growing sense of hopelessness for the entire community.

Transferability

The nature of a phenomenological study limits transferability to very similar

participants of the particular study (Groenewald, 2004). As such, transferability was

limited to urban dwellers, victims and middle aged African American. It is important to

remain cognizant that only components of the study were transferable. For example,

victims from various experiences share commonality and thus may benefit from this

study.

Dependability

Accurate capturing of the context in which this research study occurred helped to

establish dependability, both the consistency product and the process was carefully

examined (Golafshani, 2003).

Confirmability

Throughout the study I documented the procedures employed for checking and

rechecking the data (Golafshani, 2003) to ensure that all major themes and meaning units

were captured, I acknowledged and minimized bias's through the bracketing process.

<div align="center">

Summary

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Chapter 4 included information relative to the study of able bodied, middle aged,

inner-city African Americans who have been victimized by African American youth.

Chapter 4 included locating research participant, data collection process, research

participants, research questions, in-depth interviews and coding, findings and evidence of

quality. Ten participants were asked to answer 17 research questions specific to their

victimization experiences. This phenomenological inquiry led to 7 primary themes: (a)

physical, psychological and emotional; (b) coping, (c) hopelessness, (d) betrayal, (f)

traditional values, (g) societal issues, and (g) disengaged acceptance. These efforts led to

a compilation of the lived experiences of the participants. Chapter 5 presents

interpretation of findings, theoretical frameworks, implications for social change,

limitations of the study, recommendations for further study, and critical reflections.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

Chapter 5 reviews the purpose, problem, central research question, and methodology; as well as introduces discussions on the interpretation of findings, theoretical frameworks from a post-inquiry vantage, implications for social change, recommendations for further study, critical reflections. This chapter opens with discussion on the method of inquiry and the intent of the study.

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the lived experience of victimized African Americans. Driven by the central question, "What is the experience of able bodied, middle aged, inner-city African Americans who have been victimized by African American youth?", I deduced that a qualitative method, particularly phenomenological inquiry best addressed the research goal of understanding the lived experience. The phenomenologist's role is to accurately describe the social and psychological phenomena as experienced by the participant, with a focus on the lived experience (Groenewald, 2004). The selected the qualitative method of inquiry was justified by the fact that other qualitative methods and quantitative methods (Golafshani, 2003) failed to investigate the meaning of a lived experience.

Purposeful sampling was employed. Inclusion criteria (African American adults between the ages of 35–60, resided within Detroit, Michigan, and experienced victimization by African American youth within the last 12 months) were delineated throughout Detroit via flyers (Appendix A), with the intent of locating participants who

would be willing and capable (criteria determined) of engaging the study. Reflective of the inordinate rates of crime and violence occurring within America's inner cities, specifically Detroit (United States Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008), locating participants who met the criteria was without challenge. Ten participants provided in-depth discussions on their experiences of being victimized by African American youth within the inner-city limits of Detroit, Michigan.

Cultural and Ethnic Specificity

Throughout history, the movement of people from farms, rural areas and villages, generally for economic reasons, led to the development of urban areas (Poremba, 2005). Urban areas are often characterized by the presence of dense populations, "by neighborhood, disorder, increased opportunity for drug use, and weaker economic conditions, all of which have been associated with higher rates of violence" (Maldonado-Molina, Reingle, Tobler, Jennings, Komro, 2010, p. 122). Distributed throughout America is an array of urban communities; Detroit is amongst America's urban communities.

Detroit is Michigan's largest city with an estimated population of 871,121 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The total population distribution by race shows 12.3% European Americans, 81.8% African Americans, 0.3% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.0% Asian and 5% Hispanic Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). It is important to note that Detroit has lost nearly half of its population since the 1950s (Tobocman, 2005). According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2000), when comparing other major cities, Detroit has the largest proportion of Blacks (83%) followed by Philadelphia (44%) and Chicago

(38%). Detroit's city leadership is predominantly filled by African Americans. For instance, the mayor, police chief, county sheriff, city clerk, city council president and public school manager are all African Americans.

Social ills are common amongst inner-city dwellers. The Detroit Metropolitan area sustained the highest employment rate at 14.8% in April 2010 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). Poverty rates and crime rates, according to the U.S. Census Bureau ,were amongst some of the highest in the nation; while graduation rates were some of the lowest.

Synonymous with Detroit are the "Big Three" (General Motors, Ford and Chrysler), major athletic teams, (the Lions, Tigers and Red Wings), and an international riverfront that adjoins Canada. Signature events include the North American International Auto Show, the International Freedom Festival and Fireworks, the Riverfront Ethnic Festivals and Belle Isle Grand Prix (last occurred in 2006). More recent additions to the city include three casinos (all located in the Downtown area), a football stadium (Ford Field) and an open air ballpark (Comerica Park), the Compuware plaza (offices, retail and restaurants), Campus Martius and the Riverwalk (Detroit 300 Conservatory, 2006); all pointing to the rejuvenation of the city.

The once debilitating downtown area is slowly being reframed as businesses and industry return to the city (Tobocman, 2005). The same energy and attention however, is not experienced in the local neighborhoods. A variety of compositions represent Detroit neighborhoods. Amongst those include areas such as North Rosedale Park, East English Village, Sherwood Forest and Palmer Woods–some of Detroit's elite neighborhoods

(Gavrilovich & McGraw, 2000). More plenteous however, are less appealing, blight filled neighborhoods. These neighborhoods, are replete with vacant dilapidated homes, abandoned vehicles, debris filled streets and empty lots. Surrounded by the prize and glitz of the Downtown area, are many neighborhoods that are in desperate need of funding and an effective rejuvenation plan. The neighborhoods are suffering from urban decay. Many of Detroit's ails-crime, violence, poverty, drugs, low graduation rates, poor city services - were exacerbated with the downturn of the America's economy (Cokes & Kornblum, 2010). The financial woes of the auto industry led to a particularly grievous situation for communities throughout Detroit.

City woes are not limited to property and community life. Prevalent amid city officials were legal issues, as the former mayor, chief of staff, city council president and other city officials all faced incarceration due to their illegal activities while in office (Christoff, 2010). These legal proceedings and ongoing investigations cost the city millions of tax payer dollars (Robertson, 2010). The cost to the city and its residents was not limited to finances. It took a tremendous toll on the residents' spirits as they were forced to experience the humiliation–many of the egregious stories made national headlines.

Lindemann and Caplan posited the potential for human growth and hope inherent in crisis events (Gilliland & James, 1997). Detroit's violent and crime ridden history provided many crisis opportunities for the residents. However, arising, as this chapter was being developed in the first quarter of 2010, was a hope of betterment within the city. The month of May brought on a call from notables the likes of Al Sharpton and Jessie

Jackson to stop the violence in urban communities (Gray & Patton, 2010). While the

month of June brought on rallies, learning projects and panel discussions aimed at

understanding and reducing violence in Detroit (Detroit Free Press, 2010). These recent

activities suggest not only hope, but corresponding actions aimed at bringing to fruition

the outgrowth of inner hope. Perhaps, a clarion call has been heralded, heard and is being

answered.

<div align="center">**Interpretation of Findings**</div>

The findings in this study were derived from a cultural and ethnic experience

unique to the urban community of Detroit. The results are representative of responses to

the research questions, researcher's field notes, literature review and the theoretical

frameworks that ground the study. Iterations of data review led to the development of the

major themes. Seven major themes surfaced during the data analysis process. Each of the

sections examined were discussed from the lens of the major themes identified and

delineated in chapter 4.

