

**IMAGES OF COMMUNITY CRIME IN FERGUSON, MISSOURI:
OLDER ADULTS' PERSPECTIVES PRIOR TO JULY 2014**

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

IMAGES OF COMMUNITY CRIME IN FERGUSON, MISSOURI:

OLDER ADULTS' PERSPECTIVES PRIOR TO JULY 2014

presented by Kandace Lenae Fisher-McLean, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Stephen Jeanetta, PhD

Arthur Mehrhoff, PhD

Dedication

This research is dedicated to the people of Ferguson, Missouri. May your inspiring commitment and enthusiasm illuminate the unfamiliar road ahead as you continue to demonstrate the true meaning of community.

“...it is a neighborhood...There are people that care about one another...A neighborhood is first a place where I live. This is my dwelling place. This is where I rise and shine.”

“Loving where you are, loving it with all its quirks. It’s hard to explain the feeling...From the very beginning we had felt like we belonged here.”

“Community—when you get those first four letters...put them to the side...put a dash after the last “m” you have the word ‘unity.’ That’s what we are. We are unified.”

“...we bought this house...we liked the house...When we found out that we loved the community ...we were...beside ourselves...We were part of...history because this...is an older community.”

“I haven’t moved more than two yards away in 69 years...I’m either very blessed or very boring...I’m always told that I am very blessed.”

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**Images of Community Crime in Ferguson, Missouri:
Older Adults' Perspectives Prior to July 2014**

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Abstract

Environmental demands such as crime and fear of crime can affect how older adults perceive their individual quality of life in the community. The purpose of this research study was to investigate how older adults perceive crime in Ferguson, Missouri and how their quality of life is affected. Data collection for this research began in October 2013 and concluded in June 2014. This research study offers perspectives of crime in Ferguson, Missouri prior to the events of August 2014 that resulted in the death of Michael Brown and initiation of community turmoil.

This qualitative, transcendental phenomenological research study investigated 15 older adults' perceptions of crime in Ferguson, Missouri through auto-photography and photo-elicitation. The results of this research study indicate that concerns with crime in the form of neighborhood disorder do exist. However, for the most part, older adults did not feel that their personal safety was compromised. The presence of lower level neighborhood disorder has created some anxiety about whether signs of physical and social deterioration suggest the onset of future significant decay in the community. These older adults attachment to place combined with their social and physical investment in the community seem to counter the fear of crime they could experience from the presence of neighborhood disorder. Thus, their quality of life has not been gravely affected.

Chapter One: Introduction

Over one out of every eight or 41.4 million (13.3%) Americans are age 65 or older (Administration on Aging, 2012). In Missouri, 840,000 (14%) were 65 or older in 2010 (Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis [OSED], 2013A) and in Ferguson, Missouri, where this study takes place, there were 2,189 (10.3%) adults over 65 in 2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Many older adults, regardless of their ability level, will refuse institutionalized care and remain in their community. Nevertheless, the physical environment and amenities afforded to older adults will be a partially determining factor in their ability to partake in civic activities. Communities across the country will have to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of a growing older adult population (Farber, Shinkle, Lynott, Fox-Grage, and Harrell, 2011). However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, many of these modifications are ones that will benefit everyone who wishes to reside in the community “safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level” (cited by Farber, Shinkle, Lynott, Fox-Grage, and Harrell, 2011). As more adults grow older, it is also exceedingly essential to continue to recognize and nurture the strengths and assets they provide to maintain their roles as viable, socially engaged participants of their communities.

Background of the Problem

In July 2009, I was presented with a “JumpStart the Conversation” grant awarded by the Partners for Livable Communities, Metlife, and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The Partners for Livable Communities is a “national nonprofit organization working to restore and renew the communities we work and live in” (Partners for Livable Communities, 2014A). As part of their work, they recognize both the challenges and opportunities present as the population of older adults increases. Their aging-in-place initiative, “Developing Livable

Communities for All Ages” contemplates issues over and above “healthcare and social security and explores housing options, economic development, community support systems, and civic engagement” for older adults in the community (Partners for Livable Communities, 2014B).

Between 2007 and 2009, the MetLife Foundation funded “JumpStart the Conversation” grants of \$1,000 to \$2,500 for organizations in 12 communities that hosted an aging-in-place workshop (Partners for Livable Communities, 2014C). As part of the movement to promote aging-in-place, the St. Louis metropolitan region was selected to host one of the national workshops. The workshop was co-hosted by the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging, Area Agency on Aging in Southwest Illinois, and the Mid-East Area Agency on Aging. As part of the workshops, eight “JumpStart the Conversation” grants were awarded to partnerships with distinct aging-in-place proposals for community action (Partners for Livable Communities, 2014D).

My original idea for utilizing the grant money did not fully develop. However, a trusted colleague and mentor of mine introduced me to the North County Senior Ministry (formally the Northeast Deanery Senior Ministry) who was also working to launch an aging-in-place initiative. The thought was that our ideas similarly aligned and therefore could be combined to formulate a successful aging-in-place initiative. The North County Senior Ministry (NCSM) started an initiative that they called the *Lights On! Neighborhood Engagement Program* after identifying two elements of distress for North St. Louis County older adults. These older adults felt their level of safety was declining and no longer felt connected with their community and neighborhoods. Washington University’s Brown School of Social Work worked in conjunction with the Ministry and verified both fear and decreased engagement among North St. Louis County older adults (Calliotte, 2009). In their examination of the topic, they discovered that when “individuals perceive a high level of crime and are fearful, they tend to stay inside.

However, doing so perpetuates the problem as fewer people are outside to deter actual crime. Their research also showed that older adults report the highest level of fear of crime. Older adults with high levels of social interaction and stronger social networks are healthier and have lower levels of depression” (Calliotte, 2009).

The North County Senior Ministry and I, representing the University of Missouri – Extension, as the “JumpStart the Conversation” recipient met to explore opportunities to maximize the effectiveness of our initiatives. After meeting, it was decided that the resources of the Ministry and the University of Missouri – Extension could be combined to create a powerful partnership to accomplish a more comprehensive initiative. The Ministry received assistance from Whitney Calliotte, who was an AmeriCorps Community Mobilization Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) worker. Whitney had time to devote solely to the initiative and worked tirelessly to carry out the day-to-day details of setting up schedules to complete work at resident’s homes, organize volunteers, and to talk in depth to community leaders. As I have many other responsibilities as a specialist with the University of Missouri – Extension, Whitney’s time and dedication to the project was greatly appreciated.

After a review of resources from several municipalities in North St. Louis County, it was decided to focus on Ferguson, MO (Communications, NCSM, August 2009). Local law enforcement determined that motion sensor lighting and landscape pruning could be offered to older adults to create a greater sense of neighborhood security. The reasoning behind this is that keeping shrubbery neatly trimmed and below window height increases visibility for homeowners and neighbors and decreases areas where criminals can hide around homes (Calliotte, 2009).

A representative from the North County Senior Ministry made a presentation to the Ferguson Neighborhood Improvement Program (FNIP) board and as a result they committed to

sponsoring 20 homes with motion sensor lights with the caveat that the installation of those lights took place in an area of Ferguson with higher reported crime. After consulting with the then current Ferguson Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, the Southwest Neighborhood in Ferguson was identified to launch the initiative (Communications, NCSM, August, 2009).

In addition to the motion sensor lights, it was decided that additional funds from the “JumpStart the Conversation” grant could be utilized for solar powered address signs, dead bolt locks with new lever handles for those residents who needed it, and skid proof/reflective tape for difficult concrete steps at the entrances to homes. Local police officers stated that they had trouble seeing resident’s address numbers in the event of an emergency and the addition of lighted address signs would help when they needed to see them.

The initiative lasted approximately one year and involved 18 older adults in the Southwest neighborhood of Ferguson, Missouri. With the help of a social work practicum student working with the Ministry, a survey was conducted during that year and identified that one-half of the residents in the initiative had either been a victim of crime or someone in their household had been a victim of crime. Three-quarters of the residents knew of a neighbor who had been a victim of crime. At the completion of the program, an ice cream social and trivia night were hosted in an effort to help residents begin to better socially engage with one another. This program received national attention, in part because of the recognition of being a “JumpStart the Conversation” recipient. This initiative was recognized in the March 2010 *Compendium of Community Aging Initiatives* composed by the Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services at the University of California at Berkeley – School of Social Welfare.

As we entered homes throughout the year in the Southwest neighborhood of Ferguson, Missouri and spoke with residents about their thoughts and concerns about safety, I became

curious about the “bigger” issue in the neighborhood and community. Older adults repeatedly stated that they felt crime was increasing in their neighborhood and that they were more fearful than they had ever been in their entire life. However, at the same time, they were expressing their desire to want to age-in-place in their current home, neighborhood, and community. Many of the older adults involved in the initiative were longtime residents and seemed to have a very deep connection with their home and surroundings.

Towards the completion of the initiative, I was inspired to begin working on my PhD in Architectural Studies at the University of Missouri. As I began my studies, I thought repeatedly about the initiative in Southwest Ferguson and what could be done to further understand resident’s concerns and improve their quality of life. Digging deeper into research, I found that reported crime had not increased in the community; in fact it had decreased. However, what had changed over the course of decades was the racial makeup, the overall age of the population, and a number of other physical and social characteristics. Rather than a direct increase in reported crime, it seemed there were other changes that older adults were interpreting as an increase in crime.

Statement of the Problem

Past communications with older adults in Ferguson indicated that they were concerned that crime in their community has increased and their quality of life was negatively affected. On the other hand, according to statistics presented by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (United States Department of Justice, 2013), through discussions with University of Missouri-St. Louis Criminology Professor Dr. Bob Bursik (personal communication, 2011), and through communications with local police officers, crime has not changed significantly in Ferguson during the past 20 years. In fact, in some aspects, it has decreased.

Therefore, it seems there could be other changes within the community that symbolize crime to older adults. Older adults in Ferguson have a strong connection to their home and community, but as they have gotten older, their community has begun to change and evolve. They are essentially the only thing that has remained constant in their ever-changing world. They fear the changes taking place around them and one way they interpret these changes is as a variance in crime, and that their community is generally going downhill. These changing factors can be categorized as social and physical factors or “cues” and can include changes in the racial makeup, changes in the overall population age, increases in litter, graffiti, and neglected and abandoned homes and properties. Because these social and physical cues symbolize crime, it also seems that older adults in Ferguson would perceive that their quality of life has diminished if they socially withdrawal from activities because they fear for their safety.

Theoretical Framework

Numerous theories were relevant in developing a framework to understand older adult’s perceptions of crime in their community. First, Lawton’s Environmental Docility Theory (1974), states “the less competent the individual in terms of personal disability or deprived status, the more susceptible is his behavior to the influence of immediate environmental situations.” Unfortunately, this initial description of the theory has limitations because it conveys the older adult as a passive component of the person-environment connection. Thus, the theory was amended by Lawton (1985) to additionally include the hypothesis of environmental proactivity (cited by Findlay and McLaughlin, 2005). This amendment “acknowledged the reciprocal nature of the person-environment relationship and accounted for the behavioral responses of older people of above average competence for whom the environment was more of a resource than a controller of behavior” (Findlay and McLaughlin, 2005).

The Broken Window Theory is also strongly applicable in how older adults' feel about the presence of crime in their neighborhood. Essentially, as Kelling and Wilson (1982) describe, "if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, all the remaining windows will soon be broken." One unrepaired window sends a message to those passing by that no one cares and invites others to break more windows. This can also apply to abandoned cars, buildings, and lots. If one person dumps their trash in the empty lot next door and no one reports or discourages additional dumping, then it must be tolerated. This might invite others who have had a similar idea to do the same thing (Kelling and Wilson, 1982).

Kelling and Wilson (1982) explain that "breaking of windows" can lead to serious social breakdowns in a community. Here is how they describe it: "A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, and a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out and unattached adults move in." This explains the process simply, but describes how physical and social disorder can snowball quickly, leading to people leaving the community all together. Signs of disorder can attract criminal offenders because they are indicators that residents are apathetic about what happens in the neighborhood (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004).

The Social Disorganization Theory offers some of the "most promising research on fear of crime" and "stresses the relationships among demographic characteristics, social integration, and fear of crime (Adams and Serpe, 2000)." As cited by Adams and Serpe (2000), this theory additionally suggests that people will feel that their neighborhood is safer if they engage socially with those who live near them (Hartnagel, 1979; Lewis and Salem, 1986; Riger, LaBailly, and Gordon, 1981). Residents who socially engage in community organizations, church groups, and neighborhood watch groups have a reduced fear of crime. When people feel safer, they are more

likely to walk on their streets at night and thus keep an active eye on the community. “The hypothesis of the social disorganization theory is that low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, and family disruption lead to community social disorganization which in turn increases crime and delinquency rates” (Sampson and Groves, 1989). According to Kornhauser (1978, p. 120) and Bursik, 1984, p. 12), “social disorganization is the failure of community structure to appreciate the shared values of its residents and sustain effective social controls” (cited by Sampson and Groves, 1989).

Through Oscar Newman’s Defensible Space Theory, crime is hindered through the defensible space of residential areas “by creating the physical expression of a social fabric that defends itself” with “real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance – that combine to bring the environment under the control of the residents” (Newman, 1972, p. 3). As defined by Oscar Newman (1972), crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is the “design or redesign of an environment to improve safety, to decrease incidents of criminal activity, and eliminate conditions that may contribute to crime” (cited by Walsh, 1999). Strategies for CPTED include “territoriality (sense of ownership), surveillance, access control, and activities promoted within spaces including higher densities and mixed use development in order to optimize the number of potential eyes on the street” (Cozens, 2007).

Additionally, Relph’s (1976) Theory of Place Attachment describes, “place attachment as the authentic and emotional bond with an environment that satisfies a fundamental human need” (cited by Scannell and Gifford, 2009). As cited by Morgan (2010), place attachment is “the experience of a long-term affective bond to a particular geographic area and the meaning attributed to that bond. Where a person lives in a particular locale over an extended period, that

person will often develop feelings of affection for, and a sense of belonging, or being of that place, so that place becomes ‘one anchor of his or her identity’ (Hay, 1998).” Although some older adults in Ferguson have expressed they do not feel as safe as they once did, they feel a certain attachment to their home, neighborhood, and community. This is where they grew up, bought their first home, raised their children, and are retiring in. They want to age-in-place in a locale with significant meaning and comfort as they grow older.

Methodological Framework

A qualitative research approach in which purposive sampling, auto-photography, photo-elicited in-depth semi-structured interviews, and a short survey were used in data collection. Transcendental Phenomenological was utilized to understand and interpret older adults’ perceptions of crime in Ferguson, Missouri. Through this process, the researcher sets aside all prejudgments and prior knowledge of the subject matter, known as epoche. Next, the researcher analyzes accounts from research participants to identify important statements. Statements that are irrelevant, overlapping, or repetitive among research participants are omitted and remaining statements are grouped to develop themes. The themes are used to develop structural and textural descriptions of the phenomenon. These descriptions of the phenomenon are further utilized to assemble the final essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994; Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004).

“Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretation of the meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Qualitative procedures are not characterized

by statistical methods and “include short written responses on surveys; interviews; anthropological field research; video and audio data recording...” (Trochim, 2001, p. 152).

Some research methods are seen as superficial, but qualitative methods provide a deep understanding of the data. Other strengths include the flexibility of being able to modify the research process as necessary, always being prepared to conduct qualitative research, and its relatively inexpensive nature. Weaknesses of qualitative research include the inability to attain statistical explanations related to larger populations and problems with reliability such as two researchers who will likely interpret a participant’s account completely differently (Babbie, 2008, p. 343 and 344). Qualitative research generates detailed information, bringing about both positive and negative characteristics (Trochim, 2001, p. 153). “On the positive side, it enables you to describe the phenomena of interest with great richness...On the negative side when you have that kind of detail, it’s hard to determine what the generalizable themes are...Qualitative researchers don’t care about generalizing; they’re content to generate rich descriptions of their phenomena” (Trochim, 2001, p. 153).

Qualitative methods were employed as opposed to quantitative methods in this research study in order to gain a deeper understanding of older adults’ perceptions of crime in their community. It is hoped that the research results can be used to develop an action plan to alleviate some of the concerns that older adults have and improve their quality of life in their community. The study results will not be generalizable to other older adults in other communities. However, it is felt that the methods developed for this study can also be employed in other communities to gain a deeper understanding of particular community issues.

Purpose of the Study

Understanding how older adult's perceptions of crime in Ferguson have affected their quality of life is the focus of this research inquiry. It is hoped that the information collected from older adults' participation in this study can be used to better understand and eventually help reduce fear of crime, improve the rate of those wishing to age-in-place, and improve the lives of older adults in Ferguson and other communities. The research questions addressed in this research study are as follows:

In Ferguson, Missouri:

- 1) What are the physical places and elements that older adults feel represent crime?
 - a. What social messages are represented in the images of physical places and elements captured by older adults?
- 2) How has their perceived quality of life been affected by their perceptions of crime?

Significance of the Study

Data collection for this study concluded in early June 2014, nearly two months before the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. Additionally, much of the background information and literature review was composed prior to the events in August 2014. The heartbreaking incident has sparked community outrage, protests, violence, prayers for justice and peace, and distrust between a predominately White police force and predominately Black residential population in Ferguson. This research study became more significant and timely than one could have ever imagined possible.

Unfortunately, most of the nation, through the lens of the media, has witnessed only a snippet of life in Ferguson, suspended in time. This research study presents some perceptions of Ferguson that are much different than what was portrayed in national headlines after the death of Michael Brown in August 2014. Despite the tragic events, Ferguson is still a small town where

people work, play, shop, pray, grow-up, and grow old. It is home for the approximately 20,000 people who dwell there and have made Ferguson their residence of choice. Perceptions are very powerful; shaped by the phenomena one experiences through every fiber of their beings.

Perceptions are also highly susceptible to change. No argument will be made that Ferguson is anything less than a passionate community; as witnessed through this study and the events that unfolded during and after August 2014. Therefore, it is hoped that in the future, older adults in Ferguson will once again ardently volunteer to participate in future research studies that document their perceptions since the tragic events of August 2014.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

As of the 2010, Ferguson, Missouri had a population of 21,203 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Ferguson is part of the larger St. Louis metropolitan area and is located in the Northern portion of St. Louis County. The total population of St. Louis County is 998,954 (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

The City of St. Louis, Missouri is not included in this population number. In 1876, voters approved the separation of St. Louis City from St. Louis County as it currently remains (The City of St. Louis, Missouri, 2011). The population of St. Louis City adds another 319,294 to the

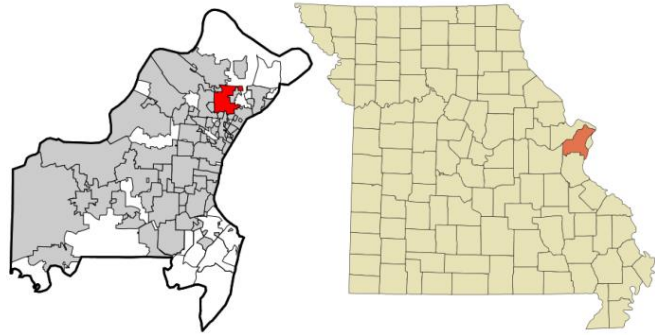


Figure 1. Map illustrating location of Ferguson and St. Louis County in Missouri. Retrieved from Wikipedia, 2014. Created by Arkyan, 2007.

Louis County (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Figure 1 identifies the location of St. Louis County within the State of Missouri to the right and the location of Ferguson, Missouri within St. Louis County to the left (Arkyan, 2007).

The progression of transportation, the construction of the interstate system, and suburban development have all had an incredible influence on the evolution of Ferguson and surrounding suburbs. As these suburbs have aged, they have faced significant demographic shifts, an aging and inexpensive housing stock, as well as various other physical, social, and economic changes. The dramatic subprime lending crisis of the mid-2000's has and will continue to have a significant impact on the area as well.

Ferguson: Suburban Development

Railroads and streetcars established growth to the suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri and greatly influenced Ferguson's origins (Fox, 1995, p. 186); producing a hotbed for freight and passenger railroad transportation at the close of the 19th century (City of Ferguson, 2014A; Fox, 1995, p. 186). In 1876, a spur line connected Ferguson to St. Louis' downtown Union Depot, transforming its rural feel into a suburb attractive for wealthy estates (Fox, 1995, p. 186; City of Ferguson, 2014A). "...it was the streetcar that created the modern metropolitan area as a settlement form--as an urban region made up of a high density central city surrounded by lower-density suburbs whose residents commute daily to jobs in the central city" (Ames, 1995). Prior to 1918, streetcar suburbs expanded, making a ten mile commute from downtown accessible in 30 minutes and "laid the skeleton for the new emerging metropolitan area..." (Ames, 1995).

The development of the earliest automobile suburbs occurred between the end of World War I and the end of World War II (Ames, 1995). At the close of World War II, those residing in Ferguson preferred to utilize personal automobiles rather than trains and streetcars (Fox, 1995). The Federal Aid Highway Act was signed into law on June 29th, 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Through this law, 41,000 miles of limited access interstates connected major cities across the country by 1972. Missouri was the first state to begin construction breaking ground in St. Charles County on Interstate 70. Interstate 70 was the first project in the St. Louis area to be completed, connecting the downtown area to the airport and Northwest St. Louis County into St. Charles County (Missouri Department of Transportation [MODOT], 2013). Ferguson is geographically bound by Interstate 70 on its south, Interstate 170 on its west, and Interstate 270 on its north.