Theme 1: Physical, Psychological and Emotional Responses

The first theme was reflective of physical, psychological and emotional responses

to victimization. The participants' responses validated this theme as being significant to

this study. One hundred percent of the participants reported having some sort of physical,

psychological and emotional responses to their victimization encounters. NOVA (2009)

indicated that victimization disrupts everyday wellness for both the victims and those

within their community. While not all participants shared the same emotional or

psychological responses, they unanimously spoke of the presence of distinct disturbing

reactions in direct response to being victimized. Common to trauma and victimization is the presence of PTSD (NIMH, 2009) symptoms. Some of those reported by participants included hyper-vigilance, flashbacks, sleep disturbances, avoidance and hopelessness. The increased presence of adrenaline and fear were the most reported commonly experienced responses amongst the participants of this study. During or upon becoming aware of their victimization experiences, the participants reported the presence of adrenaline - associated with a fight or flight phenomenon (Comer, 2010; Ross & Mirowsky, 2009). Physical responses covered a gamut of areas, with responses ranging from slight heart palpitations to becoming physically ill and needing to vomit. Victimization literature supported the participants' reactions to their negative encounters with African American youth (Dolan et al., 2007; Green & Pomeroy, 2007; Kim & Ross, 2009; NOVA, 2009), speaking of loss of sense of security, hyper vigilance and distress None of the participants claimed to be free of physical, psychological and emotional responses to their victimization encounter. A further concern is the long-term effect of exposure to violence and crime and victimization experiences. Harding (2009) posited that continued experiences of chronic stress brought on by threat of victimization could produce physiological consequences.

A curious element relative to responses to question six asking the participants regarding their life changes since the victimization encounters, was that most verbally negated that their life had changed as a result of the victimization and yet it was obvious (from reviewing the data) that, to date, there were alterations to their lives as a result of the experience.

Theme 2: Coping

Coping is a particularly salient skill for individuals residing within America's inner cities. The concentration of violence and crime within urban communities' increases the likelihood that these residents will be forced to contend with personal or vicarious victimization (Harding, 2009; United States Department of Justice, 2008; Valdez et al., 2007). Coping helps victims to maintain psychosocial adaptation when faced with stressful situations (Happen & Scarpa, 2009). The primary methods of coping utilized by the participants of this study included (a) talking with family and friends, a form of debriefing or catharsis; and (b) regaining control, through escape. The victimization literature discussed the need for one to regain equilibrium after the victimization encounter (NOVA, 2009). Participants 2 and 8 were unable to regain this sense of equilibrium, resultantly each discussed immediate plans to relocate outside of the city, to areas they considered to be safer living environments. Krivo, Peterson and Kuhl (2009) discussed the segregation of whites and nonwhites who had the resources to escape from disadvantaged communities. Those who remain would benefit from acquiring effective coping skills.

The majority of the participants displayed valiant adaptation capabilities. This adaptation was reported in both positive and negative forms. There was an apparent psychological adjustment by a most of the participants, as they discussed their previous efforts or plans to enhance personal and property security. For example some began carrying guns for personal protection and increased the security measures for their homes and other properties. Hapen and Scarpa (2008) referred to this as problem-focused

coping, where individuals employ strategies aimed at changing the situation. Hapen & Scarpa suggests that problem-focused coping as being more beneficial than the alternative of emotion-focused coping, which usually involves avoidance behaviors.

Theme 3: Hopelessness

With the exception of one participant, hopelessness reverberated throughout the participant interviews. The belief of a positive future for African American youth and inner-city communities was solely held participant 5. Overwhelmingly, the participants struggled to identify sources of hope for the future of African American youth. They like much of the literature that discusses inner-city violence and Black on Black crime (Aldridge & Daniels, 2001; Brennan et al., 2007; O'Donnell, Stueve, & Myint-U, 2009) readily identified the life inhibiting behavior embraced by countless African American youth. For many youth, a lifetime of exposure to violent behaviors and criminal acts led to engagement in the criminal lifestyle (Brennan et al., 2007; Kennedy, Bybee, Sullivan & Greeson, 2010). Initial exposure to violence often meant that they were victims. Salzinger, Feldman, Stockhammer and Hood (2002) suggest that repeated victimization experiences act as a catalyst for victims becoming perpetrators.

Hopelessness was present amongst the participants in that most were unable to visualize a viable method of improvement for African American youth. Ross and Mirowsky (2009) suggest that neighborhood disorder fosters a sense of powerlessness. Continued consideration exposed the participants' inability to recognize individual or collective efforts aimed at bringing solutions to the question of youth crime and violence within Detroit. There was undisputed agreement that something must be done, and yet

there was equally expressed frustration at the seemingly complete void of effective

activity aimed at ameliorating the life inhibiting and, very often for Detroit residents, life-

ending (United States Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2007) –in

epidemic proportion–crime, violence and subsequent, victimization experiences.

Theme 4: Betrayal

The theme of betrayal was experienced by a majority of the participants.

Essential elements for sense of community include overlapping histories, feelings of

belonging, need fulfillment derived through interaction, common expectations, mutual

interdependence and collective goals (Graves, 1992; McMillan & Chavis, 1986;

Westheimer & Kahne, 1993). The victimization experienced by the participants

interrupted their sense of community and connectedness to the group. Betrayal and a

sense of powerlessness (Geis & Ross, 1998) in-turn, replaced feelings of belonging and

connectedness. Finkel, et al. (2002) state, "Betrayal may been said to have occurred when

the victim believes that the perpetrator has knowingly departed from the norms that are

assumed to govern their relationship, thereby causing harm to the victim" (p. 957). One

participant captured the sentiment of the collective in his utterance, "It feels like having

been betrayed by your own child. We suffer enough from the acts of those outside of the

African American community. To have one African American victimize another is such a

betrayal of the struggle that our ancestors endured. It's even more disheartening when it

is done by one of our babies. Where did we go wrong?"

The experiences of betrayal left the participants primarily feeling bewildered and

saddened. The exception was participant 10 who settled at the notion that the perpetrators

(and their families) were not included in the African American community. In fact, they were no longer considered to be a part of the human community. I suspected that this categorical placing allowed participant 10 the liberty of maintaining extremely hostile feelings and aggressive posture (towards the perpetrators) that he solely held. Ross and Mirowsky (2009) suggested that neighborhood disorder produced an angered response within the victim. As a "primary" response, the emotion of anger was solely experienced with participant 10. Other participants expressed anger, but a sense of concern was more prevalent, as they pondered how to save African American youth? They wondered how to instill in the youth the historically held morals and values of a proud African American people?

Theme 5: Traditional Values

While offering explanations of the crime, violence and victimization occurring within Detroit, one hundred percent of the participants suggested the absence of traditional as an aspect of the problem. Primarily, the participants described African Americans as historically functioning as a community founded on the extended family make-up. The multigenerational family structure was the basic make up of the nineteenth values century African American slave (Welch, 2009). This familial configuration continued post slavery and allowed for the passing on of values, traditions and practices. Today, only about 30 percent of African Americans live in an extended family structure (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008). The data from this study suggested that historically held values; hard work, honesty, pride and care for others, was absent from those African American teens who engaged in crime, violence and victimization.

In addition, the ideology of community responsibility and commitment was historically a common element of African American life (Welch, 2008). The practice of these principles was seen through the Igbo and Yoruba proverb "It takes a whole village to raise a child" (Healey & Saalam, 2010). Community isolation has taken a toll on the wellness of African American communities, as families continue to disconnect from other neighboring families, community accountability and responsibility diminishes. Ross and Mirowsky (2009) indicate that community and social support requires trust that is generally absent in disadvantaged neighborhoods, where families often reside in isolation. Contradicting, Mirowsky, Gies and Ross (1998) suggest that not all urban areas are alienating; some manage to garner support amongst their community members; in spite of the preponderance of social ills. This, according to (Kennedy, Bybee, Sullivan & Greeson, 2010) is more prevalent amongst African American women. Participants in this study were more representative of Gies and Ross' findings, as they expressed connections to their community members and concern about the wellbeing of the children in general. One participant asked, "Who's caring for the children?" Another stated, "With a good number of the household being single parented (generally female headed), there is no one to ensure that solid values and beliefs are passed on to the children." Even another stated, "Our children are primarily being raised the streets."

Group pride was also valued amongst African Americans. An anthem of the 1960's Black Power Movement was echoed through the vehicle of music as Rhythm and Blues artist James Brown bellowed "Say it Loud–I'm Black and I'm Proud" in his very popular 1968 single (Rolling Stone, 2004). Having endured tremendous hardship since

the induction of Black slavery in the United States during the 17th century, African

Americans have contended with the vicissitudes of being considered less valuable than

European Americans. Throughout American history, African Americans have attempted

to negate these disparities. The BBC News (2010) reported these displays of pride during

the 1968 Summer Olympics, as Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fist

(representing Black power and pride) to bring awareness to the myriad atrocities

experienced by countless Black Americans

Theme 6: Societal Issues

Ellwood (1998) poignantly purports, "Ghettos are disastrous places to live. The

worst problems of society are found in disproportionate numbers there" (p. 12).

Overwhelmingly the participants acknowledged the absence of adequate city services, a

viable and productive public school system, sufficient recreational facilities, community

involvement and viable avenues to gainful employment. Consequently, they readily

identified the existence of exorbitant levels of impoverished conditions (i.e. substandard

housing, poor nutrition, unsafe and inferior educational opportunities, trash and rodent

ridden neighborhoods), crime, violence, victimization, unsafe living conditions and high

stress (Brown et al., 2007; De Marco & De Marco, 2009).

Recently these negative conditions have worsened as Michigan's economy led the

way for the plummeting of the U.S. economy. Michigan's economy greatly suffered

when the car industries' crisis ensued. Comerica Bank's chief economist discussed the

state of Michigan's economy. Michigan is quickly becoming a "relatively poor state" that

is likely to get poorer unless the auto industry rebounds to pull the economy out of its

"one-state recession," according to (Aguilar, 2007). The downturn of the U.S. economy, shown in 2008 with skyrocketing layoffs and the takeover of two major mortgage companies by the federal government (Cokes & Kornblum, 2010) exacerbated an already impossible situation for many Detroit residents. This study's literature review supported all of the delineated themes, with the exception of two: (a) traditional values, and (2) disengaged acceptance. The data analysis process introduced these new concepts into the study, though a portion of the literature covered in chapter two supports these new concepts, literature not previously discussed in chapter two was introduced.

Theme 7: Disengaged Acceptance

Amongst all the themes that were identified through the interview data, I was most disengaged acceptance. None of the participants verbalized active positive engagement towards reducing or eliminating the plague of violence, crime and victimization perpetrated by inner-city African American youth. Though the participants were keenly aware of the need to do something, they were at a loss of the what (what to do) and the how (how to rid Detroit of this plague of youth driven violence, crime and victimization). This kind of reluctant acceptance resembled learned helpless as espoused by Seligman or powerlessness. Ross and Geis (1998) purported that "Perceived powerlessness is a major form of subjective alienation. It is a learned, generalized expectation that outcomes of situations are determined by forces external to oneself" (p. 233). Kim and Ross (2009) suggested that there is a correlation between neighborhood disorder and disadvantage and psychological distress which includes symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study is viewed through the lens of social ecological theory, psychological sense of community and crisis theory.

Social Ecological Theory

Brofenbrenner (1986) defined social ecological theory as:

an approach to study of human development that consists of the 'scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (p. 514).

This theory shed light into the presence of violence that exists within America's inner cities. Countless numbers of children are developing within hostile and crime ridden communities, and thus learn to emulate that to which they are continually exposed (O'Donnell et al., 2009). Discussions on childhood exposure to violence supported Bronfenbrenner's idea about the interplay and interrelatedness of both the environmental influences on the individual and the individual, in turn, affecting the environment (Brennan et al., 2007).

Social ecological theory also offered insight into the potentially evolving inner-city adult who (as participant 10 vividly displayed), in response to being forced to contend with victimization, is taking arms and becoming the aggressor.

Psychological Sense of Community

Psychological sense of community with its focus on one's experience of the community rather than its structure (Chavis, Hoggeman, McMillian & Wandersman, 1986) helped to ground the study as it showed a multifaceted community experience through notions of membership, influence, need fulfillment and shared emotional connection. The participants of this study shared a long troublesome history glued by that fact that their ancestors are of African descendant and ex-slaves. Next they reside within a particular geographical location (Detroit, Michigan) with unique characteristics pertinent to this study (escalating crime, violence and victimization). Sparks (1994) referenced the erosion of safety and belonging that disrupts community relationships. From this study at least 30 percent of the participants no longer possessed psychological or emotional safety relative to residing within the city and had immediate plans to leave. In this scenario, psychological sense of community is not a positive - although it is oftentimes viewed in that light. For these members it is not functioning as a buffer against life's challenges as touted to do. For the able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans who participated in this study, their sense of community is actually functioning as a challenge itself.

Crisis Theory

Crisis theory helped to ground the study. The normalcy of the victims immediate and mid-range responses were explicated, along with the outcome responses or transformative realities that sometimes occur. Cognitive confusion, adjustment and integration are touted as being predictable and sequential stages as one reacts to crisis

(Callahan, 1997; Herman, 1997; Yassen & Harvey, 1998). Each participant traversed those stages or was progressing through them at the time of the interviews.

Transformative realities are seen in those who make a commitment to remain in the city and fight for betterment; those who were awakened in some form, even if only for a brief moment. It was also found in those who displayed themselves functioning as an aggressor.

Crisis theory also discussed the possibility of hope arising from the ashes of victimization (Gilliland & James, 1997). This study did not support this assertion, but more so revealed an apathy that appeared to be rampant amongst inner-city dwellers and possibly the American public. Perhaps the hope referred to by Lindemann and Caplan regarding the potential for human growth and hope, inherent in traumatic encounters, (Gilliland & James) will be seen as Detroit answers the clarion call that has gone out in response to increasing crime, violence & victimization.

Community Helplessness

Ninety percent of the participants were at a loss relative to answering the problem of inner-city victimization. Short of securing their homes or arming themselves, none discussed the presence of a comprehensive plan aimed at eradicating this criminal behavior. Though it was unanimously agreed upon that something must be done, these participants discussed their bewilderment of how to address the problem. Elements that contributed to the feelings of helplessness included poor police response, absence of police presence in the neighborhood, the ratio of youth to adults, aggressiveness of the youth, no apparent community plan and no effective collaboration aimed at addressing

the problem. Kim and Ross (2009) state, "Neighborhood disorder is threatening, leads to powerlessness, fear, mistrust, limited outdoor activities and frequent activation of the fight-or-flight response, which in turn is distressing" (p. 727). Harding (2009) stated:

> In a violent neighborhood, individuals are often cautious about intervening in conflict or monitoring children for fear of retribution. Residents keep to themselves rather than interacting with neighbors, resulting in more sparse networks and weaker capacity for cooperative behavior. Violence engulfs public spaces, depriving residents of the opportunity to socialize with neighbors and thereby build social networks (p. 760).

The participants were all negatively affected by the disorder that permeated their Detroit neighborhoods. Helplessness and powerlessness, to effectively bring an end to the wide-spread victimization, was a common feature shared by all.

Implications for Social Change

The psychological, physiological and emotion health of the general population is of great concern for overall public health. A survey of American literature readily shows disparate realities of overall health for inner-city dwellers (primarily economically disadvantaged African Americans) compared to their suburban counter-parts (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2007; Weinstein et al. 2004). This study's findings could contribute to social change through gaining insight into the post victimization emotional and psychological needs of able bodied, middle aged, inner-city African American victims, possibly leading to an improved approach towards intervention and support for this group; looking to thereby, reduce cost connected to

stress related illnesses and mental health recovery. Belle and Doucet (2003) discuss the presence of increased stress for those residing within the inner-city. Harding (2009) suggests, the benefits of permanently reducing violence in disadvantaged areas are anticipated in areas of safety, emotional wellbeing and health; but also for other domains like education and fertility.

Extending beyond the population of this study, to other similar urban areas; and non-urban areas that are experiencing like instances are also implications of social change. This possibility lies in an awaking of the American public to the epidemic of violence occurring within her boarders. Countless lives are utterly destroyed daily, because of their common experiences with some sort of tragedy connected to crime, violence and victimization (Harding, 2009; Krevo et al., 2009). Innumerable costs are continually incurred by the medical, law enforcement and rehabilitative systems, as they respond to the outcomes of crime and violence. At the micro-level, individuals are saddled with increasing costs as they respond to violence and crime. For example, higher insurance rates are common within the inner cities. With Detroit leading the inflation experiencing a 69% increase in rates over the last 20 years (State of Michigan, 2010). The potential for a renewed psychological energy and plan aimed at reducing violence, crime and victimization, backed by appropriate and necessary funding is an implied social change from findings of study.