The automobile became one of the most expansive influences on “large-scale suburbanization” (Ames, 1995) and the Federal Aid Highway Act has affected “every aspect of American life in the past 50 years” (MODOT, 2013). Suburbs were places where people could “escape the congestion and clamor of the city” (Fox, 1995, p. 161), but their development via construction of the interstate highway system drove downtowns into decline, destroyed historical buildings, and cut paths through “vibrant, working class neighborhoods” (MODOT, 2013). Post-World War II became known as the era of the “freeway suburbs” (Ames, 1995) in which unparalleled expansion materialized due to the construction of the “interstate highway system, the rise of the automobile, and the introduction of government home-buying incentives in the 1940’s and 1950’s” (Fox, 1995, p. 161).

St. Louis City remained a major industrial player throughout World War II. However, by the 1950’s there were issues with blight, congested traffic, crime, and businesses and families moving into suburbs throughout St. Louis County (Hannon, 1986). Active real estate development turned farmland into sprawling suburbs after WWII and such towns as Florissant, Missouri, a neighboring suburb of Ferguson, saw a spike in their local population. In 1950, the population of Florissant was 3,737. By the mid 1970s, 18,000 homes were built and the population peaked at 65,908 (Hannon, 1986; Fox, 1995, p. 36). Ferguson also boomed after World War II and homes were built by the masses. During the 1940s and 1950s, simple two bedroom “brick and frame houses” were constructed on “curving,



Figure 2. Example of brick house constructed Post-WWII.

tree-shaded lanes” throughout Northeast St. Louis County (Duncan, 2008). New arrivals to the area worked at McDonnell Aircraft, Universal Match, and Emerson Electric (Fox, 1995). Figure 2 demonstrates a house typically constructed during this era that can currently be found throughout Ferguson and surrounding suburbs.

Veteran’s returning home from World War II were in need of housing and qualified for “guaranteed mortgages under the Veteran’s Administration Housing Program” (Fox, 1995, p. 36). This program required only a small down payment and thus made home ownership more affordable than renting (Fox, 1995, p. 36). After World War II, St. Louis City “had no more room to grow” (The City of St. Louis, Missouri, 2011) and “thousands of families left the aging row houses and apartments of their city neighborhoods for lawns and ranch houses” in the suburbs (Fox, 1995, p. 36). “They were moving out of the crowded city of St. Louis to live the American dream in their fresh new suburban homes” (Duncan, 2008).

Ferguson, Missouri is considered an inner ring suburb because it is one of the older suburbs close to the city of St. Louis. Inner ring suburbs are also called first suburbs because they “were developed in the immediate postwar years” (Duncan, 2008). They have endured significant demographic and economic changes (Duncan, 2008) and “have evolved into places with varied characteristics, assets, and problems” (Hanlon, 2009). In the *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs (1961) explains that today’s worst cities were once dignified suburbs. “...today’s brand-new suburbs or semisuburbs are going to be engulfed in cities and will succeed or fail in that condition depending on whether they can adapt to functioning successfully as city districts” (p. 16). According to Lewyn (2000), “suburban sprawl, like the French Revolution, devours its own children. Sprawl creates inner ring suburbs, only to destroy them a few decades later by creating outer suburbs to skim off their elites. So as long as cities

and older suburbs continue to lose their most affluent citizens to newer suburbs, no community is truly safe from the ravages of neighborhood decay, and no stable community can endure.” There are some suburban sections that are more attractive than others and “there are very few cities that are homogenous in terms of race, socio-economic status, or class” (Fox, 1995, p. 161). As cited by Hanlon (2009), “it has been demonstrated that, in general, declining suburbs are more likely to be inner ring rather than outer suburbs (Leigh and Lee, 2005; Lee, 2005; Lucy and Phillips, 2000, 2006; and Hanlon, 2008).”

“Mobility and migration have splintered many communities that were long based on blood ties, cultural heritage and life within a narrow geographical region” (Roseland, 2005, p. 154). As a result of this mobility, migration, and suburban development, “metropolitan areas countrywide are seeing similar patterns of development-explosive sprawl where farmland and open space once reigned, matched by decline and abandonment in the central cities and older suburbs” (Dionne, 1998, p. 66). Ferguson is far from being a brand new St. Louis suburb as newer suburbs stretch further west to the far edges of St. Louis County into the Missouri River Valley. West is also where the population of St. Louis County appears to be headed. Inhabitants of the area utilize the interstate highway system to zip past older, less desirable suburbs and quickly to housing and subdivisions that are new and sprawling with flashy attractions, malls, and restaurants. Ferguson’s housing stock is older and less expensive and as a result younger newer minority families are moving in and taking advantage of the more economical, smaller, living arrangements. It also seems that landlords also take advantage of this inexpensive, smaller housing stock by converting homes into rental property.

The automobile and the interstate highway system were not the only shapers of suburban development throughout the St. Louis area. Large-scale racial segregation also contributed

greatly to the suburban evolution during the middle of the 20th century, creating future irreversible housing conditions. “The geography of America would be unrecognizable today without the racist social engineering of the mid-20th century” (Coates, 2014). Many African Americans in St. Louis historically lived in the city’s decaying slums. However, in the 1950’s, a transformation occurred in which “deindustrialization and emergent White flight conspired to erode the city’s population” (Gay, 2014). The Pruitt-Igoe housing development is one of the most infamous urban renewal projects in history (Gay, 2014). Pruitt was designed for Blacks and Igoe was designed for Whites. However, both Pruitt and Igoe filled with Blacks because Whites were more interested in less expensive options available in the suburbs (Rothstein, 2014B). Pruitt Igoe was ultimately a catastrophic failure inundated by crime and maintenance issues; three of the high-rise buildings were imploded in 1972 (Hoffman, 2000). Pruitt Igoe was located approximately 11 miles from Ferguson, Missouri.

Urban renewal projects in conjunction with “the vast tracery of highways that now entangles the city, only accelerated the city’s decline, razing many of its historically Black neighborhoods and relocating its residents, ultimately, to inner-ring North County suburbs like Ferguson” (Gay, 2014). This resulted in White residents fleeing to more affluent outer-ring and other predominately White suburban areas. Even though it is unconstitutional to discriminate based on race, St. Louis has been plagued with “geographic, cultural, and economic” segregation (Cooperman, 2014). Citing the 2010 United States Census, Cooperman (2014) suggests that “North of Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis neighborhoods are about 95% Black. South of Delmar, they are almost two-thirds White (and the median household income is \$25,000 higher). White flight and Black flight adhere to this pattern: Whites ended up in South (St. Louis) County and Blacks in North (St. Louis) County.”

According to Rothstein (2014A, 2014B), suburban development throughout the St. Louis area as well as the nation banned African Americans through the utilization of community covenants mutually agreed upon by White homeowners and with “racially neutral zoning rules” designating outer-ring suburbs for the wealthy. This left inner-ring suburbs such as Ferguson to Black homeowners who were escaping the failing schools in the inner city. As Massey and Denton explain in their book *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, “some real-estate agents reaped huge profits by blockbusting: scaring Whites out of neighborhoods with the threat of Black neighbors, then selling their vacant homes to African-Americans at rapacious prices with predatory loans” (cited by Kovarik, 2008). The federal government also participated in “redlining” or a “system of loan-approval practices” that prohibited investors from financially participating in Black neighborhoods. Rothstein (2014B) explains that “a more powerful cause is the explicit intents of federal, state, and local government to create racially segregated metropolises” through jointly supporting policies:

- Zoning that defined ghetto boundaries within St. Louis, turning Black neighborhoods into slums;
- Segregated public housing that replaced more integrated areas;
- Restrictive covenants adopted by government mandate;
- Government-subsidized suburban development for Whites only;
- Boundary and redevelopment policies to keep Blacks from White neighborhoods;
- Real estate and financial regulatory policy that promoted segregation;
- Denial of services in Black ghettos convincing Whites that Blacks and slums are synonymous;
- Urban renewal programs to shift ghetto locations in the guise of cleaning up those slums; and
- A government sponsored dual labor market that made suburban housing less affordable to Blacks (Rothstein, 2014B).

By the 1960’s, virtually the entire home real estate market had been impacted by federal civil rights laws. However, discriminatory and segregated housing practices did not cease. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) began a program in 1968 targeting low-income

homeowners and “signaled the federal government’s larger commitment to subsidizing low income families and individuals rather than the projects in which they might live (Gordon, 2008).” Gordon (2008, p. 118) acknowledges that theoretically, these types of initiatives were capable of distributing homeowners receiving housing assistance throughout the geographic area, but in actuality “they simply laundered federal subsidies through the deeply discriminatory institutions of private realty” in which ““money and helpless buyers were simply fed into the segregated market”” (USCCR, 1971; Orfield, 1981). Subsequently, Gordon (2008, p. 119) affirms that Black buyers were shown homes in North St. Louis and inner-ring Northern suburbs while Whites were shown homes in predominantly White suburban areas. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) interrupted FHA sales in the transitional Skinker-deBaliviere neighborhood after residents were concerned “that federal subsidies were tipping the local housing market by making mortgages available ‘to some gal out of Pruitt Igoe.’” (Leven, 1976; USCCR, 1971; Orfield, 1981). Many of these actions concluded in the late 20th century but “continue to determine today’s racial segregation patterns” (Rothstein, 2014A) and will continue to have irreversible everlasting effects on housing, suburb development, and the history of St. Louis and our nation.

Ferguson, like much of the rest of North St. Louis County has experienced a shift in the demographics of their community. For example, the population of those 65 and older in Ferguson and other areas surrounding the Lambert International Airport area decreased between 1990-2000 (OSED, 2013B). According to OSED (2013B), younger African American populations have replaced the older Caucasian populations in the area. In Ferguson, the racial composition of the community has changed significantly during the past 20 years. In 1990, Whites made up 73.8 percent of the population and Blacks made up 25.1 percent of the

population. In 2010, Whites made up 29.3 percent of the population and Blacks made up 67.4 percent of the population (United States Census Bureau, 1990-2010). In the 1970s, 97 percent of the population in the Northeast Suburbs were white. As the first generation aged and moved out, a “sweeping generational turnover took place, and a new class of moderate-income Black homeowners moved into these neighborhoods” (Duncan, 2008). Although Ferguson lies just outside the Northeast suburban boundary, it possesses a similar housing stock, has experienced the effects of foreclosure, and a change in the demographics of their community.

“Ferguson is a picture pleasant suburbia, a town of tree lined streets and well-kept homes, much of them built for the middle class at mid-century” (Gallagher, 2013). Unfortunately, it also took a major hit during the subprime lending crisis of the mid-2000’s. Between 2004 and 2007, more than half of the mortgages were subprime in the inner ring suburbs, creating a “cycle of financial destruction for residents and neighborhoods” (Gallagher, 2013). Property values declined and the tax base was diminished by foreclosures (Lloyd, 2012). “It is the ordinary, unremarkable, post war suburbs of northeast St. Louis County that have the highest concentration of foreclosures” (Duncan, 2008). Home prices throughout St. Louis have begun to stabilize and some have begun to rise. However, in North St. Louis County prices remain weak and there are an abundance of foreclosed homes that are older, smaller, and out of fashion; selling to landlords who then convert them into rental homes (Gallagher, 2013). “Metro St. Louis is a national hot spot for ‘underwater’ mortgages...and the problem is particularly acute in north St. Louis County” (Gallagher, 2014). According to Gallagher (2014), those who are underwater are “roughly twice as likely as others to default on their mortgages, leading to foreclosure. Some argue that stressed homeowners are less likely to improve their homes, or even maintain them, and that can affect the surrounding neighborhood.” Chris Krehmeyer, the

president of Beyond Housing states, “It’s clearly not good for the psyche of the homeowner. But if you have a good job and are comfortable with the neighborhood, you can live with being underwater” (cited by Gallagher, 2014). Some, such as William Rogers, at the University of Missouri-St. Louis would additionally argue that, “Homeowners who can’t leave have a special interest in keeping the neighborhood nice” and “they might become better neighbors with more civic involvement” (cited by Gallagher, 2014).

Ferguson was also struck by a tornado on Good Friday in 2011. According to the National Weather Service Weather Forecasting Office (NWSWFO, 2012), the tornado was an EF 4; the strongest tornado St. Louis County has seen in 44 years. This tornado destroyed 251 homes in St. Louis County and thousands more were damaged (Currier, 2011). Almost exactly two years later, in 2013, another round of tornadoes struck the St. Louis area causing damage in Ferguson, Missouri (NWSWFO, 2013). The combined destruction these tornadoes caused can still be seen in homes damaged beyond repair and abandoned.

Although Ferguson has experienced significant changes throughout its life cycle, the pride that citizens have for their city and the responsibility that they feel for others in their community and future generations is intensely evident. As some would suggest, North St. Louis County seems to be consistently targeted by negative media publicity as it relates to crime, education, and the state of housing throughout the area. Understandably, residents within Ferguson had their own individual concerns related to this research study. They did not want to cast further light on an issue that many feel has already received an inordinate amount of attention. Just like anywhere else, there are desirable and undesirable qualities about any place in which one chooses to reside, shop, and socialize. In addition to some of the challenges that

Ferguson has faced, the city has many positive qualities that would make it a very desirable community in which to live.

During this research study, the City of Ferguson had begun revitalizing the community by building a new fire station, initiating the construction of a new police station, and working to rehabilitate an old church into a new community center for its residents. The city has also collaborated with artists to design and construct a sculpture garden as part of Jeske Park. Ferguson also has an extremely vibrant farmers' market that takes place on Saturdays. Ferguson's downtown area has undergone some exciting revitalization, including new loft apartments, restaurants, bars, and other businesses. Residents and visitors are enthusiastic about these changes and look forward to additional positive progression in the community. There is hope that these developments and others bring new residents, visitors, businesses, and investors to the area.

Ferguson has several large employers in the area that might very well be attracted to all of the positive progression occurring in the area. Emerson Electric is located directly in Ferguson and has been there for many years. Boeing, Lambert International Airport, the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley are also nearby. Express Scripts significantly expanded its campus located at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, attracting new employment to the area. Ferguson has a young, enthusiastic mayor and strong police force that are committed to making Ferguson safe for its residents. Although Ferguson faces challenges, the residents and city workforce are committed to making their community a positive environment for everyone who works, lives, and visits there.

Unfortunately, St. Louis in general has received national attention about its crime rate. The city of St. Louis has consistently received high rankings as one of the most dangerous cities

in America. However, one of the reasons for this is that unlike other growing cities, St. Louis has not grown beyond its restricted borders. Other cities have expanded their borders, pulling in safer surrounding neighborhoods, thus diluting the overall crime statistics for the area. If St. Louis were to do this, the crime rate would be much lower (Christie, 2013). North St. Louis County, where Ferguson is located also seems to receive significant attention as it relates to criminal activity. However, according to statistics presented by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (United States Department of Justice, 2013), through discussions with University of Missouri-St. Louis Criminology Professor Dr. Bob Bursik (personal communication, 2011), and through local police officers, reported crime has not changed significantly in Ferguson during the past 20 years. In fact, in some aspects it has decreased.

At the time of data collection in October 2013 - June 2014, crime had not significantly increased in Ferguson. However, given the transitions that have taken place, one could argue that changes in certain physical and social characteristics in the community could be translated by older adults as an increase in crime, thus increasing their perception that their community is not as safe as it once was. In Taylor and Covington's (1993) study, they tested two major concepts. First, "residents in urban neighborhoods that have changed rapidly during the preceding decade will fear crime more than residents living in neighborhoods that have not experienced such changes." Furthermore, "community and individual characteristics -- who lives in the neighborhood, and how they view the locale --channel the effects of unexpected change on fear." Ferguson is one of the many communities in North St. Louis County that has seen many physical, social, and economic transitions in the preceding decade, potentially contributing to an increased negative perception about safety in the community. Previously, some older adults in Ferguson suggested that they were more fearful of some young people in

their community. This was because they looked intimidating, they looked like they could potentially over-power an older adult, or because they did not feel that these young people shared similar values to them. Although residents had previously indicated that they no longer felt safe in their community, they still desired to continue aging-in-place.

Older Adults and Fear of Crime

Minnery (1986) explains that fear of crime is problematic when it restricts the activities of individuals so gravely that it disturbs their quality of life (Garofalo 1977, Lavrakas 1982, Maxfield 1984) and can greatly affect such groups of people as the elderly (e.g., Goldsmith and Goldsmith 1976, Markson and Hess 1980). Psychologist Werner Greve presented empirical data that indicated a similar degree of fear of crime in youth and elderly, even though it is perceived that the elderly exhibit more fear of crime. However, young and old people manage victimization risk differently. Older adults' inclination is to perceive danger and be accordingly careful. Youth weigh the cost vs. benefit of a potential dangerous situation (Herz and Kania, 2002). This may explain why some of the older adults previously interviewed in Ferguson began to restrict some of their activities; especially if they perceived that there could be certain dangers associated with future encounters. Gordon, Riger, and Lebailly (1980) found that women who reside alone in the city frequently limit their activities due to fear of victimization. However, particular groups in this classification are not statistically at a high risk of being affected by crime (cited by Minnery, 1986).

Taylor and Covington (1993) found that residents felt that their daytime safety was compromised when they perceived that issues could ascent from unsupervised groups of youth in their community. One older resident in Ferguson stated that in the past she walked in a local park regularly. However, an incident arose in which she was approached by a group of African

American teenagers. Even though there was no confrontation and no harm was done, this sufficiently scared the older woman to a point where she no longer returned to the park for her regular walks.

Chadee and Ditton (2003) reexamined a study conducted by Ferraro and LeGrange (1992) confirming in their findings that there is no relationship between age and fear of crime. However, Markson and Hess (1980) cite a study conducted by Harris, et al., (1975) that fear of crime varies with age and gender. “At every age, women have a greater fear of crime than do men; 20 percent of all women compared to 11 percent of all men. This fear increases with age- from 10 percent among women 18-54 years old, 18 percent among those 55-64 years old, and 28 percent among those 65+.” The research varies greatly on whether older adults have a higher fear of crime in comparison to other age groups. However, because older adults initially expressed that they felt crime was increasing, it became important to understand how older adults perceive crime in their community and the potential effect fear has on their quality of life.

Perceived Environmental Press and Individual Competence

It appears that crime has not statistically increased in Ferguson, however, as previously noted, there have been significant physical and social changes occurring in the community. It could be argued, therefore, that some of these changes symbolize a perceived increase in crime by older adults even if actual crime is not increasing. Older adults who continue to reside in the community appear to have a sufficiently high competency level to deal with the psychological demands placed upon them from fear of crime. This higher level of competency potentially translates into a higher tolerance level developed from the gradual physical and social changes taking place in their community. In the past, they have been able to sufficiently “adapt to” or “tolerate” the physical and social changes happening in their community. However, as they age

and perceive that their biological and mental competency level is diminishing, their ability to continually “adapt to” or tolerate the evolving physical and social changes in their community may also diminish.

As presented by Lawton (1974), the Environmental Docility Theory states that “the less competent the individual in terms of personal disability or deprived status, the more susceptible is his behavior to the influence of immediate environmental situations.” The

Environmental Docility Theory is demonstrated through the Environmental Press Model seen in Figure 3. As

interpreted by Pollack and Patterson (1980), “through the adult life, a state of balance must exist between the individual’s competence...and environmental press...for that individual to maintain a satisfactory quality of life.” Due to the reduction of biological and psychological capabilities, one’s competency decreases and unless environmental demands are reduced, they will be unable to continuously adapt to their surroundings. If older adults in Ferguson perceive the physical and social changes (environmental demand) taking place as an increase in crime, their ability to adjust may be exceeded. This increases the perception that they will be victimized and increases the chance that they will begin to withdraw from the community.

Nahemow and Lawton (1973) suggest that “an individual is operating as his best when the environmental press are moderately challenging. If the environment offers too little

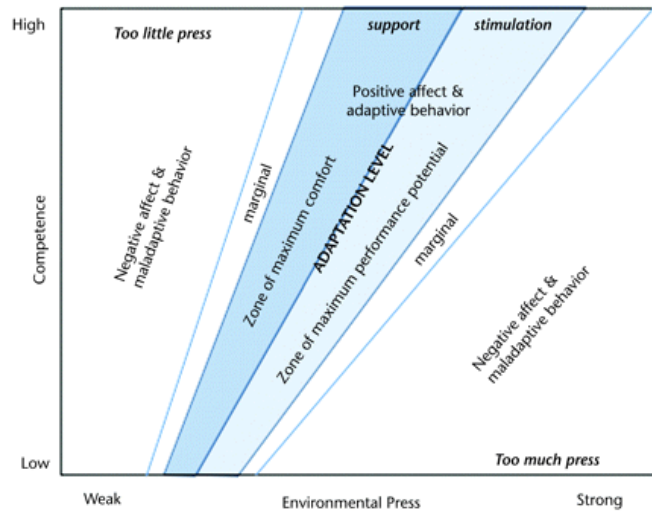


Figure 3. Environmental Press Model. Retrieved from blog by Roden, P. (2013, March 9) in Aging in Place, 2014. Model originally developed by Lawton & Nahemow, 1973.

challenge, the individual adapts by becoming lethargic and thus operates below his capacity.” This is a common occurrence in situations where an older adult is moved to a long-term care facility where staff performs all essential tasks for them. “On the other hand, it may be that the environment is too stressful and he has adapted by turning off...When the environmental pressures are very strong the individual may panic and attempt to escape from the field either physically or psychologically. This escape-oriented behavior is not geared to dealing with the situation represented by the immediate environment, but it is adaptive in the sense that it may remove the person from an intolerable situation” (Nahemow and Lawton, 1973).