Recommendations for Further Study

I recommend the study's expansion in a geographical nature, investigating experiences of crime, violence and victimization in other urban areas; while also

ascertaining occurrences–investigating from a quantitative perspective. I believe this victimization phenomenon, along with violence in general, to be of epidemic proportion and suspects that ascertaining the sheer number of instances would perhaps aid in raising awareness and sounding an alarm, thereby warranting a collective orchestrated response. Recent local events helped to solidify this belief as Reverend Al Sharpton uttered, along with others who took the podium at the funeral of one of Detroit's latest victim of violence, "Violence must end" (Gray & Patton, 2010).

Also recommended is a study on vicarious victimization. Countless individuals witness others being victimized or are indirectly impacted by others being victimized. These individuals also suffer at the hands (though indirectly) of the perpetrator (Harding, 2009). Ross and Mirowsky (2009) suggest that victimization experiences and signs of community disorder lead to anxiety and anger, though the angered response has not received research attention equal to anxiety. To that end, there are possible benefits to investing angered responses to victimization. The findings of this study support this notion as seen through the anger driven responses of participant 10.

Dissemination of Findings

The results of this study would benefit a wide array of constituencies. To that end, I expect to present the results of the study through media; publishing articles in local newspapers and magazines. Speaking engagements will also be sought through local churches, community events and educational institutions. I also plan to disseminate results beyond the local arena to state and national levels as this issue of victimization is

not limited to Detroit, or even urban areas, but is experienced, in some form, throughout

America.

Researcher's Critical Reflection

I reluctantly embarked on this study, as the original research efforts were focused

on emotional authenticity. I preferred to expend energy engaging that which is positive,

versus the negative. On Thursday, August 28, 2008 a phone call led to the change of

research focus. I was informed that her home had been invaded by four African American

teenaged males. Resultantly, I received a clarion call to investigate the victimization of

African Adults by African American youth.

The personal experience with the phenomenon warranted a concerted effort of

bracketing, in order to gain an untainted view into the lived experiences of the

participants--avoiding superimposition of my personal victimization encounter on the

acquired data. Beyond sharing of the study's criteria, I identified with many aspects of

the participants' victimization experiences. The elements of identification also required

bracketing.

I preferred to make the statement that "revealed from this study", but in truth, it

was better stated, "confirmed by this study" is a heart wrenching reality that African

American youth–particularly those residing within America's inner cities are in peril.

They are indeed an endangered group. Even more heart wrenching and devastating is the

reality that there does not appear to be a globally sounded alarm from within or without

the community. The fact that African American youth are in trouble is not a revelation.

Current or past evening news episodes, in any one of America's major urban areas, would

substantiate this notion. There was revelation surrounding the indolence about the phenomenon of African American youth being victims or perpetrators. Many of the participants shared their beliefs that the answer lies within the realm of the supernatural, a miracle from God. Relative to God being the answer, I am inclined to agree with the participants, but understand that God can and do work through human beings. Fox 2 News launched a poll on May 21, 2010 asking, "What can be done to stop the violence in the city of Detroit?" The recent deaths of a little girl, a high school student and a Detroit Police Officer demonstrated a major problem. How do we solve it? From my perspective, a collaborative well funded and orchestrated effort would in fact be a miracle for the city of Detroit.

Of great concern is the potential for an intracultural, intergenerational war. Inner-city dwellers, both young and old, are taking arms. There seems to be a growing belief within Detroit, that one must protect self, loved ones and property from the young criminal element that is plaguing the city. The increase of request for a license to carry a concealed weapon (CCW) substantiates the fear that exist within the city and the belief that one cannot depend on the already stretched Detroit Police Department to provide protection. Recently members of the Detroit City Council reported that they exercise their right to carry and others declared their intent to do so in the near future (National Rifle Association of America, 2009). Detroit residents are protecting themselves. I am troubled at the potential disaster that looms over this phenomenon.

What will it take for the rampant victimization of able bodied, middle aged, inner-city African Americans to cease? To that end, what will it take for the victimization of

inner-city dwellers at-large to cease? I assert that the answer lies not within one avenue, but many. It will require a collective effort from, not only the African American community, but from the collective American community. Mears and Bhati (2001) echoed the sentiment that conflict for any people group is a problem for all. The American community must move from an indolent posture relative to inner-city violence and violence in general, and diligently work to put an end to its life devastation and destruction.

The Researcher's Experience with Conducting this Study

Why do African Americans continue to struggle, 148 years post the Emancipation Proclamation? Many life norms continue to be presented as daily challenges for countless African Americans. I have personally experienced or been exposed to poverty, drugs, violence, poor nutrition and health care services, crime, victimization, substandard housing and limited education, at some point my lifetime, as well as a majority of Detroit dwelling African Americans. This reality, and the outcomes of such, coalesced to provide the impetus for this research effort.

What was it like for me to take this intraracial, intergenerational journey? Averse, disheartening, revelatory and anticipatory describe my primary experiences from her research efforts.

Averse

I prefer to study human potential, growth, empowerment, identity and personality development. A focus on victimization required extension efforts directed at investigating and gaining insight into the negative aspect human engagement. Through a monumental

life experience, I was compelled to avert from the study of emotional authenticity to victimization. Two thousand and eight provided the right set of circumstances. The unanticipated death of the my mother on June 29th placed me in an emotionally vulnerable position. July 13th (my mother's birth date) four African American teen-aged males totaled my car in a hit and run. The final event was an invasion of my home, perpetrated by four (assumed to be different) teen-aged African American males.

Post those pivotal encounters I was psychologically and emotionally torn between polar opposites–emotional authenticity and victimization. A choice was required. From the vantages of lost and victimization, I came to believe that the victimization African Americans by African Americans posed the greatest threat, and offered increased potential from the investigative efforts required to complete a dissertation. To that end, the research topic of this study was developed.

Disheartening

Disheartening in the sense of discouragement was experienced, as I took a systematic, in-depth examination of the historical and present functioning of African Americans. Membership within the African American community has fostered an affinity for this group of people who continues to struggle with life inhibiting practices, that are seemingly unparallel by other ethnic communities. Poverty rates, joblessness, unwed, teen pregnancy, incarceration, poor health, drop-out rates, crime and intraracial homicide are just few, among myriad examples of disproportioned life-inhibiting phenomenon for 21st century African Americans.

Also disheartening from an apprehensive perspective, as this was connected with conducting research about that which was likely criminal. Copious for the city of Detroit is crime, violence and victimization in Detroit (U. S. Department of Justice, 2006). While conducting research, it was imperative that I clarified the purpose of the investigation as gaining insight into the lived experience of the victim and not the particular details of criminal or violent activity or perpetrators. The latter offered the potential for physical or psychological risk to me if even one perpetrator believed that I was interested in their illegal activity.

Revelatory

I expected that African American(s): (a) would generally experience anger with African American youth and no longer identify with the youth, (b) would be in preparation of moving out of Detroit, no longer feeling an affinity for the city, (c) women would be more willing than men to discuss their victimization experiences, (d) victims would not be difficult to locate, (e) have an increase in fire arm acquisitions in preparation of another victimization experience, (f) would experience a growing sense of hopelessness for the entire community.

I was surprised to discover that a majority of the participants continued to identify with the youth, even those who were perpetrators of victimization and participated in criminal activities; that most participates continued to feel an affinity for the city, with no intention or plan to leave the city. Another surprise was the willingness of men to discuss their victimization experience(s). There was no difference between the men and women and their willingness to discuss their victimization experiences.

Anticipatory

The Phoenix rises from the ashes. I am excited about recent developments surrounding elements of this study–a clarion call for violence to cease in Detroit and the (individual and collaborative) response(s) from varying constituents within the community appears to be in motion. The June 9-15, 2010 Michigan Chronicle headlines read "Taking Back our Streets", while discussing the NAACP's upcoming coalition rally addressing holistic steps to address crime. August saw the forming of a new citizen group, Detroit 300, in response to community disgust with crime and violence. The group intends to work with the Detroit Police Department, with the goal of reducing crime (Hunter, 2010). There also appears to be other grassroots efforts aimed at speaking to the myriad challenges that are occurring within Detroit. Conversations on ending the violence, increasing voter turnout, improving the school system and community life are becoming more common on local radio shows, in news columns and in everyday dialogue.

I am encouraged by the recent activities with Detroit that seem to support the notion that Detroiters are no longer content with allowing their city to remain in its present state and are now poised to take the city back from all criminal elements–whether they are found in the local neighborhoods or in city hall (metaphorically speaking). It is indeed an exciting time for the residents of Detroit, Michigan. It is a time of awakening!

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to gain insight into the experience of able bodied, middle aged, inner-city African Americans who had been victimized by African American youth. Phenomenology was the best approach for the research effort as the goal was two-fold, to provide an avenue for the victims to tell their stories and for me to gain insight into their lived experiences. The goals were achieved through the process of face to face in-depth interviews and an extensive literature review. The information uncovered in this study helped to shed light on a phenomenon unique to inner-city– specifically Detroit, Michigan. Crime, violence and victimization is not limited to inner cities however, American society at-large is negatively impacted by some of the primary elements that ail the inner-city. It is hoped, that from this research effort a clarion call is issued and, equally important, answered by the necessary constituencies of Detroit, Michigan, in particular and others within American society who have the resources to effectively speak to this life inhibiting phenomenon of violence and victimization within America's inner cities.

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Appendix A: Invitation Flyer

➢ Are you an African American?

➢ Do you live in Detroit Michigan?

➢ Are you 35 – 60 years old?

➢ Have you personally been victimized by African American youth?

If you answered yes to all of the above, you are a possible candidate for participating in a

Walden University research study.

Interested?

Contact Katherine James by email at xxxxx or phone at xxxxxx.

The focus of the study is the **experience** of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African

American adults who experience victimization perpetrated by African American youth.

The researcher is not interested in details of criminal or violent acts. This research

effort will focus on the feelings, thoughts or beliefs about the victimization

experience and not on the criminal or violent activities. All information is

confidential and used solely for the purpose of understanding the victimization

experience.

Victimization may include but is not limited to having been personally intimidated,

experienced actual or perceived threats, having been physically or verbally assaulted,

experienced property damage, invasion and/or theft at the hands of African American

youth? This research project is part of a dissertation study conducted by Katherine James

a Walden University doctoral candidate.

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of able bodied, middle aged, inner-city African Americans who experience victimization perpetrated by African American youth. You were chosen for the study because of your inner-city residence, age range and victimization experience with African American youth. This form is part of a process call "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Katherine E. James, who is a doctoral student at Walden University and a lifetime resident of a predominantly African American inner-city.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning that able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city African Americans give to their victimization experience with African American youth. Victimization is generally defined as the experience of having a crime or an attempted crime was committed against oneself, family member or close friend (NOVA, 2009).

The study will be recorded through audio taping and note taking.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participant in a face to face interview

- Describe the victimization experienced with African American youth

- Discuss the meaning ascribed to the experience

- Agree to a follow up interviews as necessary

- Agree to be audio taped during the interview(s)

- Sign the Consent Form

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Minimal risks are involved in being in this study, as discussion of the victimization experience may elicit powerful emotional responses. Participants are not required to share information they do not wish to do. A benefit of participating in this study is contributing to the research base of intraracial and intergenerational dynamics within the African America community.

Compensation:

Participants will receive $10.00 for being in the study. Early withdrawal from the study will not prohibit the participant from receiving compensation.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via xxx.xxx.xxxx or xxxxxxxxxxxx. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden

University's approval number for this study is 03-23-10-0254771 and it expires on March 22, 2011.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above

Printed Name of

Participant

_____

Date of consent

_____

Participant's Written or

Electronic* Signature

_____

Researcher's Written or

Electronic* Signature

_____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically

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Appendix C: Initial Contact Protocol

In response to a potential participant's inquiry email or phone call, the following will

occur:

(1) Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study.

(2) Please indicate how you became aware of the study?

(3) Are you African American, between 35 – 60 years old, presently residing

in Detroit, Michigan, and have been victimized by one or more African American

youth?

If the individual does not meet the criterion or appears to be well suited for the research

study (i.e. dillusional, aggressive, etc.), the following statement will be made, "I really

appreciate your interest, but will be unable to use you in the research study."

If the individual meets the criterion and is well suited for the study the following will

occur:

Again, I really appreciate your interest and willingness to participate in this research

study. In order to proceed, I would like to schedule a meeting that will allow for a further

explanation of the study, get paperwork signed and conduct the interview.

This process will take approximately 90 minutes of your time and the interview will be

audio-taped. Is that OK?

What days and times are good for you?

Do you live east or west?

Some possible places to meet include local libraries (with private meeting rooms), Shiloh

Deliverance Church, Ashland Theological Seminary. Or, if you would feel more

comfortable at another public location that will allow for the necessary privacy, I am

open to that as well.

Appendix D: Interview Data Form & Protocol

Date:

Location:

Name of Participant:

Interview Number:

Interview Narrative:

Thank you for affording me this opportunity to conduct research. I believe it is important to gain insight into the experience of able-bodied, middle-aged, inner-city, African Americans who have a victimization experience with African American youth. It is my hope that this research endeavor will provide you with an opportunity to tell your story, and provide the public with greater understanding of the shared experiences of this type of victimization; thereby leading to improved relationships amid yourself and the youth, giving insight to lawmakers and community leaders, and reducing the loss of resources incurred as a result of the conflict. This interview will last approximately one to one and a half hour(s). In the event that you become uncomfortable, want to end the interview or need a break; do not hesitate to inform me. A choice to end this process will in no way be viewed from a negative perspective and will not change the compensation agreement. If you choose not to answer any question or respond to probing, it will be honored. All information gained within the interview process is confidential and will not be shared with anyone; identifying criteria will not be included in the dissertation. There is no right or wrong way to be in the interview and there are no right or wrong answers to any questions posed. Feel free ask for clarification if the question is unclear and to correct

me if I have failed to understand your perspective. My ultimate goal is to learn from your life experience of victimization.

Research Questions

1.   Describe your victimization experience.

2.   What were your immediate physical, psychological and emotional responses to the experience?

3.   What is your present physical, psychological and emotional responses to the experience?

4.   How did you cope with the experience?

5.   How do you cope today?

6.   How has your life changed since the experience?

7.   Prior to the experience, what was your view of African American youth?

8.   What is your current view of African American youth?

9.   What are the major differences from your pre-victimization view of African American youth?

10.   What does it mean to be violated (robbed, vandalized, verbally abused) by African American youth?

11.   What is your response to seeing African American youth walk down the street?

12.   What is your outlook for the future of African American youth?

13.   Prior to the experience, what were thoughts or feelings about living in Detroit?

14.   Discuss your current thoughts and feelings about living Detroit?

15. What explanation could you offer for the violence occurring within your community, (why is it happening)?

16. What is the community doing about violence?

17. What do you think is necessary to put an end to the violent encounters?

18. Is there more that you would like to discuss about your experience, something that has not been covered or fully discussed?

Demographic Questions

19. Indicate your age range, (a) 35–40, (b) 41–45, (c) 46–50, (d) 51–55, (e) 56–60

20. Indicate the number of victimization experiences with African American youth, (a) 1 (b) 2, (c) 3 or more

21. Indicate the location of your victimization experience.

22. If your encounter was not a face to face experience, how is it that you became aware of African American youth being the perpetrators? (i.e. home invasion)

Concluding and Debriefing:

I am really grateful for the opportunity to hear your story and I thank you for participating in this research effort. If there are any lingering thoughts or concerns that you have, please feel free to share them at this time. You may want to discuss your feelings or thoughts about this experience, the process of being interviewed or simply how you feel right now. We have a few minutes to have that conversation, if you so desire.

Appendix E: Protocol for Distressed Participants

In the event that a participant experiences distress, the following protocol will be executed.

1.   The participant will be given an opportunity to debrief with the researcher.

2.   If debriefing fails to sufficiently reduce the distress and there is no immediate danger the participant will be referred to a therapist (previously notified of the automatic referral as a result of participating in the research interview).