Because of the perceived increase in crime that older adults in Ferguson suggest is making them more fearful, it is possible that some have attempted to physically escape by moving away from the community. Those who are unable to physically relocate have attempted to cope with their situation by socially and psychologically escaping. Although there are a number of factors that could be associated with an older adult leaving the community, fear of crime could pose an environmental stress that could contribute to a feeling that their only way of successfully adapting is to escape to somewhere where they feel safer. For older adults who have relocated, the feeling of safety may imply a community with greater demographic homogeneity, economic stability, and fewer signs of physical decay such as litter, uncared for lawns, and run down homes. For those who have chosen to stay in Ferguson despite their perception of crime, they may have retreated socially and psychologically as a method of removing themselves from a situation they can no longer tolerate. Adams and Serpe (2000) uncover “that as social disorder increases in a neighborhood, people report less helping behavior among neighbors and less satisfaction with their neighborhood. In other words, crime is related

to social isolation, which in turn contributes to fear of crime and perceived vulnerability (Skogan, 1990; Lewis and Salem, 1986; Thompson and Norris, 1992).”

As cited by Pollack and Patterson (1980),

Neugarten and Associates (1964) suggest that there is “a shift in personality to less ‘active mastery’ in later years. As people age, they view themselves as being less capable of dealing with problems through their own initiative. Similarly, Lawton et al. (1976) have discussed a lack of environmental control as partially accounting for the crime problem among the elderly. They note such problems among the elderly as (a) limits in their visual and auditory acuity which result in potential threats going unrecognized; (b) physical limits to the actions they can take such as running to avoid assault; and (c) social isolation and economic deprivation which lead to vulnerability.”

All of these factors can contribute to older adults’ perceptions that environmental demands such as crime have greater impact than they have in reality, thus making them feel less capable in their individual competency. According to Hale (1996, p. 95), “people who feel unable to protect themselves, either because they cannot run fast, or lack the physical prowess to ward off attackers, or because they cannot afford to protect their homes or because it would take them longer than average to recover from material or physical injuries might be expected to fear crime more than others” (cited by Cossman and Rader, 2011).

Social Connectedness and Social Isolation

According to Adams and Serpe (2000), “social integration refers to a person’s sense of belonging or attachment to the community (Adams 1992a; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974)” and activities that socially connect people to their community contribute to feelings that they have a common bond with those around them, feeling that they are an important asset to their

community, and overall increases their satisfaction with the neighborhood. Hunter and Baumer (1982) note that “social integration into the local community reduces the number of strangers in the neighborhood, reinforces the feeling that neighbors will offer assistance when needed, and contributes to perceptions that the neighborhood is a safe place to live” (cited by Adams and Serpe, 2000).

In contrast, when individuals become socially isolated they become more fearful, feel more vulnerable, and withdrawal from the community (Adams and Serpe, 2000). Atkins, Husain, and Storey (1991) acknowledge that there is an acute issue associated with fear of crime and suggest that it affects “travel and activity patterns, constrains participation in social activities, generates psychological stress, and is arguably a severe limitation on individual liberty.” Miethe (1995) suggests that “fear is functional to a society when it reduces individuals' exposure to risky and vulnerable situations, but fear becomes totally dysfunctional when it permanently restricts and limits all other aspects of social life.”

Additionally, as cited by Bellair (2006) “when a large proportion of community residents live in fear, behavioral patterns that emerge from daily interaction among community residents, such as surveillance of space, may be stunted (Goodstein and Shotland, 1980).” Informal surveillance occurs when residents are out walking around their neighborhood, interacting with their neighbors, and showing general concern for one another. However, fear of crime may greatly restrict one's participation in neighborhood and social organizations that initiate informal surveillance such as neighborhood watch groups. Criminals then prey on factors of distress, low internal locus of control, feelings of vulnerability, activity restriction, and a disconnection of social relationships to carry out criminal acts (Bellair, 2006).

From earlier discussions with older adult residents in Ferguson, it appears that those who are more socially integrated into neighborhood watch groups, church activities, and other volunteer activities felt that they had access to more resources when they were faced with a particular problem. As a result of attending the neighborhood watch meetings, residents reported that they felt they had a closer more intimate relationship with local police officers and did not hesitate to give them a personal call when they felt it was necessary. In contrast, one resident who no longer drove a car and rarely got out of her home stated that she did not know her neighbors well and would not even know who to go to for help if she needed it. Having access to a diverse array of connections and resources becomes increasingly important as one turns older and begins to rely more heavily on others to assist in day-to-day needs.

Social support networks. “Social factors, specifically social support, are important buffers to the stressors of later life...” (Blazer, 2005). Aging without the social support network to ease perceived environmental demands from crime may potentially become too difficult to adapt to as their window of competency diminishes. Thompson and Krause (1998) argue that “elders who are embedded in active social networks tend to have better physical and mental health than older adults who are less involved with other people.” Thompson and Krause (1998) describe social support as a multidimensional construct developed by Barrera (1986) and is “measured through social embeddedness (the frequency of contact with others), received support (the amount of tangible help that others actually provide), and perceived support (subjective evaluations of supportive exchange, such as satisfaction with support and expectations of future support). Studies increasingly suggest that perceived support may have a stronger effect on health and well-being than other types of social support measures. This is particularly true of anticipated support, which is defined as the belief that others will provide assistance in the future

should the need arise.” Anticipated support could come from past support that was received or through the involvement in a variety of social networks that the older adult feels could assist them in times of crisis (Thompson and Krause, 1998).

Among older adults in Ferguson, the mere thought that someone would be there if necessary could be sufficient in helping combat the fears they experience. This is potentially why the local neighborhood watch meetings attract so many older adults. This venue provides a caring environment in which the local police officer in charge pays special individualized attention to their needs and concerns. He also provides them with a variety of resources and knowledge that they would otherwise be unaware of. Neighborhood watch meetings become a social gathering for the older adults where they have opportunities to share stories with one another and mingle. The mere social gathering aspect of this monthly meeting informally connects older adults with people and resources in the community, helping to combat the potential psychological fear they feel. Yin (1980) observes that the presence of a vast social support network helps to reduce fear in the elderly because the catastrophic element of victimization is diminished if the elderly feel they can more easily recover with the help of those around them. Merry (1976) also suggests that “those who knew the people they encountered in their neighborhood and were familiar with its norms have a lower degree of fear of crime. Those who regarded their neighbors as ‘strangers’ were more fearful” (cited by Yin, 1980). Yin (1980) refers to a study conducted by Cohn et al. (1978) that found that “those who were involved in a community crime prevention program were less fearful than those who were not...First, joining a community crime prevention program allows access to the social structure of one’s neighborhood. Neighbors, therefore, cease to be strangers. Second, participation in any community program may foster development of one’s social support network; thus perceived

ability to recuperate from a victimization experience is increased.” It is hoped that active engagement in community organizations, church groups, and neighborhood watch groups will socially engage residents and help reduce their fear of crime in neighborhood settings. As cited by Adams and Serpe (2000) and Schieman (2009), people who perceive that they have a connection with those in their neighborhood and regularly interact with one another see their neighborhood as more secure (Hartnagel, 1979; Lewis and Salem, 1986; Riger, LaBailly, and Gordon 1981).

In contrast, Yin (1980) suggests that “interaction with friends and neighbors about crime (regardless of personal experience) constitutes another probable source of fear.” Clarke (1983) reports that neighborhood watch groups are largely unsuccessful as a method community surveillance because people do not sustain interest and are unlikely to express vigilance to protect others. This presents the contradiction associated with neighborhood watch meetings. It seems that several older adults in Ferguson attend the neighborhood watch meetings because they believe it is helpful in understanding crime in their community. However, in addition to the social support provided through the neighborhood watch meetings, they are also made highly aware of every crime related event in their community. The police officer who leads the meetings provides those in attendance with a detailed list of all crime happenings in Ferguson during the past month. The crimes are listed by type, date of occurrence, time of occurrence, and the street where the crime occurred. Having access to this additional information about crime in the community may serve as a significant explanatory factor in influencing older adults’ increased perception of crime in their community.

Ross and Jang (2000) found that “living in a neighborhood with a lot of perceived disorder significantly affects mistrust and fear of victimization...Perceived neighborhood

disorder and social ties significantly interact: informal social ties with neighbors reduce the fear - and mistrust - producing effects of disorder. However, formal participation in neighborhood watch organizations shows little buffering effect.” Informal social ties with neighbors leads to informal surveillance of the individual’s neighborhood because residents have a reason to walk around the neighborhood, interact with one another, and show general concern for one another. Through the process of informal surveillance, residents are much more likely to identify disorder in the neighborhood.

As coined by Jane Jacobs (1961) in her book, *The death and life of great American cities*, having “eyes on the street” is important to keep social order in check. “Public peace-the sidewalk and street peace-of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves” (p. 31-32). As fear takes over, citizens physically and socially withdrawal into their homes and away from the community and consequently, informal surveillance decreases. Signs of physical disorder advance as criminals create mayhem, assuming citizens are apathetic about what happens in their community, and no one cares enough to observe their delinquent actions (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004).

The Social Disorganization Theory

The Social Disorganization Theory explains the relationship between social changes and perceptions, and how it relates to one’s thoughts about crime in their community.

According to Adams and Serpe (2000) and Schieman (2009) “much of the most promising research on fear of crime is based on social disorganization theory, which stresses the relationships among demographic characteristics, social integration, and fear of crime. In

particular, the theory suggests that people who feel attached to their neighbors also perceive the neighborhood as safer” (Hartnagel, 1979; Lewis and Salem, 1986; Riger, LaBailly, and Gordon 1981). Social engagement occurs in many forms varying from being involved in various community organizations, church groups, volunteer opportunities, employment opportunities, or through socialization with friends and neighbors in the community. The presence of social networks also helps provide formal and informal surveillance over neighborhood issues and also helps older adults feel more deeply rooted in their community, increasing their overall life satisfaction.

Sampson and Groves (1989) suggest that the hypothesis of the social disorganization theory is that “low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, and family disruption lead to community social disorganization, which, in turn, increases crime and delinquency rates.” Kornhauser (1978, p. 120) and Bursik (1984, p. 12) state, social disorganization is the failure of the community to maintain “effective social controls” and “realize the common values of its residents” (cited by Sampson and Groves, 1989). Sampson and Groves (1989) also report, “the structural dimensions of community social disorganization can be measured in terms of the prevalence and interdependence of social networks in a community -both informal (e.g., friendships ties) and formal (e.g., organizational participation) - and in the span of collective supervision that the community directs toward local problems (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1920; Shaw and McKay, 1942; Kornhauser, 1978).”

Ethnic heterogeneity and crime perception. In considering the many social variables that may be associated with older adults’ fear of crime, the Social Disorganization Theory explores how ethnic heterogeneity is a contributing factor in crime and fear of crime in the

community. Skogan (1995) presented results from surveys finding that “residential proximity to Black people is related to Whites’ fear of crime.”

This is also evident in the history of Ferguson, Missouri. Kinloch was a predominately Black suburb neighboring a nearly all White Ferguson. “...Until the mid-1960’s, Ferguson barred African Americans after dark, blocking the main road from Kinloch with a chain and construction materials. A second road remained open so housekeepers and nannies could get from Kinloch to jobs in Ferguson” (Rothstein, 2014B). As Ferguson became more integrated with African Americans, affluent Whites began to flee to other outer ring suburbs. As cited by Quillian and Pager (2000), “Taub, Taylor, and Dunham (1984) found that individuals respond most strongly to perceived neighborhood crime and housing deterioration in determining when to move and where to settle” and that “Whites may avoid neighborhoods with many Black residents not because of an aversion to neighbors who are Black but because Black neighborhoods on average have higher rates of neighborhood problems like higher crime rates and dilapidated housing stock (Frey 1979; Taylor 1981; Liska and Bellair 1995; Liska, Logan, and Bellair 1998).”

Despite Whites appearing to be more afraid, Blacks are overall more fearful of crime due to a concentration of other factors such as differences in victimization, social disorder, and neighborhood physical decay (Skogan, 1995). Older Black adults may have a good reason to be more fearful. According to statistics reported by the United States Department of Justice (2012), elderly Blacks “experienced violent victimization at five times the rate of elderly Whites or Asian and Pacific Islanders.” In a study conducted by Wiltz (1982), African American older adults were fearful of crime on a daily basis and “those who were victimized had a higher fear of crime compared to those who were not victims” (cited by Joseph, 1997).

Socio-economic status and crime perception. As part of the pilot study conducted in Southwest Ferguson during the winter of 2012, 100 percent of older adult men and 71 percent of older adult women surveyed strongly agreed or agreed they felt that an increase in unemployed people in their community was related to crime. Although participants were not asked to expand upon their feelings, it seems possible they felt that those who were unemployed might be more desperate than those with employment and a steady income, and therefore more likely to be prone to criminal actions. According to Gans (2013), “When people in mainstream America think of violence, they also think of poverty: the deviant, defiant, dangerous ‘underclass’ or ‘underserving poor.’” Fear, anger, and disapproval may be exhibited when people feel that their safety is threatened by those of a lower socioeconomic status. Even greater than their safety being threatened, people may feel that their “cultural standards, economic positions, and moral values” are also being compromised (Gans, 2013).

Although those of a perceived lower socio-economic status may be targeted as crime generators, they themselves may also be more fearful of becoming a victim of crime. In Austin, Furr, and Spine’s (2002) study about the effects of neighborhood conditions and perceived safety, they refer to work done by Austin, Woolever, and Baba (1994) in which they identified a “significant positive relationship between education and feeling of perceived safety.” They also point to studies conducted by Lee (1981), Skogan and Maxfield (1981), and Toseland (1982) in which they found that “higher status was associated with lower levels of fear.” Additionally, as cited by Bennett, et al. (2007), urban lower income residents from groups of racial and ethnic minorities are most likely to rate their neighborhood as unsafe (Boslaugh, et al., 2004; Wilson, et al., 2004; Brownson, et al., 2001). However, as Austin, Furr, and Spine (2002) indicate, the thought that those of a lower socioeconomic status are more fearful of crime is not collective.

They refer to a study performed by Baba and Austin (1989) which found that socioeconomic status had “no significant impact on perceived levels of neighborhood safety.”

The Broken Window Theory

Areas with multiple physical incivilities such as litter, graffiti, broken windows, unkempt lawns, and homes in disrepair suffer consequences beyond those of the immediate physical decay and disorder. These physical characteristics become important symbols that residents and others cannot or will not protect their neighborhood from crime (Kelling and Wilson, 1982; Skogan, 1990). Kelling and Wilson (1982) identify what is known as the Broken Window Theory: “if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, all of the remaining windows will soon be broken.” One unrepaired window signals to those passing by that no one cares about the building and invites others to break more windows. This can apply to other various situations such as abandoned cars, empty lots littered with trash, and graffiti. If one person dumps trash in the empty lot next door and no one complains about it or cleans it up, then it must not be something about which people are concerned. This might invite others who have had similar ideas to also use the empty lot as their personal dumping grounds. As referred to in Herzog and Flynn-Smith (2001), how people care for their environment also connects with the Broken Window Theory and “draws support from the wide range of studies implicating maintenance as a predictor of fear of crime (e.g., Perkins, Meeks, and Taylor, 1992; Perkins, Wandersman, Rich, and Taylor, 1993; Schroeder and Anderson, 1984; Taylor, Shumaker, and Gottfredson, 1985; Wilson, 1975; Wilson and Kelling, 1982).” Brown, Perkins, and Brown (2004), suggest “residents react to the symbolism of these incivilities by withdrawing from social activity in the neighborhood.” According to Taylor, Shumaker, and Gottfredson (1985), “signs of neighborhood decay make residents infer that their community is going downhill and that

nobody is doing or can do anything about it and residents begin to fear for their own safety.”

From a criminology perspective, this can lead to serious social breakdowns in the community.

“A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, and a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out and unattached adults move in” (Kelling and Wilson, 1982). This explains the process simply, but essentially describes how physical and social disorder can quickly snowball, resulting in community out-migration.

The Defensible Space Theory

Newman’s (1972) book, *Defensible space: crime prevention through urban design* identifies the key strategies of “territoriality (sense of ownership), surveillance, access control, and activities promoted within spaces including higher densities and mixed use development in order to optimize the number of potential eyes on the street” (cited by Cozens, 2007). Newman’s defensible space principles are useful in addressing the needs of the older adults in Ferguson because they address not only the built environment, but its interaction with sociological explanations for crime (Jacobs, 1961; Newman, 1972). Defensible space is produced “by creating the physical expression of a social fabric that defends itself” with “real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance – that combine to bring the environment under the control of the residents” (Newman, 1972, p. 3).

Defensible space principles alone are insufficient in addressing the negative perceptions that older adults have about crime in their community, but it is one of a combination of approaches that can be taken to help alleviate the fears they experience. One major theme of the Defensible Space Theory is to empower residents to feel as if they have control over their physical environment. By utilizing defensible space principles to take control of the built

environment, it is also hoped that residents will feel socially and psychologically empowered to ease the fears they experience with their personal situation. Many of the older adults in Ferguson no longer feel that they have the control that they once had because they no longer know their neighbors, their mobility restricts them from walking around the neighborhood to keep a watchful eye on the community, and they do not feel that they would be able to adequately defend themselves if they were being victimized. Residents bonding together to identify physical incivilities in their community, educating each other on the benefits of utilizing environmental design as a form of crime prevention, and working together to employ some of the principles will help by socially engaging them in feeling as though they are working towards a common goal.

Territorial reinforcement. Newman (1972) describes territoriality as the “capacity of the physical environment to create perceived zones of territorial influences” (p. 51). According to the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition (2013), territorial reinforcement is “the use of physical attributes that express ownership such as fences, signage, landscaping, lighting, pavement design, etc.” Signs of territorial reinforcement can be direct or subtle. A more direct form would include putting a fence around a yard. A more subtle form might include landscaping to help define a space and express territory or changes in paving material from the public sidewalk to the private walking path of one’s yard. According to Newman (1972), “by its very nature, the single family home is its own statement of territorial claim. It has defined ownership by the very act of its positioning on an integral piece of land buffered from neighbors and public street by intervening grounds” (p. 51). Newman (1972) states that territory can be “reinforced by symbolic shrubs or fences, and in other cultures by high walls and gates” (p. 51), but as housing becomes denser, the territorial definition becomes difficult (p. 52).

Older adults in Ferguson may not realize the potential power they possess in reinforcing their own territory. A significant issue in Ferguson is that older adults do not feel like there is anything they can do to alleviate crime related problems. In this case, knowledge can be very powerful. By providing residents with the knowledge that there are things they can do to their own individual properties to protect themselves from criminal activity may be a step in the right direction to reduce their fears. Some methods of territorial reinforcement may be feasible for older adults to apply to their home and surrounding property. Other methods may be more difficult or less feasible to apply. Carefully designed landscaping around homes in Ferguson may be a simple approach to defining territory and providing a symbolic transitional edge between public and private space. Some streets in residential neighborhoods within Ferguson have no sidewalks between public streets and private residential yards. Constructing sidewalks to define territory, to provide paths for natural access control, and to provide opportunities for natural surveillance is a sizeable project that would need to be systematically organized and carried out by the City of Ferguson.

However, what should be avoided, and what Newman did not intend to happen is for territorial reinforcement to become a form of “target hardening.” Target hardening refers to the use of locks, bars on windows, and gates as an obtrusive version of territorial reinforcement. Although these measures may be effective in keeping potential offenders out, they can negatively alter the mental psyche of someone who is already fearful of crime in their neighborhood. As cited by Wortley (1996), “concerns have been raised about the social implications of the unfettered application of target-hardening principles” (Bottoms, 1990; Grabosky, 1994; Weiss, 1987). Wortley (1996) argues that such features as “walls, guards, conspicuous security devices and the like divide rather than build communities by separating and isolating their members” and

“run the danger of becoming counterproductive, creating the very social conditions which foster criminal behavior.” Territorial reinforcement principles should rely on subtle measures that convey a similar message, but that also blend in more aesthetically with the built and natural environment. Measures of territorial reinforcement should not be utilized to provoke more fear among residents thus creating additional social isolation for those living in the community.

Natural surveillance. Oscar Newman (1972) defines natural surveillance as the “capacity of physical design to provide surveillance opportunities for residents and their agents” (p.78). The Lancaster Community Safety Coalition (2013) further explains this concept by describing natural surveillance as the “placement of physical features, activities, and people in a way that maximizes visibility. A potential criminal is less likely to attempt a crime if he or she is at risk of being observed. At the same time, we are likely to feel safer when we can see and be seen.” Environmental design attributes that provide natural surveillance include accessible sidewalks, sufficient residential scale lighting, and landscaping appropriately trimmed so that it is easier to detect suspicious activity. In addition, homes and businesses should have direct views to the primary street through doors and windows for easy observation (Lancaster Community Safety Coalition, 2013).