3.   If warranted, as reflected by the participant's presenting stress level and corresponding response, the participant will be connected to crisis personnel. (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1–800–273–8255 (TDD: 1–800–799–4889) www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

4.   In the event of eminent danger, 911 will be called.

5.   Walden University will be notified of event.

Appendix F: Sample Transcript

R. Ok, if you would thoroughly describe your victimization experience for me.

P9. It was before noon May 2009, I was at the grocery market and as I was leaving the market. I went to the car, hit the key less entry, open the door and threw my wallet on the seat, got in. Before I could, as reaching for the driver's door, before I could close the door I heard a voice behind me. And when I turned around and looked back, that's when I seen the gun pointed at me. And, I looked up and seen a young black male holding the gun telling me to get out the car. So, I started to reach for my wallet, which was on the passenger seat and he was like, no leave it, leave it. Give it to me, give it to me. So I was getting out of the car, my hands on my wallet and I was like why? He was like, just give me the car. Give me the damn car. So, I asked him, I said can I please just have my license out the wallet? Please just give me my license. So as I'm asking for the license, we're standing. Well, my face to his chest because he was much taller than me. So I'm looking up at him, but we are just less than an arm's length away from each other. I could just touch him anywhere, I was just that close. And he still holding the gun at me and he is going through the wallet, you know like, let me give this lady this license. So I'm like wow! I'm thinking to myself that he is actually giving me the license. And he's going through the wallet, he's giving me the license and I said well can I have, and he was like go just get away. You know in other words, that's all you're going to get. So, I don't know why I was stalling for time, or what it was bringing you know to that scenario. But I did ask and he gave it to me. So I just started backing up, when I realized this is actually happening. So, I'm backing up and I'm like can I just get in the store.

Don't let him shoot me. That, then I started to think about what could happen. So, as I got closer to the door, he sped out the lot in the vehicle. That's when I ran in the store, and as I was going through the entry door I heard a man holler something to me. And I'm looking back, but I am steady walking in the store and I'm telling them what just happened. So everyone in there, because I just left the lady's register and they are like shocked and amazed and what happened. I'm like, I need the phone, call the police, blah, blah, blah. So the man that I heard yelling at me came in the store and he was like you just got robbed, didn't you? And I'm like, you know I'm looking at him a little irritated, like leave me alone I need the police. And he was like I saw them. And that's when he went on to describe that he noticed the boys on the side of the building. And one kept looking around the building, you know like waiting on someone to come out of the store, before they ran up on me.

R. OK, so, it was more than one.

P9. Yes, it was more than one, but only one approached me. The other gentleman, young man, was picked up around the corner. As he took off, he picked him up at the next corner on the other side of the store.

R. Oh. Ok, Ok. If you can remember back then. What was your? I'm going to ask about your physical and emotional/psychological response, back then.

P9. Initially, when it happened I was shocked. I actually thought it was somebody playing with me. You know, I'm thinking someone approached me to have a joke or play or whatever.

Interrupted by the door bell ringing.

R. So we were talking about your physical response to it, and or your emotional and psychological response.

P9. OK. In thinking back to that day when I was initially approached and I responded the way I did with him. I was a little shocked. But initially, I was not scarred or fearful. I was more surprised and I just started to react out of what, I don't know. But there, I really wasn't scarred at the moment, I knew what was happening. So I was in the moment, but not in the moment. As I went in the store, or approaching the store door, it started to sink in a little bit more, as to what actually occurring. What the outcome could be. So I, I, I, guess reality started to sink in a little deeper there. Physically, I was ok, until. I had, well back track. Once the police came, they took the statement and actually listening to them, it sounded a little promising that they would get the vehicle back. Just in overhearing umm, what they were talking about. So I knew that there was something going on in the area. And they were close to closing it. And umm because of the personalize plates on my vehicle, they were saying that they would be able to get them a lot quicker. So then, I called for my friend that lived around the corner from the store for me to come and pick me up and take me home. And to pick up the register and insurance certificate so that I could take it to the precinct, because they needed the VIN number. So she picked me up, after giving the statement and getting the information from the police. And took me to pick up the information and that's where I broke down. To cry and, it was like, just, just racking sobs just controlling my body. To where it was hard to stop but I knew in my head that I had to get myself together, because I still had to go to the precinct, to give additional information. So I started to pull myself together. Where actually I just wanted

to lay on the floor and just cry like a baby. Pulled myself together to take care of that information. Ummm, other than that, on that particular day I was just overcome with gratitude. Once I finished the process of handling, information with the police and got home with my family. I was just so grateful that the outcome was what it was for that day. You know because it could have been so much more detrimental to everyone that you know centered around me so, I was just so overcome with gratitude that it was a relief. But then I felt stressed like are they going to come back later. It started to sink in when things quieted down that day. Are they going to find out where I live. You know. I have my license, but what was in my wallet. Will it lead back to me. They took all my keys, you know they may come in the house so I had to go and get locks for all the doors, change all the locks that day. But I was listening out you know hoping that nothing happened in the interim with that.

R. So kind of the whole gamut of emotions.

P9. Yes, and it continued for a period of time. Because, that, as I said at that time there was no fear. But, later as, as time passed it didn't get better for a while. Because I would doze off to sleep, or I would be get, stepping out of the bath tub or anything and it's just reflections of the gun pointing at my head, you know it's like a flash and it could happen at any time but usually a quieter times. You know, it's like wait a minute. And so, possibly for the first, I would say six to eight months after, I was paranoid getting in the car. You know it was, it was strange, but I would go only to places where I was familiar with people, the gas station. I know the owner, his brother, his cousins that work there. So it would be like walk me to my car. If I go at a time when they have security, they

would tell security, you walk her to her car. If I had to get gas, they would come out to the gas pump with me. If I went to a certain store, umm you know, you going to walk me to my car. But I only shared the information with people that I felt close enough with or respected enough to respect me for the way that I felt, you know to help me through that process. So you know they did. And they still will now, but I'm like I'm better. You know, I got to deal with it at some point. So I'm much better. There are time when I see you know a group of young males together and I may get a little paranoid, but I say my prayer and I keep on steppin. But I'm a little bit more caution, you know have a little bit more caution and awareness about me now. Whereas, I think I may have gotten a little comfortable. But it was a place where I felt safe. You know, if you could ever think of somewhere feeling safe outside of home but it was a place that I frequent a lot as well.

R. I see and it was midday. It was the kind of a situation where you don't really anticipate or expect.

P9. Right, right. Especially that early in the day. Because that's my thing. I want to get out and do what I need to do before it gets too busy. Because I don't need the distractions and you know I figure you know. You always think of crime late in the day. And that's a total misconception you know.

R. So, you actually already spoke on the next question talking about if you have present responses. Psychologically, physical, emotional responses. So now you are more cautious and more aware, kind of more vigilant about.

P9. Yes.

R. And are you saying some times now you, you still have moments when you are afraid?

P9. I wouldn't say totally afraid, but there are times when I may start to get a little panicky. As to why are they are together, where are they going? Why did they turn in this direction? You know why are they looking at me? What are they going to do? And I'm going OK, I'm not going to feed into this, you know. I'm just doing what I'm doing. If I'm in the middle of walking to my car, I'm going to get into my car. If I'm closer to the door of the store, then I'm going to go back into the store. So you know it's like I'm not going to just freeze in time.

R. OK, so it's just. But it's more triggered by seeing them.

P9. So, now it is, now it is

R. During, at the time when it happened, how did you cope with it?

P9. It was just a day by day experience. Talked with my family and my friends. You know, but at point, I just needed to just be quiet. Because everyone was sharing what they thought, what they felt, their views. What should have happened, what could have happened and it was just starting to just overcrowd my brain. And I just needed quiet time. So I just started to be less vocal. And then I had to start going through the process when they did notify me that I had to go through to pick out a line out, a line up or whatever they call it. I had to go through that. As things quieted down then that started up.