It is important to note, that depending on the literature type, different phrases are used to describe surveillance. In the Criminology literature the phrases, “informal” and “formal” surveillance are used to describe the ways in which people keep an eye on the neighborhood. Formal methods are carried out by police, security guards, and surveillance cameras. Informal methods can be carried out by housewives and husbands, older adults, and pedestrians. In the Environment and Behavior literature, surveillance is often referred to in the form of natural surveillance giving less attention to formal methods of surveillance. This is because the term

natural surveillance places a greater emphasis on how the deliberate but subtle design of the physical environment can help provide methods of surveillance to residents as part of their everyday life.

As explained by Reynald and Ellfers (2009), opportunities for crime depend on the types of activities that occur in a place, the environmental characteristics of place, the motivation of an offender, and the absence of surveillance (Sherman, Gartin, and Buerger, 1989). Newman (1972) explains that “certain sections and arteries of a city have come to be recognized as being safe – by the nature of the activities located there; by the quality of formal patrolling; by the number of users and extent of their felt responsibility; and by the responsibility assumed by employees of bordering institutions and establishments. The areas most usually identified as safe are heavily trafficked public streets and arteries combining both intense vehicular and pedestrian movement; commercial retailing areas during shopping hours, institutional areas; and government offices” (p. 108-109).

As cited by Sampson and Groves (1989), social organization or disorganization is dependent on both informal (friendships) and formal (organizational participation) social networks in the community and work to supervise local problems in the community such as crime and delinquency (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1920; Shaw and McKay, 1942; Kornhauser, 1978). As some older adults are retired and potentially spend more time at home and in the immediate neighborhood, they become a vital form of natural surveillance because they have the ability to keep a watchful eye on the neighborhood when others may not be home to do so. Recognizing and empowering older adults to act as an important form of neighborhood surveillance provides them with an additional purpose to stay actively invested in the interest of their neighbor and community.

Environmental Perception of Place

The perceptions that people have of their own environment can greatly affect the way that they feel about crime in their neighborhood and community. “The environment...is a language of communication, with a syntactic and semantic structure” (Appleyard, 1979). In other words, the environment, while highly structured, is also full of potential meaning, symbols, and interpretations (Appleyard, 1979). The way that individuals’ interpret the structure of their neighborhood is so powerful that it can dictate the entire way they experience it. As people experience their neighborhood, they may interpret what they observe in the form of social symbols and meaning. The social meanings attached to the environment become extremely critical when a perceived conflict occurs in the community or environment. One’s environment, especially one’s home and immediate neighborhood, are symbol-laden. The home environment, over which one has more direct immediate control, evolves as one evolves, taking on one’s personality as one changes, adapts, and grows. However, outside the door, the immediate neighborhood is uncertain territory because individuals may feel they have little control over their neighbors, their neighbors’ actions, and what generally happens in the streets of their community (Appleyard, 1979). Fear may ensue if people begin to perceive their neighborhood is deteriorating in a physical and/or social sense and there is little they feel they can do to control the circumstances.

For the older adults in Ferguson, they and their homes have become the constant, when the outside world seems to be transforming physically and socially. Their interpretation of the deteriorating physical condition (litter, un-maintained homes, and unkempt lawns) of their neighborhood and the social changes (change in racial composition, population age, and socio-economics) taking place become potential symbols of community decline and can be perceived

as crime, even when crime is not statistically increasing. As previously noted, as people's ability to adapt decreases, their ability to continually adjust to the physical and social changes taking place in their community diminishes. Unless the environmental press placed upon them can be reduced, a satisfactory quality of life will likely not be able to be maintained (Lawton, 1974; Pollack and Patterson, 1980). As older adults begin to experience increased environmental press from changes in the physical and social condition of their neighborhood and their window of adaption decreases, they may believe that there is little that they can do to improve the environment outside of their home. As they retreat into the familiarity of their home and isolation increases, social relationships suffer, and natural surveillance throughout the neighborhood decreases.

Fear of Crime and Threats to Place-making

During previous conversations with older adults in Ferguson, one question seemed particularly relevant: "why do these people want to stay here if they are so frightened by crime that they do not want to walk in the local park by themselves?" The research investigated the older adults' situations from an outsider's perspective because their sense of place was not understood. Relph (1976) describes, "place attachment as the authentic and emotional bond with an environment that satisfies a fundamental human need" (cited by Scannell and Gifford, 2009). As cited by Morgan (2010) place attachment is "the experience of a long-term affective bond to a particular geographic area and the meaning attributed to that bond. Where a person lives in a particular locale over an extended period, that person will often develop feelings of affection for, and a sense of belonging, or being of that place, so that place becomes 'one anchor of his or her identity' (Hay, 1998)." Although some of the residents no longer feel as safe in their community as they once did, their community still feels like the comforts of home after 30 – 50 years of

residence there. One resident displayed all of the tick marks on her door where she had marked the height of her children over the years. This was the moment when their connection to home and community despite their fears became apparent.

Relph (1976) would describe this connection as the degree of “insiderness” that someone has or feels for their community. Insiderness is the intensity that people feel in a particular place that forms their identity with that place and refers to the “degree of attachment, involvement, and concern that a person or group has for a particular place.” People will have a stronger identity with place if they feel that they are more inside a place. People can also feel separated or alienated from a place for a given reason, this experience of a place is known as “outsiderness.” If one feels outside a place, they perceive an emotional separation between them self and that place. Relph (1976) explains that there are degrees of intensities of the insiderness and outsiderness that people feel for place because different places take on different feelings and meanings based on their experiences and interactions in a place (cited by Seamons and Sowers, 2008).

Older adults in Ferguson may have once felt that they were very “inside a place” when roaming through their community. However, this degree of “insiderness” may be threatened if one fears for his or her personal safety because they perceive that crime is increasing in the community. They may begin to feel more like emotional “outsiders” as their community begins to rapidly change around them and their personal world begins to shrink. To continue as “insiders” in the community older adults must maintain their social integration, personal relationships, and attachments within the larger community.

Some older adults have maintained their feeling of “insiderness” in the community because they systematically participate in activities that socially connect them to the needs and

concerns of their local society. In contrast, one resident who no longer drove a car and rarely left her home stated that she did not know her neighbors well and would not even know who to go to for help if she needed it. For this older adult, her lack of physical and social connection with the larger neighborhood has made her feel as if she is an “outsider” in a community where she previously felt like an “insider” for so many years. This diversity of connections is important to maintain “insiderness” in their community. As cited by Thompson and Krause (1998), “Elders who are embedded in active social networks tend to have better physical and mental health than older adults who are less involved with other people (George, 1996; House, Landis, and Umberson, 1988; Kaplan, Gassel, and Gore, 1977; Krause, 1997; Shye, Mullooly, Freeborn, and Pope, 1995).”

As part of identifying with a place, Cuba and Hummon (1993) recognize that “community attachment research indicates that integration into the local area is a prime determinant of attachment to locale. Local social involvements-particularly those with friends, but also those involving kin, organizational memberships, and local shopping-prove to be the most consistent and significant sources of sentimental ties to local places (Gerson et al., 1977; Goudy, 1982; Guest and Lee, 1983; Hunter, 1974; Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974; St. John, Austin, and Baba, 1986).” As previously noted, social engagement for the older adults in Ferguson is especially critical to staying connected and attached to their local community thus increasing social support and hopefully decreasing the fears they experience.

“Everyone needs networks of other people, it is impossible to make communities without networks” (Jacobs, 2011). It is impossible to feel like an insider in a community of ever evolving change without a series of networks of other people. As the needs and wants of the older adults in Ferguson change, these series of networks will become increasingly crucial. In

order for older adults to continue residing in their community as active and vital citizens, they must recognize the spirit of place that once attracted them to their community. This can be accomplished through social integration in formal, more organized community groups or through an informal exchange of words with a neighbor across a dividing fence. Public casual conversation may seem trivial, but it establishes public respect, trust, and identity within the community (Jacobs, 1961, p. 56).

“To create a ‘sense of place’ and foster connections among people, the physical characteristics of neighborhoods must draw people together and encourage an atmosphere of peace, security, and pride among residents of a community” and “while responsible participation in governance is important, getting to know your neighbors is a simple first step” (Roseland, 2005, p. 156). Residents in Ferguson remember a time when they were more actively engaged with their neighbors. One resident stated, “Now the neighbors just run from their car to their house. They don’t stop and talk like we used to. You don’t even know your neighbors to tell you the truth. I am more fearful and I wouldn’t even know how to ask for help if I needed to.” It becomes difficult for residents, especially older adults, to trust their neighbors and feel comfortable talking about how the physical and social environment can foster safety and security when they don’t feel like anyone takes the time to get to know one another. It may be that residents young and old are feeling similar frustrations with their sense of security, but have not taken the time to talk with their neighbors and community members about it. Collective action towards a common goal must first begin by discussing and deliberating about the issue and deciding what needs to be done, who will do it, and how a plan for action will be carried out. As with the older adults in Ferguson, “there is a longing, among millions of Americans now reaching middle age, for a stable and secure social world that they believe existed during their

childhoods and does not exist now” (Dionne, 1998, p. 93). Quoting Hillary Clinton, Dionne (1998) states, “I want to be able to take my daughter to the park at anytime of the day or night in the summer and remember what I used to be able to do when I was a little kid” (p. 93). Due to their fear of crime, older adults interviewed in Ferguson also stated that they had begun to restrict such activities as walking in the park alone, walking to the bus stop, and shopping alone.

Although nostalgia may have both positive and negative aspects, it may be one way to engage older adults in thinking about how to improve the physical and social elements of their community to help reduce fear of crime among residents and create a more sustainable future. For older adults in Ferguson, nostalgia reflects a yearning for what they remember as a simpler life, full of comfortable and reliable relationships in their community (Dionne, 1998, p. 93).

Wolfe and Elshtain write in their essays: “many critics of the civil society idea see it as a form of nostalgia, as a longing for the warm, encompassing (and closed) communities of the premodern era” (cited by Dionne, 1998, p. 6). However, “residents of crime-ridden neighborhoods miss the street corner and doorstep sociability made possible by physical security” (Dionne, 1998, p. 7). Older adults in Ferguson want back a neighborhood where they remember their children playing safely, where they could walk down the street safely, and one in which they did not live in fear of becoming a victim of criminal activity in their homes. They long for a place “where everyone knows your name, and probably a good many other things about you, and your commitments, and your family” (Dionne, 1998, p. 3). They long for a network of community members capable of coming together for the collective good of the neighborhood.

The Community Ecological Model

Ecology refers to the study of the interrelationships between organisms and their environments (Stokols, Lejano, and Hipp; 2013). Stokols, Lejano, and Hipp (2013) suggest that although the term ecology is often interpreted as relationships between plants, animals, and their environment (Darwin 1859/1964, Haeckel and Lankaster 1876, Clements, 1905), it is also a practical investigation of “human communities.” This is known as Human Ecology in which McKenzie (1924) defines as “the study of the spatial and temporal relations of human beings as affected by the selective, distributive, and accommodative forces of the environment.” As cited by Young and Minai (2002), humans are generally organized into communities; defined as multifunctional groups that are concerned with the general welfare of its residents (Selznick, 1996). The size of communities can vary in scale and can be as small as a family or as large as an entire nation (Young and Minai, 2002).

“The structural approach to community ecology assumes that communities are units of evolutionary change” and “are problem-solving organizations that are biased toward maintaining the health of their members in a changing and unpredictable social and physical environment” (Young and Minai, 2002). According to McKenzie (1924), “man is a gregarious animal: he cannot live alone; he is relatively weak and needs not only the company of other human associates but shelter and protection from the elements as well.” As cited by Abruzzi (1996), “the evolution of complex ecological communities is the organizational process whereby a growing population adapts to changing conditions of resource availability created in part by its own growth (Brookhaven National Laboratory, 1969; Whittaker, 1975; Cody and Diamond, 1975).”

The city and its inhabitants are one type of an ever-evolving, intricate ecological community. Jane Jacobs (1961) describes cities as “a problem in organized complexity” (p. 422). Cities present “situations in which a half-dozen or even several dozen quantities are all varying simultaneously and in subtle interconnected ways. Cities do not exhibit one problem in organized complexity, which if understood explains all. They can be analyzed into many such problems or segments, which are also related with one another. The variables are many, but they are not helter-skelter, they are interrelated into an organic whole” (p. 433). As Jacobs explains, problems presented in “real life” are not simple problems (p. 434). According to Robert Park (1936), “urban life and culture are varied, subtle, and complicated. The ‘web of life,’ is one in which all living organisms, plants and animals alike, are bound together in a vast system of interlinked and inter-dependent lives. Habitats and inhabitants-whether plant, animal, or human are interrelated and interdependent in the most complex way in a closed codependent environment known as a community.”

As both Jacobs and Park describe, the phenomenon occurring in Ferguson is also not a simple problem. Problems of the city or the suburb, because they deal with real life, cannot be inserted into a mathematical equation and cannot be solved as such. It is quite easy to attempt to examine a few variables in Ferguson and hypothesize about what one thinks is happening or causing the problem. However, at any given time, there are thousands of variables that may be simultaneously affecting a given outcome in the community.

Park worked to pull sociological research “away from a normative and often overtly prescriptive analysis of society toward a more objective methodology” (The University of Chicago Centennial Catalogs, 2013). Community members themselves must be directly involved in the community design process because they are ultimately the ones who will be

affected by the changes taking place there. In Sir Patrick Geddes research he also encouraged residents to “survey, plan, and improve the local environment” (National Library of Scotland, 2012). He developed the first sociological laboratory, which encouraged people to take a holistic approach to learning about the environment. Through his sociological laboratory he demonstrated how by “starting at a local level, one can begin to make connections with the wider world” in which “education was a catalyst for social change and active citizenship” (National Library of Scotland, 2012).

As Relph (1976) suggests, we can only hope, with the help of community “insiders,” such as through the experiences of older adults in Ferguson to gain a deeper descriptive understanding of the issues at hand. A prescriptive diagnosis may be lacking that can alleviate the perceptions older adults have about crime in their community. However, through the process and documenting, understanding, and interpreting the research, older adults will be better able to reflect on the fears they are experiencing and local police, city planners, and scholars cannot only gain a deeper understanding for the problem but possibly begin to design initiatives with the partnership of community members who are receptive to their needs.

The Community Development Approach

Some of the key concepts of community development include building strong and trusting relationships with partners, enhancing the capacity of community members to make critical decisions, designing initiatives that are inclusive to all, and developing strategies to help organize individuals to solve community problems. This will aid community members, such as older adults in Ferguson, to develop a sense of purpose, enhance their capacity to be vital and active citizens, and become responsible for the sustainability of their community. As Mehrhoff (1999) describes, “community design is not really about fashioning more handsome buildings,

interesting views, or attractive landscapes. Community design is ultimately about empowering the citizens of local communities to shape their own preferred futures by acquiring and applying information and knowledge about their communities in a far more systematic, thoughtful, and democratic manner than current practice” (p. 122).

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) explain that older adults were admired for their wisdom and familiarity with the community. However, it seems that in modern civilization they are viewed as recipients of services who have a “lack of economic mobility and their increasing need for social and medical services...” rather than as a vital community asset (p. 51). Littrell and Littrell (2006) explain that “the profession of community development is not interested in the establishment of clients....Community development is interested in forming equal partnerships over time that are based on the assumption that people are capable of becoming increasingly able to give purposeful direction to the future of the communities in which they live and function” (p. 7). Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), acknowledge that older adults provide a variety of assets, which would make them excellent partners in the community, rather than clients or recipients of services. Some of these assets include increased economic resources, enriched culture, tradition, and history, experience and skills, extra available time, and access to established peer groups (p. 52). We need to be careful not to make our aging population a population of clients. Instead we need to empower them, make them feel less dependent on others to solve their problems, and work in tandem to develop their assets. This will help make them more effective citizens, capable of working as valuable partners to solve the needs of their community (McKnight, 2005). Money is made and new occupations are created to care for older adults. However, community professionals should be working alongside them to empower them to be effective change agents in their community. For those who really care for the old, there is a need to

expand upon the assets that older adults possess, to make them needed and valued community citizens. As Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) explain, community members can be viewed in two ways, either as “clients who have deficiencies and needs or as citizens who have capabilities and gifts” (p. 13).

Partnerships. A critical aspect of enhancing capacity in the community involves implementing a democratic and inclusive decision-making process that will help increase the social wellbeing of everyone in the neighborhood. Wheatley (2006) explains that the “world of relationships is rich and complex” (p. 35). Wheatley (2006) references Bateson (1980) in explaining that we should “stop teaching facts” or “the ‘things’ of knowledge - and focus, instead, on relationships as the basis for all definitions” (p. 35). Through our interactions within relationships with others, the controlled nature and predictability of research experiments is surrendered because we are dealing with real people in real world settings. Relationships provide interdependent connections in which everyone involved develops the capacity to impact one another through community development research (p. 35). This is the basis for partnerships in the community, to make our research more fulfilling and useful by engaging residents and experts together in the initial process.

People must be directly involved in creating and developing a community change strategy. This includes involving a critical mass of people, or sufficient numbers of people so that the idea will be adopted by the whole population (Axelrod, 2002, p. 52). Recruiting a critical mass of people for potential partnerships can be accomplished in various ways and help the community take ownership of issues and care about the outcome and sustainability of initiatives (p. 53). External experts can become a critical partner in community initiatives and can contribute greatly to their success or failure (Littrell and Littrell, 2006, p. 6). Experts should

only work to implement an agenda that citizens themselves have identified as important rather than trying to push their own personal or professional agenda (p. 7). Working together and expanding the circle of involvement, experts and community members can jointly form stronger partnerships. When forming partnerships, it is also important to widen the circle of involvement to enlarge discussions about the initiative, provide opportunities for co-created plans, and generate the prospect for sharing new information and ideas. Partnerships should include those who have new additional information, those who will be impacted by the initiative, those who might oppose the initiative, those who might be responsible for the outcome of the initiative, and those who have the authority to assist in implementing change.

Capacity. Mattessich, Monsey, and Roy (1997), define social capacity as “the extent to which members of a community can work together effectively...develop and sustain strong relationships, solve problems and make group decisions, and collaborate effectively to identify goals and get work done” (p. 61). According to Mayer, Rainbow Research (1994), a community can fortify its capacity by uniting the “influence of a community’s commitment, resources, and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems” (cited by Mattessich, Monsey, and Roy, 1997, p. 62). By building an older adults’ social capacity they will in turn become more effective leaders in their community.

As Wheatley (2008) describes, informally people create the leadership that best responds to their needs at the time (p. 24). Janov (1994) also thinks of leadership as a behavior rather than a role. She states that “we always need leaders, but this can be satisfied by many different people, depending on the context” (cited by Wheatley, p. 24). Older adults, given their experience, history in the community, and available time could become effective leaders in planning and implementing efforts in their community. Some older adults may feel paralyzed by

what they cannot do rather than utilizing what they can do. By helping older adults realize their capacity to be leaders and make a change, we can help them grasp a vision for a safer community.

“The critical resource for strengthening community capital is not money-rather, the critical resources are trust, imagination, courage, commitment, the relations between individuals and groups, and time, the literal currency of life” (Roseland, 2005, p. 13 and 14). These critical resources come from a variety of

community capital spheres including natural capital, physical capital, cultural capital, social capital, human capital, and economic capital; see Figure 4 (Roseland, 2005, p. 13). While empowering older

adults to take action in their community, it is important to encourage them to think

about drawing resources from a variety of capital areas. Partnerships that enhance capacity should include volunteer organizations, church groups, school clubs, and a variety of other civic and social organizations to provide human capital through the commitment of their time, specialized abilities, and access to other outside resources.

Empowering older adults to think about the assets that they provide to the community will enable them to be more effective citizens and encourage them to take action against the fear they experience. One very powerful asset that older adults can provide is the amount of extra time they have available to devote to an initiative in their community. Other members of the community who work full time or go to school full time may not have this time. Their time may



Figure 4. Community Capitals Framework (Emery and Flora, 2008). Retrieved from University of Minnesota Extension.

also be more flexible, which makes them potentially valuable as community watch members. They may be home at different times of the day than others in their neighborhood and can serve to keep an eye on their neighbors' assets and report suspicious activity that may be occurring. If community development specialists can help older adults imagine themselves as "beacon towers of important information, standing tall in the integrity" of their message...they will be out "stating, clarifying, reflecting, modeling, filling" the community with messages of importance (Wheatley 2006, p. 57). It is the job of the community development specialist to help people realize their individual gifts, abilities, and capacities that can help influence the community they live in. Helping them realize their individual gifts will make them feel valued, powerful, and well connected to the people around them. In turn, the community will be more powerful because of the contribution being made. Strong communities are places where the capacities of local residents are identified, valued, and used (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993, p. 13 and 14).

Inclusivity. According to Littrell and Littrell (2006), broad based inclusion refers to "including people and groups with many different backgrounds, ideas, and assets. Inclusion is achieved by seeking out the diverse opinions of people whether they belong to seemingly homogeneous groups or not" (p. 56). In other words, although it is a primary focus to empower older adults to make a change in their community, the option should be available to all in the community to participate. Issues identified and resolved should include a broad representation of people and their ideas. This also means that those involved in any community development project should try to understand different viewpoints, discover new partners in the community, and engage those with diverse ideas and backgrounds. "Truly meaningful participation requires that all concerned and affected stakeholders are provided the information and resources they require to influence and contribute to the decision-making process...The issues of who

participates, when they participate and how they participate are critical to achieving fairness, efficiency, and stability in decision making” (Roseland, 2005, p. 191).

Because it is a goal to decrease fear of crime through the empowerment of older adults, it is important to ensure that they participate and are included in the decision making process. Inclusive participation in Ferguson will also be important. Many older adults have expressed that they often feel that teens, young adults, and men are most likely to commit crimes in their neighborhoods. Older adults could be empowered by becoming mentors for teens and teens could be empowered by combining resources to help older adults achieve goals in a community initiative. This type of social arrangement would help older adults gain a better perspective about different populations in their community and potentially reduce the amount of fear they associate with certain populations. “Critics would say, only those who are alike will deliberate with one another. We are simply too different to be able to decide on anything together. There are too many people, with too many life histories and cultural experiences, for them to understand each other...We are much more comfortable with people like us than with those who are different” (Matthews, 1999, p. 219). Broad representation should extend past descriptors such as gender, age, class, race, and ethnicity. Diverse viewpoints are more important than diversity itself and deliberation helps people to make decisions and solve problems (Matthews, 1999, p. 220). The challenge may be discovering, including, and dealing with diverse viewpoints and values that all individuals in the community have (Littrell and Littrell, 2006, p. 71 and 72). One would hope that by including a cross section of residents to participate in the deliberative process about involving the community, residents would be able to engage in a meaningful initiative that includes diverse viewpoints and relieves some of the stereotypes and fears. While it might be challenging to deliberate with those who are culturally different,

diversity of experiences will be enriched and value added to support an initiative that truly feels community-wide. A diversified group of stakeholders will help create community cohesiveness and pride that may be more powerful in combating fear of crime than fixing crime itself.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Research Design

The purpose of this research study was to investigate older adults' perceptions of crime in Ferguson, Missouri and the impact on their quality of life. Data collection for this research study began in October 2013 and concluded in early June 2014. Transcendental Phenomenology was the qualitative method employed to understand the phenomenon. Purposive sampling, auto-photography, photo-elicited in-depth semi-structured interviews, and a short survey were utilized for data collection. Ethical matters, the validity of the study, and the generalizability of the research results were also considered in relation to the design of the research study.

Qualitative methodology. Qualitative research methods investigate meanings that individuals or groups attribute to a particular issue (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). "Qualitative measures include short written responses on surveys; interviews, anthropological field research; video and audio data recording; and many other approaches, all of which are characterized by a non-numerical approach" (Trochim, 2001, p. 152). The process of conducting qualitative research involves developing questions and procedures for inquiry, collecting data onsite and in a personalized location such as a participant's home, analyzing data by building and composing general themes, and interpreting the meaning of the research data (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).

Transcendental Phenomenology was the qualitative research method utilized for this study. It has a complex development history, but ultimately provides the researcher with a tangible set of guidelines yielding qualitative research results.

Transcendental philosophy. An escalating dissatisfaction with a "philosophy of science" that exclusively focused on the physical, and unsuccessfully considered the interpretations people formulate through their cyclical relationship between internal awareness

and their experience in the physical environment gave birth to the transcendental science movement (Moustakas, 1994, p. 43). Although present since medieval times, the modern transcendental philosophy derives from the teachings of Immanuel Kant (CPR A11-12/B25) in which the term “transcendental’ is to refer to ‘all cognition which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our cognition of objects in so far as this mode of cognition is to be possible a priori’” (cited by Heinamaa, Hartimo, and Miettinen, 2014, p. 4). Although there are various models that utilize transcendental philosophy, all maintain an understanding that explores the “radical, ultimate, foundational structures of experience, thought and reality” (Edie, 1964). Kant uncovered the transcendentals by practicing a deduction technique; founded on the premises of the “unity of conscious life.” Physical entities are evaluated not only as possessing “certain qualities and quantities, but our experiencing is always accompanied by certain ‘mineness’” (Heinamaa, Hartimo, and Miettinen, 2014, p. 5).

Phenomenology. The lengthy and multifaceted historical development of Phenomenology can be challenging for a researcher to comprehend and employ (Converse, 2012); it is not just a philosophy, but also a method used to conduct research and understand the findings (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). “Phenomenological results and innovations have influenced not only theories of perception and cognition but also our views on social emotions and human coexistence. Consequently, contemporary phenomenology is well known for its contributions to the philosophy of selfhood and preconceptual perception, for its explications of empathy, shame, and guilt, and for its emphasis on the facticity and plurality of human life” (Heinamaa, Hartimo, and Miettinen, 2014, p. 1). Phenomenology is a way of thinking that stresses attention to one’s personal encounters and interpretations of their environment. As a phenomenological researcher, it is important to comprehend how the environment is perceived by those who experience it

(Trochim, 2001, p. 159 - 160). “There are many different emphases and interests amongst phenomenologists, but they have all tended to share a particular interest in thinking about what the experience of being human is like, in all of its various aspects, but especially in terms of the things which matter to us, and which constitutes our lived world” (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p. 11). More specifically, the technique created by Husserl known as Transcendental Phenomenology evaded traditional phenomenology and philosophy in order to render itself as an entirely rational experience and science (Edie, 1964). His idea of phenomenology requires that the researcher follow a particular protocol in the investigation of the research topic (Schmitt, 1959). “Phenomenology, according to him, can begin only after the ‘transcendental-phenomenological reduction’ has been performed by the beginning phenomenologist. Descriptions not preceded by this ‘reduction’ are not phenomenological” (Schmitt, 1959).

Transcendental phenomenology. As Moustakas (1994) clearly and concretely explains, “Husserl’s phenomenology is a Transcendental Phenomenology. It emphasizes subjectivity and discovery of the essences of experience and provides a systematic and disciplined methodology for derivation of knowledge (Husserl, 1965, p. 5-6). Husserl’s approach is called ‘phenomenology’ because it utilizes only the data available to consciousness-the appearance of objects. It is considered ‘transcendental’ because it adheres to what can be discovered through reflection on subjective acts and their objective correlates. It is a ‘science’ because ‘it affords knowledge that has effectively disposed of all the elements that could render its grasp ‘contingent’ (Husserl, 1965, p.23). It is logical in its assertion that the only thing we know for certain in that which appears before us in consciousness, and that very fact is a guarantee of its objectivity.”

A core theme of Husserl's Phenomenology is intentionality, which he describes as the "fundamental property of consciousness; all phenomenological problems...are classified according to it" and the "principle theme of phenomenology" (cited by McIntyre and Smith, 1989, p. 1; Ideas, 146, p. 357). Intentionality is composed of the concepts of noesis and noema; becoming the central focus of Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology (Conklin, 2007). Conversations about these fundamental philosophies have created disputes among phenomenologists because of their unambiguity and clarity (McIntyre and Smith, 1989). Conklin (2007) explains that "the noesis is composed of mind and spirit and aids in providing meaning to whatever presents itself to 'perception, memory, judgment, thinking, and feeling' (Husserl, 1931, p. 249)." Encompassed in the cognitive realm, no "sensory or physical referents" are incorporated. The noesis embodies meanings shrouded from one's immediate apprehension and extracted through phenomenological explorations (Conklin, 2007).

Conklin (2007) explains that the noema, paralleling noesis in the composition of intentionality, "is considered the real, physical object of our awareness draws our attention in a prereflective manner." He refers to Ihde (1977, p. 43) who distinctly illustrates the difference between the two components:

Noema is that which is experienced, the *what* of the experience, the object-correlate.

Noesis is the way in which that *what* is experienced, the experiencing or act of experiencing, the subject-correlate.

Noesis and noema refer to the insightful meanings one encounters through every life experience. Contemplating those experiences, one reaches the essence, unearthing additional important portions of the meaning embodied in the physical encounter. Thus, the meanings concealed in the experience of the physical encounter become the realistic description of an actual thing

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 70). “Thus the Husserlian ‘back to things themselves’ is a way of emphasizing knowledge that is rooted in meanings rather than in an analysis of physical objects”

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 70).

Description of Data Analysis

The analysis methods exercised, as part of the transcendental phenomenological process, seems to vary slightly among researchers. Moustakas (1994, p. 120-122) provides an outline of his modifications of the Van Kaam method and the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. He then gives specific examples in pages 122-154. Conklin (2007) also demonstrates the use of the modified Van Kaam method in his research study. The analysis methods utilized as part of this research study aligns more similarly with the methods outlined by Creswell (2007, p. 159) and as demonstrated through Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004), providing a simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. The concept of the Transcendental Phenomenological process can appear quite abstract at times. Therefore, “to best understand the approach to Transcendental Phenomenology, the procedures need to be illustrated by a qualitative study that employs the approach” (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004).

Transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology encompasses a series of steps to arrive at an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The following steps illustrate the methods outlined by Creswell (2007, p. 159) with the addition of more formal transcendental phenomenological language explained by Moustakas (1994).

- Epoche
- Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction
 - Horizontalization, delimited horizons, clustering of horizons into themes
- Imaginative Variation

- Vary possible meanings and perspectives of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 180), describing *what* was experienced through textural descriptions and *how* it was experienced through the use of structural descriptions (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004; Creswell, 2007, p. 159).
- Synthesis; Formulation of a composite description of the phenomenon under investigation to arrive at the essence of the experience

Epoche. “Epoche is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” and “requires a new way of looking at things, a way that requires that we learn to see what stands before our eyes, what we can distinguish and describe” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). It is the primary stage in the phenomenological reduction method (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004) in which the researcher is required to suspend any presumptions he or she may possess about the experience under investigation (Conklin, 2007). “Such an epoche, or ‘phenomenological reduction’ leaves us with a field of phenomena, a field of pure psychic experience which remains what it is in its descriptive features whatever the ontological status of the cogitata inscribed within it may prove to be” (Crowell, 1990). As cited by Perry (2013), the expressions of “bracketing, reduction, and epoche (Norlyk and Harder 2010)” are utilized interchangeably, encompassing a variety of definitions. Bracketing, part of the epoche process, as describe by Husserl “involves shifting our attention from the world itself to our own consciousness of that world. Indeed, rather than putting aside our judgments, bracketing involves actively reflecting on those conscious acts (i.e., perceiving, analyzing, valuing, and so forth). The object of our reflection moves from being an object in the external world the object of our own consciousness” (Perry, 2013).

Because of previous involvement with initiatives involving older adults in Ferguson, Missouri and with the community trauma surrounding the death of Michael Brown, it was particularly important to engage in the epoche process. Although challenging and nearly impossible at times, it was important not to allow personal feelings or judgments to cloud the process and results of the research study and previous phenomenon at hand. All data for this research study was collected two months prior to the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Rather than clouding the results that may be present in the current study, the events after the death of Michael Brown have shed additional light on the data collected as part of this research study investigating older adult's perceptions of crime in Ferguson.

Transcendental-phenomenological reduction. According to Schmitt (1967, p. 61), "it is called transcendental because it moves beyond the everyday to the pure ego in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time. Further, it is called 'phenomenological' because it transforms the world into mere phenomena. It is called 'reduction' because it leads us back (Lat. *reducere*) to the source of the meaning and existence of the experienced world" (cited by Moustakas, 1994, p. 34).

Horizontalization. According to Moustakas (1994), "Horizons are unlimited. We can never exhaust completely our experience of things no matter how many times we reconsider them or view them. A new horizon arises each time that one recedes. It is a never-ending process and, though we may reach a stopping point and discontinue our perception of something, the possibility for discovery is unlimited" (p. 95).

Achieved through the process of horizontalization; research participants' accounts are discovered by gathering statements from interview transcriptions and prepared as a list so that the variety of perceptions about the experience can be easily detected by the researcher. During

this portion of the analysis, all statements possess equal value (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). Next, “statements irrelevant to the topic and question as well as those that are repetitive or overlapping are deleted...” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97). This reflects the delimited horizons of the experience. In the case of this research study, excerpts reflect a condensed version of the research participant’s response to capture the true essence of their experience unclouded by unnecessary and sometimes overlapping wordings and phrases. Table 1, represents an example of the significant statements extracted from the participant’s interview transcripts.

Table 1. Delimited Horizons
<p>“This is my home...raised 3 children here. It was built in 1908...There’s one backyard separating this from the home I grew up...a great place to raise kids. They could wander the neighborhood as I did...always playmates around...grew up knowing their neighbors...We remain there today...with knees that are 69 years old and laundry that’s in a basement...My comfort zone is very small. I’ve only moved two homes away from where I grew up...we’re probably there to stay...Look at that front porch...There’s a porch swing on there 12 months of the year...antique wicker furniture on there all summer...baskets hanging, strawberry crates, artwork...It looks like an outdoor living room. I like to see people walking their dogs...kids two doors away riding by on their bikes...It’s just a window on the world... Everyone on the street is friendly and everyone does watch out for one another...That’s part of being a community. I don’t want to live in a house and not know who’s around me...I’m really proud of the fact that you can live in a home for 48 years and still be happy; that it would have served your needs from the time you were raising your family until you were a senior citizen...It’s been good to us.”</p>
<p>“...so overgrown I can’t really tell whether anybody lives here...It’s hard to even see the house...It doesn’t look overgrown with a purpose...Don’t care or else maybe they’re incapacitated and can’t care...What about the Ferguson rules?...for all these rules...they have they’re either not enforced or...It just doesn’t send a good picture of the neighborhood period...I gather that...the City of Ferguson does send people like this notices but if the fine is not great enough that they go the hell with it and don’t bother. It’s too much trouble to clean it up.”</p>
<p>“...the diversity in Ferguson has changed amazingly...usually not in a bad way. When I was growing up...there were no Black people in Ferguson...now I think we are about 60/40... over a 50 year period.”</p>

“...there weren't a lot of things...inductive to crime in the neighborhood as much as individual homeowners not maybe taking the best care of the property.”

“I think ownership is better than rental when you've got someone that owns. Typically, they would take better care of their house, than renters. Renters tear them up.”

“...bags of trash, leaves...branches...car parts; bumpers...They just put it in their nice clean truck ...drive it over...dump it off...It makes you think about the ghetto, not being comfortable in an area where people are just trying to survive. Who lives here? Who would want to live here?”

“One of the best things about the City of Ferguson is our park system. You probably can't live more than a mile away from a park.”

“...it is a neighborhood...There are people that care about one another...A neighborhood is first a place where I live. This is my dwelling place. This is where I rise and shine.”

“I personally am not comfortable when I see groups of African American youths walking up and down the middle of the street...They're always screaming at one another or fighting.”

“...a jeep...lived in by a homeless man who is mentally unstable. He's lived in Ferguson many many years...spends most of his time hanging out in the lobby of the library...It makes the gardeners uncomfortable...It kind of represents Ferguson's homeless people...It's a tragic problem...Sometimes through their behavior tend to make one uncomfortable...They sure don't look good. They are part of the perception that Ferguson is not a choice place to live...I think it adds to the perception that Ferguson is trashy down at the heels and possibly, probably unsafe...”

“...one of the oldest schools in Ferguson...This means stable firm community. Where people would want to raise their kids...It's a beautiful neighborhood...I think my grandmother went there...It's an attraction to the city...nostalgic...”

“...my friends, easy access to anywhere in town...I like the old house...antique type of feel of the neighborhood...The neighbors are good, it's quiet...I'm comfortable here.”

“The house next to us has...official notices...Every month they send somebody out to check on

the house...I commented that that is a real problem...that says...'boy, here I am empty now' ... legally they had to do that...We are very watchful of the house, but we are not here all the time..."

"...security doors...That means...there are a lot of break-ins...on a regular basis....There are other ways...that you could secure your house; better lighting, alarm systems...The down and dirt way is to stick up bars...Most of that kind of crime happens within a mile of where the person lives...That means they're with us. They're our neighbors."

"I have a friend who was a council member...When somebody would finally get fed up and move...she'd say 'you didn't let Ferguson down, Ferguson let you down...She's right."

"...we moved here at a time when the Ferguson and Florissant school district was going through voluntary desegregation...everyone thought we were crazy...You know, you're going to have problems...we wanted a community that was not lily white. We wanted a community that was diverse...we have continued to value that."

"I have in both of my cars...at the office, poop bags. We do not let our dog poop and we don't clean it up...I want my neighborhood to be representative of me...It shows respect."

"...a new young man...has taken this building... added apartments above it...this is what can be done...if someone has faith in the community...Puts a smile on my face. I'm always encouraged when someone has the ability...money...time ...to start a big project...another great building with opportunity to bring in new residents...new business people on South Florissant Road."

"I no longer feel comfortable working in my front yard...I never leave my car parked outside...I have an alarm system (I couldn't continue to live here by myself without it). My doors are locked at all times."

"...it is an empty house....a rental property...The landlord has been very slow about making any improvements to it...The guy that lived there before let a few things go down...didn't keep it up... We all kind of take a turn around the house to see if there are any open, broke windows, any evidence like...anyone's broken into it...It's kind of odd to have that piece of the puzzle... not filled in....see probably some cars in the driveway...kids playing."

"The blue tarp...Somebody that is just not vigilant about caring for the property...Whenever you have a situation like this...it's not beneficial for the neighborhood. I don't think that some

homeowners understand that they are not living in a vacuum. This is going to impact my home values...It impacts the general neighborhood...the impression of the community..."

"...this has been this way for years...The tornado's hit the roof...They have not done anything about it...The city has not been vigilant about...vacant properties, run down properties. There have been others in the last ten plus years that the city has purchased... torn down...rehabbed... This is one that they have not touched. Part of it is anger that it's been allowed to sit there and nothing be done...It shows deterioration...that the city doesn't really care..."

"...the sculpture park will just say, 'wow, Ferguson is a happening place.' There won't be any signs...do not touch, do not climb...interactive stuff...introducing them to art...they are outdoors. They don't have a mobile device in their hands...something of interest to all ages..."

"...this is my community...I don't worry if I walk home from a city council meeting in the dark ...if I walk home from a friend's...This is my town...You don't want to mess with me...My husband will say, 'I wish you would be more aware...I wish you would be more careful'...I belong here...I don't walk around meek and mild, like there is always a boogey man. I walk around like I own this sidewalk. I'm not walking haltingly. I look like I can take care of myself."

"...My husband and I are big about littering. He is going to be known eventually as the 'trash man cometh'...We walk daily...We have different routes...as we walk he picks up trash...It is totally amazing what people will throw out of the cars or leave in the parking lots..."

"...overall a lot of ruffraff...more confusion going on...children coming from school fighting, arguing, cussing...parents...not instilling the correct values in their children."

"...group of our friends...We meet at the local bar one night a week...We're all involved in the community as far as different committees...We like to BBQ...enjoy each other company...I just like being involved...I like the outcome...It's satisfaction when you're done."

"...the Farmer's Market is a gathering place. They shop for local produce...grown by the farmer who's standing there. There also is live music...food vendors...a spot to come see your neighbors...friends, meet new people...a real asset to the community...something at the market for all ages...all the generations mixing together. Senior citizens are kept young by seeing kids doing chalk...hoola hooping...Makes me feel positive about what's going on in the community."

“...we’ve got areas where there are a lot of...undesirable people who hang around the front yard and the porch...I would not be able to say, ‘well, those are the people that would commit crimes’...When there’s a lot of hanging around...they can be up to no good sometimes...”

“...our properties are rentals...transient I don’t care...not investing myself in your community...inhabitants...I don’t think that does the community any service...The percentage keeps going up...”

“The chartreuse green in the painting on the building...looks very inner city slum to me...See that sandwich board sign out there?...I thought we had laws against having a sale every day of the year...It makes me feel angry...I think it just looks trashy as all get out.”

“...this street abuts to some houses that are not in as good repair...These people...take good care of their homes...They are not fearful of what’s two or three blocks away...There has been some crime over in that section...These people hang in there...all Victorian homes ...all well taken care of...They care about the community...They care about their home...about the image that shows to people that come into town...A positive thing...an indication of their character...”

“...its familiarity...I haven’t moved more than two yards away in 69 years...I’m either very blessed or very boring...I’m always told that I am very blessed.”

“...when I grew up here...this was an all-White community...White people are comfortable living...with a 28% Black minority...We are now at over 70%...We’re in the minority...Businesses look up their demographics...and they aren’t coming here.”

“Ferguson has a ton of projects going on right now...a new fire department...police department... community center...a number of good, positive things going on. If you’ve always lived here...you are very thankful...People...have lunch from Emerson or Express Scripts and they say, ‘wow, we never crossed the property line coming into Ferguson. We didn’t know this was here.’ This is a great hidden jewel...That’s important...It says we care. We are moving forward...progress.”

“...the neighborhoods changing...There’s another vacant house on this side of the street...It looks like it’s some activity...Somebody’s trying to break into the garage...It makes me angry...That’s not their property...It gives me the image that that’s not an up to snuff street...up to par.”