R. Ok so they caught the guys.

P9. They caught the guys, they found the car. They had to keep the car and dust it from prints and process it the way that they do. I had to go for the lineup and one of the young men refused to stand up in a line up, so I had to pick him out a group of photos. There are

several photos on one page. Well it would have been a lot easier had he not worn a half

face mask. But he did wear a half face mask to cover from, I think the bridge or the under

part of his nose down. So I had to pick it out. To pick him out from the nose up. And I'm

like there is no way I can pick this person out. And they kept saying, some things never

change about a person. They can cut their hair, they can cut their eyebrows or they can

get a tattoo or whatever, but some things never change. Well I had to go downtown for

the lineup and the police would pick me up. And umm, I had to stand there with the

witness and the detective to pick out the young person who did the crime. And I found

the closest one that I thought would look like the young man but who's to say it was

actually him. So I did pick out the right one. The second guy I didn't see him so I didn't

have to pick him out of a line up. I picked out the right guy, then we had to go through

umm some type of hearing or to find whether they had enough evidence to hold him for

the crime. So I had to go on the witness stand and state what happened and go through a

series of questions from the defense attorney and the DA. And I guess it must of went

well because they ended up holding him for the crime and charging him. For that and I

believe seven or eight other crimes. So, then I had to start all over again. Because, then I

got a little paranoid. Because not only am I in this room, my family is in this room, but

his family is in this room and his friends are in this room. So it's not just him knowing

what I look like, it is all of them knowing what I look like. And then we all live in the

same area. You know, so there are times even now riding down the street that I can pick

out his family's car because they have personalized plates. They have personalized plates

as well. And I'm going ok. I may not, I may look at someone and say they look familiar

but, I may not be able to remember where I seen them from. They remember where they seen me. Even though, he did commit this crime, but I understand that's their family. You know, so it, it, it's, it's different. It's different. It's, it could make you a little uneasy at times and there are times when it could make you stronger. It all depends on your mental capacity is at that time.

R. So how would you say you cope with it today? How do you cope with it today?

P9. Today, time has helped. Prayer, lots and lots of prayer. But I think also it depends on the type of person that you are initially. I don't hold grudges. I may not forget, but I do forgive. This was a hard one. But it just happened over time. It is not something that I put a lot of effort into saying that I have to forgive him, I have to forgive him. It just happened over time and I just thought about it after not thinking about it for a while and I it hit my mind and said let me check to see if he is still in jail. And I checked to make sure he is still in jail. And I go you know what I am not even made at him anymore. You know I am not upset, you know I'm upset that he chose to do what he done. I upset that he didn't think about the consequences that it would cause. But I don't, you know I'm not upset. Actually, I feel sorry for him, because that's what he thought he needed to do and he didn't have no other outlet to express his self. If could have been something a lot more positive that he could have done. And on the spree that he was on, and it's, it's, it's, it's sad.

R. If you could talk, think about how your life has changed as a result of it.

P9. You know, I don't think it's changed a lot. Umm, the only thing that I have done a little more than other times, was a little. Is being a little more vocal when it comes to a

young black teen. But it's usually someone I am familiar with. And I just encourage them to do their best when it comes to school, when it comes to themselves and to think outside of the block. Which is where they are living at, at that time to know that there is other places. You know other venues, a whole nother world and don't just settle for where you are or what you have. There are a couple times when there may have been a young black male in the store and I may have been in there and they would say something and I may comment on it. You know it be like, what's up baby. And I'm like you know that's not how you would refer to a woman or a young lady, you know just say hello. And they will go oh ok, I know. Or even with grown men. Because there are other nationalities in our neighborhoods running businesses. And there are many times when I see that the men would disrespect the woman, as far as I'm concerned is disrespect in how they speak to them. And there is one for sure at one of the stores that I frequent and they groom the other guys to come in and take over when they, when others leave and hey baby, baby and I'm like no, no, no, no, no, that's no how you, you speak to me. What's wrong with it? I say it's disrespectful. You just say hello or ask me my name. Well what's your name? I say xxxxxx, and if you cannot speak to me in that way then don't speak at all. Well I'm sorry, I'm sorry and then I go in there the next day, hey baby oh I'm sorry. I done forgot your name but I know don't call you baby. I say no you don't. And there are times when there is men in the store and they are like that's right tell them. But I now that you have to speak up more and that's something that I would do anyway when it comes to a man. But also to teach young men to do that as well but, it's, it's, it's really not that different from my norm.

R. Except for being a little bit more vocal, intentional about directing. Yeah I can see that in hopes of saying something that will help them to not make some of the same mistakes. Umm, prior, I'm going to ask you about prior and current so however you want to answer it. I'm asking prior to the experience what was your view of African American youth and if that has changed?

P9. My view was that they are an endangered species. And that has not changed. What I felt then is what I feel now. I feel that they have very little direction but it's not just the . . . I don't know how to describe it, but it's not because of one person or one group to create that. I think it's, it's, I think it's, it's collectively of what's going on in their homes, household, their family, their friends, the media. Umm, it's just I don't see, I don't see any vast improvement anytime soon. As far as showing them another way or another outlet or letting them know this is not the way, when they is nothing creative for them to do to express themselves in a positive way.

R. So prior to the experience as well as now you see them as being endangered?

P9. I do
.
R. Nothing, not a lot out there for them in a constructive kind of a . . .

P9. No, not in a way where they know where to direct themselves to get it. You know. It may be out there but they don't know where. And it's no one to guide them to show them how. And it's hard for them to ask for how if they don't know it's out there to ask for.

R. And don't know what to ask for.

P9. Right.

R. So no major differences in your view before and after.

P9. No.

R. What does it mean for you an African American woman to be violated by an African American youth?

P9. It hurts, it hurts a lot. But violation is violation, regardless to who done it. Any ethnicity. It hurts that we would do this to ourselves. But it would hurt to do it to anyone. So I don't rate that as higher or lower than any ethnicity.

R. So it would be the same for you if it was a Hispanic person?

P9. It would, yes.

R. So just from the level of being human beings, that's the way you view it.

P9. Ummm, huh.

R. Ok you talked about this a little, somewhat already. If you could talk more about your response to seeing African American youth walk down the street.

P9. Really to sum it up, it's no direction. It's like where are you going? You just back and forth, up and down, undershirts on, pants sagging, you know gym shoes on, hat on. Where are you going? What are you doing? What are you doing it for? You know, you just wake up day to day with nothing to do figure out what I'm going to do? Well first I'm going to walk to the store, or I'm going to the gas station. Then they sit on the porch or they hang out on the corner, it's, it's just no direction.

R. A couple of things you mentioned before your response, for instance you are in the vicinity, you're walking and they are walking. What is your experience with that?

P9. It depends on the day, where my head is at. There are some days that if I see a group of young men walking or a couple of young men ummm I may get a little ancy you know

as to where they are going what they are about to do, you know. And then there are days when I'm a little stronger and I don't feel as vulnerable. So I am ready to respond or react in whatever way I need to, to protect myself. I mean I carry my mace daily. t's always on hand. But there are some days when you feel a little bit more vulnerable than others that you may not feel as secure.

R. Did you, did you carry mace prior to your experience?

P9. No

R. Ok, so that part has changed for you.

P9. Yeah.

R. Ok, ok, umm when you think about yourself as a young teen walking down the street, how do you, do you see that as being different than what they do?

P9. You know, actually no. Actually no. But as far as I don't think we were as disrespectful. When we were teens as younger. I mean there was some disrespectful ones out there, but we weren't. You know, we walked did what we wanted to do but we were disrespectful with it.

R. So there is a difference in a since the caliber of the teen.

P9. It is they curse, there language is fowl, their body language is you know whatever. And it could be adults in the vicinity in earshot they don't care they don't ummm, they don't censor what they do you know they still may smoke the cigarettes or smoke their blunts or drink what they are drinking they don't try to hid it. You know we censored what we done whatever it was. You know we didn't just blatantly do things in front of adults because we would get knocked down.

R. Right, right, so there was the difference. I mean the activity might look the same.

P9. Yeah, yeah, but there was a difference in the mind set and the mannerisms.

R. Ok. What is your outlook for the future of African American youth?

P9. Bleak. Bleak.