Themes. The non-repetitive, non-overlapping horizons are then analyzed and organized into thematic areas (Mourer-Urdahl and Creswell; Moustakas; 1994). Twelve themes emerged from the analysis of the statements about how research participants perceived crime in their community. These thematic areas are: community image, interaction with nature, undesirable attitudes and behavior, littering, historic buildings and homes, community safety, community investment, vacant property, racial integration and community transformation, natural surveillance, maintenance, and rental property. Table 2 provides an example of some of the statements that compose the 12 thematic areas.

Table 2. Thematic Areas	
Themes	Research Participant's Statements
Community Image	<p>“The chartreuse green in the painting on the building...looks very inner city slum to me...See that sandwich board sign out there?...I thought we had laws against having a sale every day of the year...It makes me feel angry...I think it just looks trashy as all get out.”</p> <p>“...a jeep...lived in by a homeless man who is mentally unstable. He’s lived in Ferguson many many years...spends most of his time hanging out in the lobby of the library...It makes the gardeners uncomfortable ...It kind of represents Ferguson’s homeless people...It’s a tragic problem...sometimes through their behavior tend to make one uncomfortable...they sure don’t look good. They are part of the perception that Ferguson is not a choice place to live...I think it adds to the perception that Ferguson is trashy down at the heels and possibly, probably unsafe...”</p>
Interaction with Nature	<p>“One of the best things about the City of Ferguson is our park system. You probably can’t live more than a mile away from a park.”</p> <p>“...the sculpture park will just say, ‘wow, Ferguson is a happening place.’ There won’t be any signs...do not touch, do not climb...interactive stuff...introducing them to art...they are outdoors. They don’t have a mobile device in their hands...something of interest to all ages...”</p>

<p>Undesirable Attitudes and Behaviors</p>	<p>“I personally am not comfortable when I see groups of African American youths walking up and down the middle of the street...They’re always screaming at one another or fighting.”</p> <p>“...we’ve got areas where there are a lot of...undesirable people who hang around the front yard and the porch...I would not be able to say, ‘well, those are the people that would commit crimes’...When there’s a lot of hanging around...they can be up to no good sometimes...”</p>
<p>Littering</p>	<p>“...My husband and I are big about littering. He is going to be known eventually as the ‘trash man cometh’...We walk daily...We have different routes...As we walk he picks up trash...It is totally amazing what people will throw out of the cars or leave in the parking lots...”</p> <p>“...bags of trash, leaves...branches...car parts; bumpers...They just put it in their nice clean truck ...drive it over...dump it off...It makes you think about the ghetto, not being comfortable in an area where people are just trying to survive. Who lives here? Who would want to live here?”</p>
<p>Historical Buildings and Homes</p>	<p>“...one of the oldest schools in Ferguson...This means stable firm community. Where people would want to raise their kids...It’s a beautiful neighborhood...I think my grandmother went there...It’s an attraction to the city...nostalgic...”</p> <p>“...this street abuts to some houses that are not in as good repair...These people...take good care of their homes...They are not fearful of what’s two or three blocks away... There has been some crime over in that section...These people hang in there...all Victorian homes ...all well taken care of...They care about the community... They care about their home...about the image that shows to people that come into town...A positive thing...An indication of their character...”</p>
<p>Community Safety</p>	<p>“...security doors...That means...there are a lot of break-ins...on a regular basis....There are other ways... that you could secure your house; better lighting, alarm systems...The down and dirt way is to stick up bars...Most of that kind of crime happens within a mile of where the person lives...That means they’re with us. They’re our neighbors.”</p> <p>“...this is my community...I don’t worry if I walk home from a city council meeting in the dark ...if I walk home from a friend’s...This is my town...You don’t want to mess with me...My husband will say, ‘I</p>

	<p>wish you would be more aware...I wish you would be more careful' ...I belong here...I don't walk around meek and mild, like there is always a boogey man. I walk around like I own this sidewalk. I'm not walking haltingly. I look like I can take care of myself."</p>
<p>Community Investment</p>	<p>"...group of our friends...We meet at the local bar one night a week... We're all involved in the community as far as different committees... We like to BBQ...enjoy each other company...I just like being involved...I like the outcome...It's satisfaction when you're done."</p> <p>"...a new young man...has taken this building... added apartments above it...This is what can be done...if someone has faith in the community... Puts a smile on my face. I'm always encouraged when someone has the ability...money...time ...to start a big project...Another great building with opportunity to bring in new residents...new business people on South Florissant Road."</p>
<p>Vacant Property</p>	<p>"...this has been this way for years...The tornado's hit the roof...They have not done anything about it...The city has not been vigilant about... vacant properties, run down properties. There have been others in the last ten plus years that the city has purchased... torn down... rehabbed... This is one that they have not touched. Part of it is anger that it's been allowed to sit there and nothing be done...It shows deterioration...That the city doesn't really care..."</p> <p>"The house next to us has...official notices...Every month they send somebody out to check on the house...I commented that that is a real problem...that says...'boy, here I am empty now'...Legally they had to do that...We are very watchful of the house, but we are not here all the time..."</p>
<p>Racial Integration and Community Transformation</p>	<p>"...the diversity in Ferguson has changed amazingly...usually not in a bad way. When I was growing up...there were no Black people in Ferguson...now I think we are about 60/40...over a 50 year period."</p> <p>"...we moved here at a time when the Ferguson and Florissant school district was going through voluntary desegregation...Everyone thought we were crazy...You know, you're going to have problems...We wanted a community that was not lily white. We wanted a community that was diverse... We have continued to value that."</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Natural Surveillance</p>	<p>“...porch lights on the left...porch lights on the right...nothing in the middle...Well, houses that don’t have porch lights on...It becomes dark, It’s inviting...When there’s no porch lights vacant houses quite often don’t have electricity on and so criminals see those Black houses and they become targets...Burglars that’s don’t want to worry about having to meet people while they are in the house..”</p> <p>“Ok, way overgrown... The police always give out these helpful hints about how to make your house look lived in is keep your bushes cut back...If you’re trying to talk about somebody who has nefarious activities could hide...Although personally I think it looks kinda nice...Just because it’s overgrown doesn’t mean that I don’t like the way it looks ...It makes me feel like some strange old lady lives here and I think I’d like her!...I personally hate to think that you can’t do this anymore...In the 70’s this would really been ok...It’s kind of wild, it’s not neglected...Overgrown with a purpose...”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Maintenance</p>	<p>“...there weren’t a lot of things...inductive to crime in the neighborhood as much as individual homeowners not maybe taking the best care of the property.”</p> <p>“The blue tarp...somebody that is just not vigilant about caring for the property... Whenever you have a situation like this...it’s not beneficial for the neighborhood. I don’t think that some homeowners understand that they are not living in a vacuum. This is going to impact my home values...It impacts the general neighborhood...The impression of the community...”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Rental Property</p>	<p>“...our properties are rentals...transient I don’t care...not investing myself in your community...inhabitants...I don’t think that does the community any service...The percentage keeps going up...”</p> <p>“I think ownership is better than rental when you’ve got someone that owns. Typically, they would take better care of their house, than renters. Renters tear them up.”</p>

Imaginative variation. “The task of imaginative variation is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, and functions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97-98). This is accomplished through a depiction of textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon described by each research participant.

Textural and structural descriptions. Through imaginative variation the researcher begins to provide “a description of *what* was experienced in textural descriptions and *how* it was experienced in structural descriptions” (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004). The goal is to create the structural descriptions of the phenomenon by utilizing the *how* of the encounters to illustrate the circumstances that exemplify the textural descriptions or *what* of the individual encounters (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98). The textural and structural descriptions are demonstrated in the results section of this research study and delineated under the specific thematic areas. The textural and structural descriptions are not generally organized into their thematic areas to convey the research results. However, it was felt that for this research study this was the best way to illustrate the textural and structural descriptions alongside the photographs to provide research results that were more clearly coherent and easily interpretable to a general audience.

Synthesis of the experience. Moustakas (1994) explains that textural and structural descriptions are then intuitively integrated (cited by Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004) to depict the “essence of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). This composite description is “typically a long paragraph that tells the reader ‘what’ the participants experienced with the phenomenon and ‘how’ they experienced it (Creswell, 2007, p. 159). The synthesis of the experience is outlined in the results section of this research study.

Sample and Population

The research study sample was composed of adults who were 60 years of age and older who lived within the geographical boundaries of Ferguson, Missouri. Traditionally, an older adult would be defined as someone who is age 65 and older. However, given the outcome of the pilot study conducted prior to this study, it was determined to lower the age criteria thereby increasing the potential sample size. Purposive sampling was utilized in this research study that involved recruiting participants who were within a particular predefined category (Trochim, 2001, p. 56). Specifically a type of purposive sampling known as snowball sampling was utilized to locate potential research participants who may be difficult to find. In snowball sampling, data is gathered from community members. They are then asked if they know of others in their community who meet the requirements for participation and who would be potentially interested in contributing to the research study (Babbie, 2008, p. 205).

Each neighborhood within Ferguson has their own “neighborhood group” that meets regularly or semi-regularly. An effort was made to attend as many of the neighborhood group meetings as possible in an attempt to recruit research participants from a variety of neighborhoods. In this research study, many of the research participants had friends, neighbors, and acquaintances that also qualified for participation in the research study. Their contact information was either provided directly from the primary research participant, or a recruitment letter was given to them and they contacted the researcher inquiring about participation. Research participants represented eight of the twelve neighborhoods within the geographic boundaries of Ferguson, Missouri. These neighborhoods included Jeske Park, Old Ferguson West, Ferguson West (Wabash), Ferguson Hills, Forestwood, North Hills, Southwest, and Old Ferguson East. Eight of the 15 research participants were recruited directly through the

neighborhood watch groups they attend. Five of the 15 research participants learned about the study through others who passed along the information about the study. One research participant learned about the study by reading about it in the local newspaper, and another participant was contacted directly by the researcher.

An extensive effort was made to recruit older adults from the predominately Black Nesbit-Newton neighborhood located adjacent to the Canfield Green Apartment Complex. Residents of the neighborhood expressed concerns about crime and community disorder at their regular neighborhood watch meetings to police officers, the mayor, and the city manager. Unfortunately, no older adults from the neighborhood volunteered to participate in the research study. Some older adults from the neighborhood were concerned that their own personal safety might be jeopardized if other angry residents retaliated against them for taking photos as part of the research process. Even after providing them with the option to only participate in the interview portion of the research study, older adults declined. One Black male publicly expressed his frustration with the research study and the university system by suggesting that nothing would be done with the results to help improve the quality of their neighborhood.

Personally, it was felt there might be distrust with the researcher, as a young, white, female student from the university. A distrust that was probably warranted. Out of all of the neighborhood meetings in Ferguson, the researcher felt the most like an outsider in the Nesbit-Newton neighborhood. Research participation from this neighborhood was desperately wanted because of the concerns with crime that they publicly expressed. However, there was a distrust that was going to be difficult to penetrate; a distrust that had roots extending deeper than the primary investigator's knowledge with the community or the problems with the neighborhood. These residents felt powerless in their repeated attempt to express their concerns to those who

were in power; the police, mayor, city manager, and the student researcher. It seems that there may have been a long history of those in power not following through to address the concerns of residents and homeowners or the perception that those in power were not doing enough in the neighborhood.

Data Collection Procedure

Auto-photography. “Auto-photography is an ethnographic field research method that attempts to ‘see the world through someone else’s eyes’” and “provides a tool in qualitative and ethnographic research projects that moves a step toward understanding what qualities of environments and places are important for research subjects in their daily lives” (Thomas, 2009). The research method of auto-photography involves giving research participants a camera and asking them to photograph items of importance in their environment (Nolan, 2006). Depending on the specific aim of the study, the researcher may or may not choose to give research participants detailed instructions about the photography process (Thomas, 2009).

In this study, photography provided a qualitative research tool to help understand what physical elements and places older adults perceived as symbolizing crime in their neighborhood. Research participants were supplied with a disposable camera by the primary investigator and asked to photograph physical elements and places that they felt symbolized crime in their neighborhood. Participants were given the option of using the disposable camera provided or utilizing their own camera. Most research participants chose to utilize the disposable camera that was offered to them and only one research participant chose to utilize his own camera. One research participant was accompanied on a walk around the neighborhood by the researcher in which she pointed out physical elements and places that she felt contributed to crime and the primary investigator took the photos. Before participants were free to take photos, they were

provided with brief verbal instructions on the picture taking process. Participants were instructed to take photos of physical elements and places that they felt symbolized crime in their neighborhood. Participants were instructed to only take photos of non-human physical objects and were instructed to try to keep such things as addresses and license plates out of pictures – elements that could potentially specifically identify an individual. However, research participants were also told that if this type of information was accidentally photographed, the photo would either not be utilized or photographic techniques would be utilized to blur or block out the identifying information. Participants were also instructed not to trespass onto any individual's property. All photos were to be taken from public view; this usually meant either the public street or sidewalk. These measures were taken to avoid any ethical or legal issues that might arise. If the participants chose to utilize the disposable camera provided, they were also given quick instructions on how to use the camera. As the disposable cameras did not work well for nighttime photos, they needed to be taken during daytime hours when it was sufficiently light outside. Prior to taking photos, research participants also received and were verbally read the research study consent script (See Appendix B) and a handout was given out outlining some of the ethical guidelines of photographic research (See Appendix C).

Photo-elicitation. When photographs taken by participants through the auto-photography process are used as the basis for interviewing the participants about the photos they captured, this process is known as photo-elicitation. An important element of photo elicitation, or photo interviewing, is that it assists in developing a discussion in a more casual environment, taking pressure off the interviewee to be the “center of attention” (Tinkler, 2014). According to Tinkler (2014), the photos act as a ‘third party’ in the interview (Collier and Collier, 1986, p. 105) easing tension associated with direct eye contact as the interviewer and the interviewee

focus their attention on the photograph being discussed (Prosser and Burke, 2006, p. 9). Additionally, “the difference between interviews using images and text, and interviews using words alone lies in the ways we respond to these two forms of symbolic representation. This has a physical basis: the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. The images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain’s capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words” (Harper, 2002). Supporters of the photo interviewing process also suggest that, “photos facilitate interviews by ‘building bridges’ between the interviewer and interviewee (e.g. Collier and Collier, 1986; Harper, 2002; Pink, 2007), communication is encouraged and rapport and trust are built” (Tinkler, 2014).

The photographs taken by the participants were used as the basis to shape the interview. However, a semi-structured interview guide, based on a state of the art literature review, was also developed prior to the interviews. As Babbie (2008, p. 335 and 336) explains, “a qualitative interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry including the topics to be covered, but not a set of questions that must be asked with particular words and in a particular order.” This research study employed a semi-structured interview format, which included an interview guide composed of open-ended questions pertinent to the topic under investigation (Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge, 2009). Intensive or in-depth interviewing utilized in this study, as described by Charmaz (2006), can range from a loosely guided discussion to a semi-structured interview format intended to generate a focused conversation with the research participant to learn in depth about their perceptions and experiences.

Some research participants completed taking the pictures in as little as a week, while some participants took a month or more to finish taking their pictures. Participants were not restricted on the amount of time they had to take the pictures. It was felt that participants should be allowed to take the appropriate time they needed to adequately capture the images they desired. If participants had not finished within a few weeks, they were contacted by the primary investigator to check-in through phone or by E-mail to see how things were going. At no point in the process were participants rushed to complete this phase of the research project.

When the participants telephoned or E-mailed the primary investigator indicating that they were finished taking their pictures, the primary investigator set up a time to meet with the research participant and pick up the disposable camera to have it developed. At that time, for most of the participants, a time for the photo-elicited interview was also scheduled. For those participants who chose to use their own camera to take the photos, the photos were E-mailed to the primary investigator and then printed for the photo-elicited interview. Although not specifically instructed to do so, some research participants also chose to take notes about each photo they took. This information provided an excellent complement to the photographs and interview materials.

Participants chose where they felt most comfortable conducting the photo-elicited interview portion of the study. While many interviews were conducted directly in the participant's home, some were conducted in other, more public locations. Participants also chose the day and time that worked best with their schedule to conduct the interview. The primary investigator was able to allow flexibility in her schedule to accommodate the research participant.

Each picture was numbered on its backside to be easily identified as it was being talked about. This assisted the primary investigator when the interviews were coded and analyzed. To view the complete interview guide, see Appendix E. The questions on the interview guide were repeated for each individual photograph for each participant. Interviews took approximately 90 minutes with some interviews taking more or less time depending on the number of photographs that were taken and how much the research participant had to contribute to the interview. Some research participants chose not to participate in taking photos, but still agreed to participate in the interview portion of the research study. A separate semi-structured interview guide was developed for those who did not wish to take pictures, similar to the one involving picture taking (See Appendix F). A digital, audio recording device was utilized during the interviews to free the primary investigator from taking notes and to ease transcribing for data analysis.

Survey. A short paper survey was developed to collect demographic information and given to participants when the primary investigator met with them to conduct the interview portion of the research study. Participants were asked a series of open-ended and multiple choice background questions. They were asked about their age, gender, race, in which neighborhood they lived, and whether or not they considered themselves an individual with a disability or not. It was felt that information might have an impact on how certain older adults perceived crime in their community. To view the survey, see Appendix D.

Validity

According to Creswell (2009, p. 190-193), the precision of results applying particular methods assists in supporting the validity of qualitative research studies. This can be accomplished through the triangulation of various sources of data to rationalize the choice of thematic areas and by examining the accuracy of data by returning to the research participants to

inspect particular accounts, and by expressing the results through the application of vivid descriptions to improve credibility. This can also be achieved by reducing researcher bias by clearing up and reflecting upon preconceptions, reporting upon a variety of perspectives (positive and negative) to add additional credibility, and researcher immersion in the research setting to develop a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon. Creswell (2009, p. 192) also suggests utilizing a person to examine the write-up of the research study to assure that it also makes sense to an audience other than the researcher, and utilizing an external auditor not familiar with the research study to provide an objective assessment.

The use of photography in addition to the interview data provided various examples to support the themes present in the research results. Although two research participants chose not to take photographs, their verbal reports similarly aligned with those who chose to take photographs. Through the use of the photographs, research participants were also able to deliver vivid accounts of their experiences; pointing out particular examples to demonstrate their thoughts. The epoche process in transcendental phenomenology is put in place to help decrease researcher bias and presumptions about the research topic, thus increasing the validity of the research study. Although helpful, it does not seem entirely likely that a researcher is going to be able to set aside all experiences and judgments about the research study (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004). Personally, this was easier to achieve earlier in the study process. Although the data was collected two months before the shooting of Michael Brown, it became more and more difficult to maintain epoche as Ferguson, Missouri covered every local and national news headline.

Due to continuous involvement in Ferguson, Missouri before and during the research study, full immersion into the research experience was achieved and thus made it more possible

to fully understand the issues present in the community. Through the research results, differing viewpoints were accounted for in the explication of the thematic areas. Additionally, various external persons also reviewed the write-up of the research study to ensure that it would make sense to an outside audience. An external auditor, who also served as the final editor in the write-up, examined the write-up from the point of someone unfamiliar with research study. The combination of the above measures all helped to increase the validity of the research study.

Generalizability

Qualitative methodology is generally not “an appropriate means for arriving at statistical descriptions of a large population” (Babbie, 2008, p. 343). Generalizability is utilized limitedly, because the results of a qualitative research study are not meant to be generalized to other sites or populations. Qualitative research studies tend to focus on the particular rather than the general in that themes are developed precisely for a certain population within a certain place at a particular moment in time (Creswell, 2009, p. 192-193). This research study investigated older adults’ perceptions of crime in Ferguson, Missouri and should not be considered generalizable, neither to other older adults nor other communities. The results are not completely generalizable to all older adults in Ferguson, Missouri; as only 15 older adults volunteered to participate in the research study. However, the research methods employed are sufficiently generalizable to be applied to a similar population in other communities. This research provides a basis for a larger study that could be conducted utilizing a quantitative methodology that would provide more generalizable research results for Ferguson, Missouri as well as other potential communities.

Ethical issues

Ethical issues present themselves in every research study, especially those that directly involve human research subjects. The nature of photographic research posed particular ethical

issues. As part of the data collection process, research participants were given a handout outlining the basic ethical guidelines of photographic research. They were also asked to keep all people, license plates, addresses, etc. out of their photographs so that no one could be specifically identified through photographic images. However, research participants were assured that any identifying information that could accidentally end up in photographs would be removed or blurred out by the primary investigator before the photo was utilized. Research participants were also asked to only take photos from public view such as the public sidewalk or street because of the legal and ethical issues associated with trespassing onto another's property to take photos.

Some older adults inquired about the safety of taking pictures related to crime throughout their neighborhood and the possibility of retaliation issues associated with taking these types of photos. Therefore, participants were strongly urged not to participate in the research study if they did not feel safe doing so. They were reminded that participation in the research study was completely voluntary, and that if they chose to participate, but felt uncomfortable with the process at any point, they could withdrawal from the research study. They were also urged to avoid putting themselves in a position where they felt uncomfortable taking a photograph. Research participants were also told that they could choose to only participate in the interview portion if they still wanted to contribute to the research study, but did not feel comfortable taking photographs. One of the local police officers spoke to some of the older adults and stated that he felt that the risk of retaliation by another individual because they witnessed someone taking pictures in the community was quite low. He reassured older adults that as long as they stayed on public property while taking pictures, it was legal to take any photos that they chose.

Contact information for the participants was collected to deliver cameras and to schedule the photo-elicited interview session. This information was coded and stored on a password-protected computer. All additional information; photographs, interview data, and surveys were also coded so that the participants' identity would not be revealed and was kept inside a locked file cabinet inside the primary investigator's office.

Strengths and challenges of the research study

Babbie (2008, p. 342-343) recognizes that one of the strengths of qualitative research lies in the depth of understanding that the research study permits. The combination of auto-photography and interviews with research participants provided an incredible depth of understanding about the phenomenon. The photos taken by research participants gave them a basis to talk about difficult issues in their community that they may have not otherwise spoken about in a traditional interview setting. The photos also were deemed useful in the manner in which they facilitated illustrating their experience in a way that words could not do on their own. The photographs also helped provide tangible results outlining both older adults' concerns and points of optimism throughout their community.

Another strength of this research study was the representation of older adults. An extensive effort was made to recruit older adults from every neighborhood, but was unfortunately unsuccessful. However, men and women, Black and White, varying in age from 60 – 78 volunteered to participate in the research study from eight neighborhoods in Ferguson, Missouri. The broad representation of older adults assisted in improving validity throughout the research process. The complete list of demographic characteristics is presented in Table 3 in the results chapter of this research study.

The research study also presented challenges. Some of these challenges were previously anticipated, while some were not. At some points in the research study, the challenges appeared monumental. However, they were tackled one by one as they arose and logical solutions were applied as the situation merited.

One of the main methods for recruitment included engaging older adults from various neighborhood watch meetings held throughout the community. Therefore, it became likely that the research study would attract older adults who not only were interested in community crime, but who were already highly socially engaged. The literature review supports the notion that those who are more socially engaged, also tend to be less fearful of crime in their community. Those who are less socially engaged in their community and potentially isolated in a home environment might have a higher fear of crime. However, this is a population that becomes much more difficult to access for research study purposes.

Secondly, the research method of auto-photography also likely attracted a population of older adults that were more physically mobile in their community. To assist in combating this issue, an opportunity was offered to older adults to only participate in the interview session of the research study. Two older adults chose to only participate in the interview portion. However, they were both rather active and physically mobile. Therefore, the modification of the research method as suggested above did not attract additional older adults to the research study who had mobility restrictions.

Another potential challenge was the time of year that the auto-photography portion of the research study was conducted. Research recruitment occurred in the fall months, while the photographic portion of the research study took place in the late fall, winter, and early spring. Older adults were discouraged from taking pictures or were delayed in taking pictures because of

the harsh winter of 2013-2014 within the St. Louis area. A larger sample of older adults may have been recruited if the photographic portion had occurred during the late spring, summer, and early fall months.

All older adults who participated in the research study were homeowners who lived in single family homes. This is a limitation because their perceptions about physical elements and places that they feel are representative of crime might be quite different from renters, those who live in privately owned condominiums, townhouses, duplexes, or apartment buildings. The sample of older adults, themselves were a limitation. Because the scope of this research study only analyzed older adult's perception of crime in Ferguson, Missouri this cannot be considered an all-inclusive perception of what others may think about crime in Ferguson, Missouri. Those of other various ages may very likely have a very different perception about crime in Ferguson, Missouri. Although older adults were not asked about income as part of this research study, it is felt that most of the older adults who participated in this research study could be characterized as middle to upper middle class. This is a limitation because their perceptions of crime and their views about appropriate physical and social community norms may differ from those who represent a perceived lower class of residents, regardless of their race.

One major limitation was the researcher's perception as an outsider to those trying to be recruited to the research study. Although there was previous research engagement in the community, there were issues that presented themselves early in the recruitment of the research study. Several older adults expressed anger and animosity toward the research study. They deemed it as extraordinarily one-sided and having the potential to generate a negative image of their community. All concerns and criticism about the research study were taken extremely seriously and as a result, modifications to the research study were made early in the process of

data collection. In addition to photographing physical elements and places in their community that older adults felt contributed to crime in their community, they were also asked to photograph physical elements and places that contributed positively to the image of the community. It was explained to research participants that as a student researcher and as an employee of the University of Missouri-Extension; the primary investigator had a personal, professional, and ethical obligation to utilize all results gained from the research study towards the improvement of their community and not to ever utilize research results in a negative manner. The concerns stems from a long standing reputation in which the local media has tended to focus on the negative aspects of North St. Louis County where Ferguson, Missouri is located; overlooking the positive aspects about the community. Those older adults who chose to participate in the research study were also pleased that they had the opportunity to photograph some positive elements about their community.

Chapter 4: Results

Population Sample

Fifteen older adults from eight of the twelve neighborhoods within the geographical boundaries of Ferguson, Missouri volunteered to participate in the research study between October 2013 and June 2014. Eleven older adult females and four older adult males were interviewed. Of the 11 females who participated in the research study, seven characterized their race as White and four females characterized their race as Black. Of the four men who participated in the research study, three men characterized their race as White and one man characterized his race as Black. Six participants stated that they lived with a spouse or partner, seven participants indicated that they lived alone, one participant reported that they lived with others in their household. This could include family, friends, or roommates. One participant indicated that he lived with a spouse or partner, but also indicated that his grandchildren resided with him. Fourteen of the 15 research participants indicated that they did not consider themselves a person with a disability. One of the 15 research participants indicated that she did consider herself a person with a disability. However, she did not indicate on the Likert scale how strongly she felt that her disability made her more fearful of becoming a victim of crime. Participants were asked what neighborhood they resided in because it was important to try to gain a variety of perspectives from residents throughout Ferguson. Five research participants were between the ages of 60 – 64. Three research participants were between the ages of 65 – 69. Six research participants were between the ages of 70 – 74. Finally, two research participants were between the ages of 75 – 79.

Three participants indicated that they were from the Jeske Park neighborhood. One resident indicated that she resided in Old Ferguson West, one participant indicated that he

resided in Ferguson West (Wabash) neighborhood, and two residents indicated that they resided in Ferguson Hills. Two residents indicated that they resided in Forestwood, one resident indicated that he resided in the North Hills neighborhood, one resident indicated that she resided in the Southwest neighborhood, and four research participants indicated that they resided in the Old Ferguson East neighborhood. A side-by-side comparison of the research participant's demographic characteristics can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant Demographic Data						
Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Neighborhood	Current Living Situation	Disability
P1	Female	72	White	Jeske Park	Lives Alone	No
P2	Male	63	White	North Hills	Lives Alone	No
P3	Female	72	White	Jeske Park	Lives Alone	No
P4	Female	71	White	Old Ferguson West	Lives w/ spouse or partner	No
P5	Female	63	Black	Ferguson Hills	Lives w/ spouse or partner	No
P6	Female	70	White	Old Ferguson East	Lives w/ spouse or partner	Yes
P7	Male	74	White	Old Ferguson East	Lives w/ spouse or partner	No
P8	Male	60	White	Jeske Park	Lives w/ spouse or partner	No
P9	Female	63	Black	Southwest Ferguson	Lives with other in household (family, friends, roommate)	No
P10	Female	67	Black	Forestwood	Lives Alone	No
P11	Female	61	White	Forestwood	Lives Alone	No
P12	Male	65	Black	Wabash	Lives w/ spouse or partner + grandchildren	No
P13	Female	72	White	Old Ferguson East	Lives Alone	No
P14	Female	69	White	Old Ferguson East	Lives w/ spouse or partner	No
P15	Female	78	Black	Ferguson Hills	Lives Alone	No

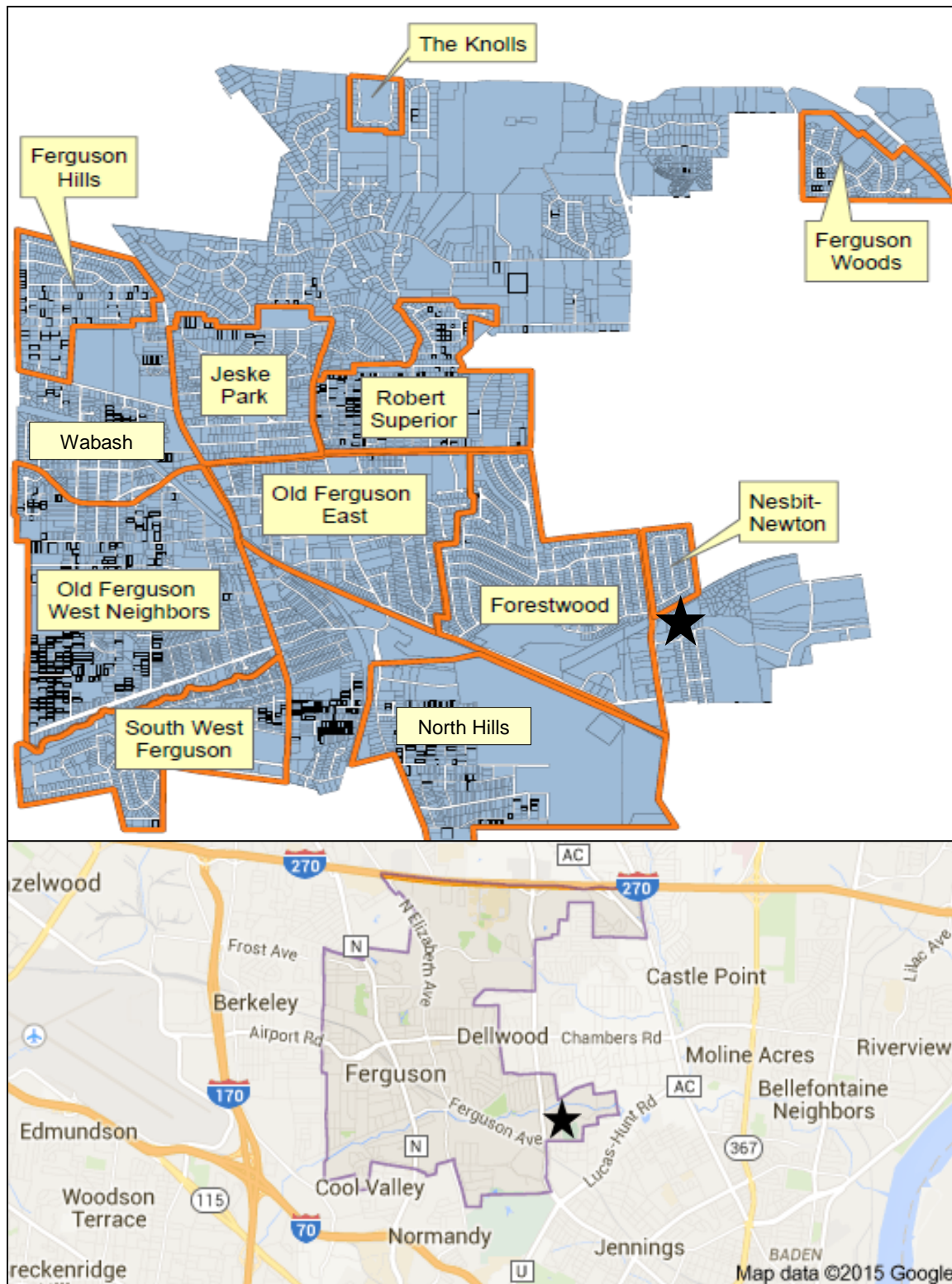


Figure 5. Top map illustrates location of neighborhoods within Ferguson Missouri. Retrieved from the City of Ferguson, 2015. Bottom map illustrates location of Ferguson Missouri in relation to other surrounding suburbs and interstates. Retrieved from Google Maps, 2015. ★ on each map indicates location of the Canfield Green Apartment Complex.

Photo-elicited Interviews

Thirteen of the 15 research participants chose to participate in the auto-photography portion of the research study. Two research participants chose not to participate in the auto-photography portion, but did participate in the interview portion of the research study. Each individual interview was semi-structured and only the photos that individual took were used to guide his or her interview. Participants were interviewed at the location of their choice with most interviewed in their homes, while others were interviewed at other public locations in Ferguson.

Through the transcendental phenomenological approach 12 themes emerged:

- community image
- interaction with nature
- undesirable attitudes and behaviors
- littering
- historic buildings and homes
- community safety
- community investment
- vacant property
- racial integration and community transformation
- natural surveillance
- maintenance
- rental property.

Community image. The theme community image developed as participants spoke about the displeasing aesthetics of some of the businesses in their community. They also felt that the presence of a particular population contributed to an undesirable appearance and affected the perception of safety in their community. However, participants also recognized that Ferguson had a number of community representations that were transforming that perception in a more positive direction.

As older adults spoke about the aesthetics of some local businesses that contributed undesirably to the image of their community, they utilized words and phrases such as “cater to the poorer demographically and African Americans,” “pathetic,” “trashy,” “indicative of the general deterioration,” and “looks very inner city slum.” One participant felt that the community’s homeless population contributed to the perception that “Ferguson is not a choice place to live” and “trashy down at the heels and possibly, probably unsafe.” In highlighting an element that contributed positively to the image of Ferguson, one research participant noted that, “sometimes North County does not get included in things that go on in the St. Louis region” and “a lot of people who have an opinion about North County have never been to North County...”

One research participant spoke about her concern with the image of Ferguson in the context of planning for a class reunion,

- When I had been working on class reunions...so many of my old...schoolmates said 'oh no, I wouldn't come back to Ferguson. No, I don't go up there. It's not safe.'

Two research participants, both White females, both lifetime residents of Ferguson, captured what they felt were local businesses with displeasing aesthetics that did not attract desirable influences to their community. They remember when Ferguson thrived with successful department stores, drug stores, doctors, dentists, and other amenities. Some of the larger chain

stores such as Walgreens have driven out small businesses, but these research participants also felt that some successful businesses had closed and left because of the dramatic demographic changes in Ferguson.

- ...businesses that cater to the poorer demographically and African Americans...I really object to...their window displays. I don't like this



Figure 6. Window displays.

image right there in downtown Ferguson...Businesses...look at the demographics...they aren't coming here...It makes me feel very sad...I know what this city used to be...It's just pathetic...indicative of the general deterioration...

- The chartreuse green in the painting on the building ...looks very inner city slum to me...See that sandwich board sign out there?...I thought we had laws against having a sale every day of the



Figure 7. Chartreuse building color.

year...It makes me feel angry...I think it just looks trashy as all get out.

Another research participant spoke about the image of the community in the context of the homeless population in Ferguson. Although their presence was intimidating at times, she did

not feel that they were directly responsible for any sort of criminal mischief in Ferguson. More than anything, they just frightened people in Ferguson through their behavior and appearance.

-...a jeep...lived in by a homeless man who is mentally unstable. He's lived in Ferguson many many years...spends most of his time hanging out in the lobby of the library...It makes the gardeners uncomfortable...It kind of represents Ferguson's homeless people...



Figure 8. Jeep.

It's a tragic problem...Sometimes through their behavior tend to make one uncomfortable...

They sure don't look good. They are part of the perception that Ferguson is not a choice place to live...I think it adds to the perception that Ferguson is trashy down at the heels and possibly, probably unsafe...

One older adult White female chose to paint a more appealing picture of Ferguson, because she, like many other research participants felt that North St. Louis County was not portrayed optimistically in the media and not included in positive county-wide activities. As part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of St. Louis, fiberglass cakes were placed in significant locations throughout the region.



Figure 9. STL 250 cake.

-...STL250 presented the City of Ferguson with one of their cakes. They are 4 foot fiberglass cakes that have been decorated...Our cake is a fabulous representation of Ferguson...Sometimes North County does not get included in things that go on in the St. Louis region...A lot of the people who have an opinion about North County have never been in North County...They had a little presentation...folks drove by...people would honk and give us the thumbs up.

Interaction with nature. The theme interaction with nature emerged as both male and female, Black and White research participants spoke about the various parks and recreational activities throughout Ferguson that provided them with contact to natural elements. Research participants were very enthusiastic about the number of activities and progressive additions to parks throughout Ferguson, community gardens and farmer's markets, Ted Jones Bike Trail and other various events that the City of Ferguson hosted in an effort to engage residents and utilize their park spaces and neighborhood streets. One participant passionately spoke, "one of the best things about the City of Ferguson is our park system. You probably can't live more than a mile away from a park...I think our park system is a real asset to the community."

Older adults spoke about the various parks in Ferguson and used positive wording to describe their largest park, January Wabash as "beautiful," "peaceful," "quiet," "utopia," and "lively." However, one older adult felt that although the park was "beautiful", it could be very "dark" and "desolate", providing an opportunity for criminal activity. Participants also spoke encouragingly about the design and creation of new sculptures in Jeske Park and utilized wording and phrases such as "Ferguson is a happening place," "something of interest to all ages," "draw people into the city" and "interactive." One research participant reported that there was a creek running through the park that was being addressed by the city because in the past it

had provided an “opportunity for crime” with “a lot of places where people would hide.” The Ted Jones Trail, passing through Ferguson, was also a popular topic for older adults and was addressed as “positive”, “progressive,” “optimistic,” and described as an opportunity for “freedom.” However, it was also described as potentially “intimidating” depending on the time of day one traveled on the trail. Older adults also spoke about other various outdoor community activities including the farmer’s market and Sunday Parkways event as an opportunity to “volunteer”, “grassroots effort,” “a gathering place,” “positive,” and something “for all ages.”

One research participant spoke about outdoor interaction in the context of a regular event that symbolized the many community gatherings organized by the City of Ferguson and heavily supported by the volunteer efforts of community members.

- We have a Sunday Parkways...They had an event three times this summer...They close off streets...big tents go up...bike helmets are given out free...all kinds of activities...face painting...zomba...A real grassroots effort by...people who volunteer. They don't go to the same park...each section of the city eventually has an opportunity to walk to that. Everyone city-wide is invited. They are always publicized...They draw a lot, a lot of families.

Several research participants spoke about their regular involvement in the weekly farmer’s market and their support of the local neighborhood gardens in their community. Unfortunately, all of the photos taken by research participants were taken during the months when the outdoor farmer’s market was not in regular session. Many participants expressed their disappointment in not being able to photograph the interaction of local farmers and community members at the market. However, older adults spoke about the market so vividly and with such excitement that it was easy to paint a mental image of the beauty of such an event.

-...the farmer's market is a gathering place. They shop for local produce...grown by the farmer who's standing there. There also is live music...food vendors...a spot to come see your neighbors...friends, meet new people...A real asset to the community...Something at the market for all ages...All the generations mixing together. Senior citizens are kept young by seeing kids doing chalk...hula-hooping...Makes me feel positive about what's going on in the community.

- We have two community gardens, east and west, where groups are growing vegetables ...They meet a couple of nights a week and they share garden space. They are very hard working. They also provide food for the concert series that goes on all summer.

Research participants spoke about January Wabash Park and one participant explained the creation of the park by the Wabash Railroad Company for their employees to enjoy with their families. She also spoke about the special memories she possessed about the park from her childhood. One occasion while visiting, a man caught a very large fish in the park's lake. She wanted to take a photo of the man with the fish for the local newspaper, but the man asked that she not take the photo,

- This lake is such a gem, and I don't keep the fish, I catch and release. If you print a photo of how big this fish is, people will come and catch.

She respected the man's wish because she also shared the mutual belief that the park should be preserved for the personal enjoyment of the community, just as the workers of the Wabash Railroad Company enjoyed and as she had privately enjoyed throughout her life as a resident of Ferguson.

- I have never been up there and walked the trail when there weren't other people walking...I have never been there when there weren't fishermen. It's most beautiful in the snow...When you're on the three-quarter



Figure 10. Lake at January Wabash Park.

mile trail, when you get to the other end, it's peaceful and quiet...When you come back to ...the lively parts of the park...the playground always has kids on it...You can hear young children laughing...See senior citizens fishing...It's a great gathering spot...It looks like utopia...A beautiful use of land with a lake and nature and ducks and geese.

However, one research participant articulated that she felt leery about the spooky nature of January Wabash Park.

- It's beautiful, it's got a great walking path around it, but it's very desolate, very dark...I would not walk by myself there...It's a perfect spot to be robbed...Once you're back there you got nowhere to run from anybody...

She spoke about an incident in which a body was found wrapped up in the bed of a truck in the park and had concerns about the location of parking and the isolated nature of the footpath as it wrapped around the backside of the lake.

Several older adults spoke about their fondness for Jeske Park, the addition of new interactive sculptures to the park, and the beautiful neighborhood that surrounds it. One research participant, who was a resident of the Jeske Park neighborhood, spoke about the addition of the

sculpture park and the honor he felt in knowing one of the sculptors who grew up in the neighborhood. He hoped that the innovative enhancement to the neighborhood park would attract young families with children to their



neighborhood. The participant also *Figure 11. Jeske Park.*

spoke about the excitement of a sculpture commemorating the past tornadoes. The local Christian Church had tongue and groove spruce beams that spanned the sanctuary. When the tornado came through, it went right over the church, throwing spruce logs up and down the street. The beams were salvaged by the sculptors and will be transformed into a wire and spruce twister commemorating the events of that day.

-...it's certainly not the biggest park in Ferguson...It's going to draw people into the city...community...neighborhood when the sculpture park is finished. It's going to be a little different...I really do hope...it draws the 20 and 30 something's in to look at the quality of the housing...Look at it as either a good starter home or someplace they could raise a family.