R. Can you talk about that a little more?

P9. If nothing happens soon, it's bleak. And with the age group that we're discussing to depend on them in our old age as we become older and senior citizens, it's really scary. And it, it really makes me a little fearful for the future. And it's like I'm going to fight for my youth tooth and nail because I'm scared to depend on them to care for me to run a computer or hit a switch or anything. So it's bleak not only for them but for me.

R. Yeah, the, the, the, thought of needing them to be responsible.

P9. It's scary.

R. Umm, again I'm going to ask you about prior to your experience and currently, what were your feelings or thoughts about living in Detroit?

P9. Prior Detroit was my home city. I'll be here till the death (excuse me). I feel that way now if I could find an actual neighborhood, that is not run down, where there is not houses boarded up or torn down or burnt out or drug houses set up, where abandoned cars, decent police response time. Umm same with the fire department. But yet I still have no yearning to be anywhere else. So it's just hoping and wishing it would get better.

R. So it's still your desire to be here, but you want things to change.

P9. To change for the better.

R. So what's, before, before the experience, it. It sounds like there is a little bit of difference before and after.

P9. Well it's not so much because of thy experience or the crime that was committed, it's just maturing. Just getting older you know and there was a good police response time to the crime.

Interruption.

R. Ok so we were umm, I was just talking about your feelings about living in Detroit. So pretty much they are the same but just wanting things to be different, wanting things to be better for those of us who live here.

P9. Right.

R. You know, you know, that's, that's positive what the response time was.

P9. It was really good and I was expecting to stand in the store and wait on them forever. But they were right there.

R. Ok, Ok, that certainly helps with wanting to stay and just kind of fight for our city. Ummm, let's see. What, explanation can you offer for the violence occurring within our city, why is it happening?

P9. I really don't know. You know I could say lack of jobs. I could say low economic status. I could say, you know, there are people hungry. But as a Black community we've had harder times than this. And we made it and we were strong you know. We welcomed each other to what we had you know. If you had it and I needed it you shared it. Same with whomever. We looked out for one another, so it wasn't about I and me, you know it was us and we. So I really can't explain you know why this is occurring, except that we

have weakened ourselves as a people. We've diluted what we were, we were strong, we were proud with whatever we had, we stood strong, firm and now (chuckle) I, I, just don't know.

R. Yeah I can really resonate with what you are just saying. Because I see it as the same. African Americans we've always struggled. Poverty, lack of education, lack of having a lot access to those things that other groups of people have as a norm. We've always struggled with having those and yet I do see that there is a difference in us as a community of people. Really I see it as you said in that we no longer function as a community. We used to function from the stand point of a community, we called it a village. And, and now instead of being an us and a we, it is I and me and mine. And for us that's detrimental, that's killing us, as a people.

P9. It is! it is!

R. Ummm, what do you see, what is the community doing about the violence?

P9. I don't see it. I mean there may be certain communities or areas that's standing vigilant, I don't see it. And honestly I haven't done anything neither. You know initially, I said I'm going to the community meetings and I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that. And I went to one and it was like ok, maybe I will go to the next one and maybe I won't. And I never went back.

R. So as a whole, kind of in general, it doesn't appear that the community, African American community at large, it doing anything. OK, ummm what do you think is necessary to put an end to the violent encounters?

P9. Other than, building the village back up, it's, it's going to have to be a grass roots effort, just start at the bottom up.

R. What might that look like, a grass roots effort?

P9. I think it initially have to start with teaching our young women how to be respectful of themselves, how to demand respect. How to be a parent not so much a friend. Ummm how to discipline. And men mentors for the single women because a woman can do it, but there are certain things that man needs to teach another man. And that's going to be necessary and I think it all starts there.

R. So that's taking it back to the home basically.

P 9. Yes. The grandmothers are younger and younger. You know you are not in the kitchen with grandma while she's baking a cake, and teaching you how to roll out the dough for the pie and you know just certain things that are just special and if you could go back to the place, I thinkin that's where you get centered again. You get put back in a place where you need to be to start all over. It's like putting you back at go. I mean you start over and if you lose your way you come back to that, to that square again, and you try it again another way. You know it's that, it's that foundation.

R. Yeah, ummm hum. Yeah because from that comes those things that made us strong, those values. You know pride and strength and hard working, all those types of things that don't seem to be being passed to this generation. So is there anything else that you might want to discuss about your experience, something that we might not have covered?

P9. I believe we touched on everything. It's just that we, I someone need to find a way just to reach them. Because they are so far gone into their mind, into their own space.

You know it's like how do you bring them back. Because for those who are already out there, they are out there. So, you know, what do you do?

R. Yeah it does, it feels huge and overwhelming.

P9. You know, they say how do you eat an elephant. One bite at a time. But where do you start biting (laughter) where do you start?

R. Yeah, yeah. You know it's like how do you wake us up? How do you wake us up? Yeah and it's part of the reason that I'm doing what I'm doing. Like I shared before, I don't. It's never been my desire to focus on something negative. You know that's just not what I prefer to do. I don't prefer, because I am asking people in a sense to relive and experience that could have been very traumatic for them. But I think part of the answer is doing that. Part of the answer is starting the conversation asking the questions and just starting us to think about what's going on, why is, just talking about it I think will begin to help the problem. In a sense and then from talking, doing something, doing something. We've got to talk, ummm and, and attack it from all different parts of the elephant. From whichever part we find ourselves, we've got to attack it from there. OK, as we conclude, I've just got a few questions.

R. Indicate your age range, 30 – 35, 36 – 40, 41 – 45, 46 – 50, 51 – 55, 56 – 60.

P9. 46 – 50

R. Indicate how many victimization experiences you had, 1, 2, 3 or more

P9. 1

R. Where did your victimization experience occur?

P9. East side of Detroit at Morang Market

R. And it was a face to face encounter, correct?

P9. Yes, a face to face encounter.

R. I am really grateful for the opportunity to hear your story and I thank you for participating in this research effort. If there are any lingering thoughts or concerns that you have, please feel free to share them at this time. You may want to discuss your feelings or thoughts about this experience, the process of being interviewed or simply how you feel right now. We have a few minutes to have that conversation, if you so desire.

P9. No I'm fine.

R. Also, remember that in the event you would like to or feel that it would benefit you to speak with a therapist, the list provided is for that purpose. As previously indicated two free sessions will be provided.

P9. Oh that's nice.

R. Again, thank you for your time and willingness to participate in the study.

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

Walden University, Minneapolis, MN

Ph.D., General Educational Psychology

November 2010

Intraracial, Intergenerational Conflict and the Victimization of African American Adults

by African American Youth

Ashland Theological Seminary, Detroit, MI

Masters, Pastoral Counseling

June 2002

Spring Arbor University, Detroit, MI

Bachelors, Family Life Education

February 2001

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Wayne County Community College District, Detroit, MI

Distance Learning Coordinator (1983 to present). Responsible for faculty and student

support and training in the Distance Learning Division

Instructor, August 2005 to Present

Courses: Comparative Religion, Marriage and Family

Ashland Theological Seminary, Detroit, MI (Adjunct Instructor)

Instructor, January 2003 to present

Courses: Theories and Techniques, Research Design, Social and Cultural Issues,

Marriage and Family, Differential Diagnosis, Group Dynamics and Group Counseling

Spring Arbor University, Detroit, MI (Adjunct Professor)

Instructor, June 2003 to present

Courses: Marriage, Family and Sexuality; Diversity in Counseling, Human Life Cycle,

Abnormal Psychology, Family Theory, Parenting and Family Skills, Adult Planning and

Life Development.

LICENSES / CERTIFICATIONS

Pastoral Counselor (June 2002)

Online Instructor Certification (August 2003)

Licensed Professional Counselor (State of Michigan) June 2004

National Board Certified Counselor

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Association of Christian Counselors

American Counseling Association

American Psychological Association

Christian Association of Psychological Studies (CAPS)

Psych Chi Member

SKILLS / INTERESTS

Angel Learning Management System

Blackboard Learning Management System Administration and Training

Counseling Supervision

Founder of Seminars for Better Living

Founder of Empowering IFR (Individuals, Families & Relationships)

Group Counseling

Spirituality and Spiritual Leadership