-...the sculpture park will just say, wow, Ferguson is a happening place. There won't be any signs...do not touch, do not climb...interactive stuff...Introducing them to art...They are outdoors. They don't have a mobile device in their hands...Something of interest to all ages...

However, one older adult admitted that there were some opportunities for crime in the park that the city was addressing.

- There's a drainage ditch they laughingly call a creek that runs through here. But the city went in there and had the money to cut out all the honeysuckle, grapevines, and trees needing cutting...Actually it was an opportunity for crime because you're walking around that creek, there was a lot of places where people would hide. Kids would hide there and smoke and the things they wanted to do.

The Ted Jones Trail was also a popular discussion point among research participants and frequently utilized for walking and biking. One participant spoke of the Ted Jones Trail as being a gateway into Ferguson and the freedom he felt in riding his bike on the trail. However, he also acknowledged that there were parts of the trail that could be daunting. He described a tunnel that passed through the trail,

- It's so long and narrow, you can't see back in here. I used to go out in the morning when it is still dark and ride. And going through that tunnel—now you're not supposed to be in that park when the sun's not out. But going through that tunnel is, the thought, you could have just a flash of fear. Hey, someone could be over there waiting on me.

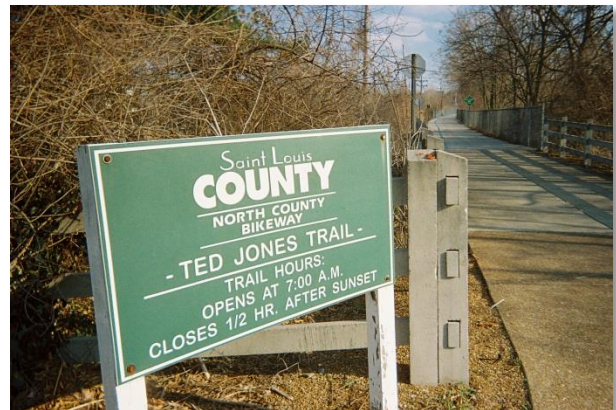


Figure 12. Ted Jones Trail.

Another research participant described the Ted Jones Trail in the context of her interactions with nature and animals on the trail.

- Shortly after getting on the trail last summer there was a young couple walking towards us. And the young woman said, 'be careful there's a snake in the middle of the trail.' I turned to them and said 'thanks for the warning' and then I ran over the snake with my bike. So I felt two bumps. I looked down and I literally freaked out. When we came back the snake was gone so apparently I didn't smoosh him because he slithered off the trail.

The trail was also described optimistically in the aspect of autonomous travel.

-...it's a positive thing, it's an avenue for people to get around. If people wanted to live in Ferguson and commute to UMSL, it takes you right into the campus...I've travelled it a lot....a freedom in getting out and riding my bike...I don't know of any reported crimes on it since it's been open...I see it as a progressive thing...An optimistic thing...This part of this is probably the loneliest part of it as you're approaching going up into Cool

Valley and if you're coming down out of Normandy up from Florissant Road.

- That's not graffiti. It's artwork that has been posted on there and it's kind of graffiti like. So, don't look at that photograph and think that that's

incriminating. That's not.



Figure 13. Artwork on tunnel.

Undesirable attitudes and behaviors. Several older adults were concerned about some of the generalized behavior exhibited by various individuals in their community. Particularly they seemed to be concerned with behaviors and deterioration of values amongst youth in the community. Words and phrases that older adults utilized to specifically demonstrate some of the issues they observed among community youth included, “fighting,” “cussing,” “screaming,” and

exhibited behaviors that are “intimidating to seniors,” “irritating,” and “unwanted to the elderly.” Older adults also felt that some of the undesirable behaviors such as “hanging out,” and other “annoying behavior” displayed by various community members demonstrated an attitude of “no values,” “not caring,” “no self-respect,” “rudeness,” and a “lack of civility.”

A Black male spoke about the undesirable behaviors he witnessed as neighborhood children walked home from school.

-...overall a lot of riffraff...more confusion going on...children coming from school fighting, arguing, cussing...parents...not instilling the correct values in their children.

Another older adult also felt that children were no longer held accountable for their adverse actions and they had no fear that there would be any negative implications for their behaviors.

-...I wonder, too, about the kids that walk around...Why aren't they in school?...When I was a kid...all the police knew you and they knew your mom and dad...If you were out on the street when you weren't supposed to be, you were in trouble. That just doesn't happen now.

There was also some concern amongst both Black and White research participants about youth walking in the street, disrupting traffic, putting themselves in harm's way, and intimidating the general public through their actions.

- I personally am not comfortable when I see groups of African American youths walking up and down the middle of the street...They're always screaming at one another or fighting.

- The groups...intimidating to seniors...walking in the streets instead of on the sidewalk.

In particular, one research participant spoke about the frustrating behavior of youth playing basketball in the street near her home. This attracted undesirable individuals to the neighborhood and expressed unpredictable behavior that was unwanted by homeowners in the neighborhood.

-...the basketball goal...It would bring unwanted traffic...Not only the homeowners or the children...they bring their friends from other neighboring communities...The code enforcers should put something up on the property owners door...to tell them that they have to move that ...People drive down the street...real fast...they're out there in the street...It's just kinda irritating...I wouldn't want it next door to my house...It's just not safe for them...It's unwanted to the elderly



Figure 14. Basketball goal.

around here. I would remove that basketball goal and encourage them to utilize the park area...They should know not to have this...going towards the street...They could hit the cars and cause property damage...It's just more of a nuisance...

A Black male communicated his concern with the values of some of the people in his neighborhood, their fear of reporting suspicious activity, and their lack of involvement in keeping the neighborhood safe.

- Certain people in the community have this...no snitch philosophy...if I saw somebody going in your house...garage...back yard...taking something that I know didn't belong to

them...I'm quite naturally going to tell you...Give you a description of who did that...I don't understand...when I was growing up...everybody stuck together. You better not do anything wrong...somebody would go tell your parents...No values...not knowing your neighbor...not caring...not respecting your neighbor...not respecting your neighbor's property...

The same research participant felt that many of the undesirable attitudes and behaviors exhibited by young adults boiled down to a lack of self-respect and lack of motivation to change their lives. He describes returning from the Vietnam War, feeling some of the same social pressures that these young adults do, and the process of making positive changes in his life.

- ...you see the people...the way they dress...the way they act...I can look at myself... what I used to do...when I was in Vietnam...especially young folks are doing, I did all that...When I came back here, I knew I couldn't do that...I said to myself, 'what I'll do is I'll leave that there...come back and use the time that I have to dry out' ...They haven't reached a point in their lives where...they want to change...It's no self-respect, don't care...A general negative attitude.

Two White females were also uncomfortable with the general offensive behaviors exhibited by individuals in public settings; particularly in retail stores while they were trying to do their shopping.

- ...there are times of day that I will not go to the grocery store, the drug store...The people I see make me feel uncomfortable...Their idea of personal space is different than mine...Annoying behavior like the king of the aisle deal...like nobody else in the store exists...Not aware of their responsibilities of being one of many.

- I do not like it when I'm at a stop light and hear...very loud music booming from the car next to me...Having to be super alert when I go to the grocery store...General rudeness and lack of civility exhibited.

Finally, one research participant seemed to be concerned with individuals of working age who seemed to be hanging out on their front porch; day and night.

-...we've got areas where there are a lot of...undesirable people who hang around the front yard and the porch...I would not be able to say, 'well, those are the people that would commit crimes'...When there's a lot of hanging around...they can be up to no good sometimes...

Littering. The theme littering developed as White and Black, male and female research participants spoke about the disturbing amount of trash present throughout their community. Trashed seemed to include anything from a small amount of waste such as candy wrappers and soft drink cans, to grass clippings, and larger items such as tires and automobile bumpers. One neighborhood was described as “makes you think about the ghetto,” to describe the problem with disrespectful illegal dumping. Littering was also described as “a growing problem,” and “ignorant.” This made older adults feel “hopeless,” and that the situation was “discouraging.”

One older adult described the vacant lot where a neighborhood used to be present across the street from her home. The airport bought up the land, tore down the neighborhood and all of the streets, then sold the land to a development company. The participant felt that not as much dumping occurred when there was still a neighborhood presence. Since the land has been vacant, people utilize the area to dump trash, assuming no one is taking ownership of the land or that someone else will clean it up.

- ...somebody in the middle of the night thought that I needed a used tire...left it right in front of the house... That just blows my mind...It means you are living in an undesirable area... You'd rather look out...see the grass cut, manicured nice and clean...



Figure 15. Abandoned tire.

It makes me angry really, that someone would throw their trash in front of your house...I wouldn't take my trash and throw it in front of theirs.

- ...bags of trash, leaves...branches...car parts; bumpers...They just put it in their nice clean truck...drive it over...dump it off...It makes you think about the ghetto, not being comfortable in an area where people are just trying to survive. Who lives here? Who would want to live here?

- I've called the police because people are dumping stuff...They have no regards for people living there...They tend to do it on vacant land. They think, well the airport will clean it up...The airport don't live here.

The research participant also described an area down the street from her house, across from the vacant land. There was a large amount of unbridled growth blocking residents' view of the vacant land; disrupting the natural surveillance they might otherwise have. She also described the contagious nature of trash dumping, almost as if unspoken permission was being given to others who were thinking about committing a similar action.

- Just paper...trash...This is the side that people dump the most...because the residents can't see...If they would clear it out that would stop...They would think people are watching...



Figure 16. Unbridled growth and trash.

They wouldn't be dumping stuff...

- The hardest thing is to keep it cleaned up. If you dump something, get it cleaned up right away so that other people don't think, 'oh, we can bring our stuff and dump it there.'

Another research participant described a creek used for dumping that lacked any opportunity for either natural surveillance and/or territorial reinforcement over the area.

-...by Maline Creek. It appears to have already been used for a drinking and dumping area...beer cans...a tire here by the culvert...Whoever is responsible for the creek access by the road has not taken precautions...to minimize...trash dumping...Maybe a fence should have gone up...Somebody's taking advantage of this area. So how do we minimize that from occurring?



Figure 17. Maline Creek area.

Several older adults spoke about their own personal pursuit to keep their community clean. They wanted to create the image that someone cares about their home, neighborhood, and community. One White female described how she and her friends were disappointed in how a particular area of their town looked, so they took it upon themselves to put together a weekly group of volunteers to pick up trash along a busy thoroughfare. Unfortunately, she also spoke about the disappointment that they felt in their volunteer efforts.

-...a liquor store...that disturbs people...They feel it attracts an element that is not healthy for a community. A group of friends and I used to go up every Sunday morning and pick up litter...We finally stopped...It was so



Figure 18. Liquor store.

hopeless...After about 3 or 4 years...we quit...discouraging.

Another research participant spoke about doing her part to keep the neighborhood clean by picking up after her dog when she walked him.

- I have in both of my cars...at the office, poop bags. We do not let our dog poop and we don't clean it up...I want my neighborhood to be representative of me...It shows respect.

One research participant and her husband walk regularly for exercise and on their routes they pick up trash in an effort to beautify their community.

-...My husband and I are big about littering. He is going to be known eventually as the 'trash man cometh'... We walk daily... We have different routes...As we walk he picks up

trash...It is totally amazing what people will throw out of the cars or leave in the parking lots...

Two White female research participants spoke about their disappointment with young people littering in the neighborhoods on their way home from school in the afternoon.

-...they send little food packages home with children...They eat the fruit...drink the juice and dump the cans...I picked up a large bag full of litter as an example...The neighborhood has definitely changed...A growing problem, but



Figure 19. Litter.

believe me people my age did not litter. Your parents would have dealt with you if you had...They used to say about Ferguson was that if you did something bad on the other side of town your parents knew about it before you got home...Just total disrespect...It's a cultural thing people didn't see any problem with this trash...Where do you think the term trashy neighborhood as an insult came up. It's because trash is a problem. It degrades the neighborhood...You need a place to look as if someone is claiming it as their area...They will not tolerate that here.

-...it is such a throw-away society...Not only a racial situation, but an age-related situation. I see kids of all races pitching stuff, but I tend to see it more with minorities...That bothers me...In the time I grew up there weren't as many disposable containers...sacks...papers...My parents were children of the depression so they were very frugal...It just makes me sad that we don't have more respect not only for our own

property but for other people's property...It sends a message that people don't care...not conscientious...I don't think that that's necessarily a true representation, but I can see how somebody passing through might draw that conclusion.

One Black female described her place of business and how she regularly exercises both natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement to minimize dumping on her parking lot. She describes a car rental place across the street and how people were using her empty lot to clean out their cars before returning their rental vehicle.

-...There's a car dealer shop...People returning their car...He must have told them you're going to have to have the car cleaned out...They literally clean their car out on my lot. They don't know that I can see them...They can't see in...The way I turn the blinds...The first time I saw them do it I said, 'oh, look how ignorant'...The second time, 'it's not happening for you my brother...'

By taking control of her area, she also explained how a lot of dumping has stopped. Her persistent effort to both keep an eye on people's negligent behavior and the actions she exhibits around her property shows that someone cares for and is claiming the property.

-...a lot of dumping has stopped...People see a clean area and they are less likely to litter...When it's busy traffic, that's when I clean my windows. It's when I clean my doors. I'm out there sweeping...I want people to know...

This participant also described how there are several trash barrels up and down the street near her place of business and how that has helped to eliminate excuses people might have to dispose of their trash in the street.

-...this is a group effort...As many people as we have walking, you would think this place would be filthy...We are picking stuff up. There are...beautiful brick trash barrels...

You've got stuff in your hand...if you're not being stupid, then why would you throw it on the ground?

Finally, one White female suggested that despite her discouragement with littering in her community, she had faith in the younger generations as their schools take them out and encourage them to pick up trash around their local parks.

- I see hope...January Wabash Park, students from the middle school periodically go around and clean up things that have been thrown into the lake...It is a good lesson that we are at least making people aware that this is not the way you want to do things.

Historic buildings and homes. The theme historic buildings and homes was developed as research participants emphasized the value that the community placed on preserving the historical traditions and sites throughout the City of Ferguson. Research participants utilized words and phrases such as “makes me happy,” “all well taken care of,” and a “positive thing” for the community. One participant whole-heartedly affirmed that the historic school, once attended by her grandmother, made her feel “nostalgic.” Another older adult felt that Ferguson should be proud of its heritage of stately homes, but needed “to do a better job of promoting ourselves.”

One research participant described how Ferguson originated as a train town and the community-wide effort to preserve the historic train cabooses in which families frequently visited.

*-...a train town...How
Ferguson came to be...
Business people got together
...purchased two cabooses.
The Ferguson Historical
Society...rehabbed them...
authentic on the inside...open
for tours...draws in tiny little
kids to senior citizens...It*



Figure 20. Train cabooses.

*makes me happy...I like to see people interacting with things that are around town...I
love the historic part...Driving down the main thoroughfare of the street...you see a
couple of red cabooses, you just think, 'wow, that's cool.'*

Research participants felt that the historic homes throughout Ferguson were particularly significant. They believed Ferguson had historic homes that rivaled anything found in what were considered more desirable parts of the county. They also showed a great interest in ensuring that these homes were cherished and preserved for future generations.



Figure 21. Example of historic home.

-...It is classic; gorgeous craftsman, big eaves, big porches on both sides...An example of a beautiful home...We have never been a braggadocios community. We don't try to sell ourselves...We need to do a better job of promoting ourselves...This home looks like it's loved...It says we are thrilled to be here...We are willing to take up upkeep on our lawn, the house itself...Someone who is proud of their home...I've only lived in old homes. I have a real soft spot for charm.

-...This could be in Midwest Magazine. I don't know that these are the images that people would have in their minds that they would find in North County.

One research participant chose to take a picture of her own home to demonstrate her affection for older homes and the sense of attachment she experienced for not only her home and memories inside, but the neighborhood that surrounds it. She explains that when any updates or repairs need to be made to the home, she always considers preserving the original architectural integrity.

- This is my home...raised 3 children here. It was built in 1908...There's one backyard separating this from the home I grew up...a great place to raise kids. They could wander the neighborhood as I did...always playmates around...grew up



Figure 22. Research participant's home.

knowing their neighbors...We remain there today...with knees that are 69 years old and laundry that's in a basement...My comfort zone is very small. I've only moved two homes

away from where I grew up...we're probably there to stay...Look at that front porch... There's a porch swing on there 12 months of the year...antique wicker furniture on there all summer...baskets hanging, strawberry crates, artwork...It looks like an outdoor living room. I like to see people walking their dogs...kids two doors away riding by on their bikes...It's just a window on the world...Everyone on the street is friendly and everyone does watch out for one another...That's part of being a community. I don't want to live in a house and not know who's around me...I'm really proud of the fact that you can live in a home for 48 years and still be happy; that it would have served your needs from the time you were raising your family until you were a senior citizen...It's been good to us.

She also captured the home that she grew up in, close to the home where she currently resides. The photo serves as a descriptor of some of the beautiful historical homes in her community, but also as a basis to reminisce about the memories she spent with friends and family.

-...this is where I grew up...It's a lovely home...Any child who was raised in a home like this would have just a warm and fuzzy feeling. We could entertain extended family. We had a huge, very deep lot...A great bar that I climbed up on when I was a kid...swings back there...a barbeque pit...family picnics...A home made for entertaining...it makes me feel really young. My girlfriends and I would sit out there. Boyfriends and I would sit out there after dates. It's just a beautiful home and a beautiful setting.



Figure 23. Research participant childhood home.

Another older adult demonstrated the pride of ownership exhibited by residents despite issues occurring within close proximity of their home.

-...this street abuts to some houses that are not in as good repair...These people...take good care of their homes...They are not fearful of what's two or three blocks away...There has been some crime over



Figure 24. Example of well-maintained home in Ferguson.

in that section...These people hang in there...All Victorian homes...all well taken care of...They care about the community...They care about their home...about the image that shows to people that come into town...A positive thing...an indication of their character...

The oldest school in Ferguson also symbolized a historical anchor and a personal anchor for an older adult progressing through life in the community.

-...one of the oldest schools in Ferguson...This means stable firm community. Where people would want to raise their kids...It's a beautiful neighborhood...I think my grandmother went there...It's an attraction to the city...nostalgic...

Community safety. The theme community safety developed as participants communicated about the various aspects of crime and safety in the community. Overall, male and female, Black and White older adults communicated, “we really feel safe,” “I feel comfortable,” “I don’t feel afraid,” and “people are looking out for the residents.” However, some also agreed that “opportunists see older adults as potential victims,” and that it was

important to be “cautious about my surroundings.” One research participant felt that “it only takes a handful to ruin a community,” and another states that her “doors are locked at all times.” Two research participants spoke about the criminal activity present at some of the local apartment complexes, stating that there had “been a lot of troubles in the past,” but at the time of data collection (late 2013- mid 2014) felt like tensions had been alleviated. One older adult felt that most of the crime in the apartment areas was “self-predatory,” an “unfortunate situation, “in which the victims must feel “powerlessness.” Finally, some older adults spoke about direct victimization or victimization they witnessed to property or other people in their community. They described their personal feelings as, “I felt violated,” “I felt frustrated,” and “sad.”

Several residents felt that Ferguson itself was not the main problem when it came to crime and violence in the community. Both Black and White participants voiced concern with crime in the context of nearby neighbors that brought unwanted chaos to the community.

- One of Ferguson’s main problems...are our neighbors – Berkeley, Dellwood, Cool Valley, and beyond. These areas have a lot more crime...but quite a bit of traffic through our city.

-...in Berkeley...known as the drug strip...a lot of gang activity...Since they had a major bust...I haven’t heard any gun shots...since the summer...That’s pretty good...One day...I heard some guns shots...from an automatic pistol...I went out...and see if I could find these cartridges...Put them in a plastic bag...give them to the police...It angers me...They’re either fighting over turf or drug debt...Don’t own any property in the neighborhood...Not paying any taxes...Don’t have a job...Bringing down the community...with the thought...they can get something for nothing... It only takes a handful to ruin a community...

Two female research participants, one Black and one White expressed their concern with security bars positioned on residential doors throughout their neighborhoods.

- ...security doors...that means...there are a lot of break-ins...on a regular basis...There are other ways...that you could secure your house; better lighting, alarm systems...The down and dirt way is to stick up bars...Most of that kind of crime happens within a mile of where the person lives...That means they're with us. They're our neighbors.



Figure 25. Bars on door.

The majority of the research participants stated that they felt very secure in Ferguson and did not restrict their day-to-day activities around the community.

- We really feel safe in our neighborhood...There's a new business...We were talking with them about why they chose here...They did not have to worry about where they walked at night...

However, some also acknowledged that crooks preyed on the feeble mind and body; targeting those who appeared to be an effortless mark. Therefore, one was wise to not foster conditions that would brand themselves as a suitable target.

- ...opportunists see older people as potential victims...When my mother got to a certain age there was no way...I would let her go up to the grocery store by herself...tottering... If I was a young thug I'd see easy pickins'. Dangling a purse...the whole bit.

-...predators...look for the weak. The lion looks for the wilder beast that is kind of stumbling...As you get older, that certainly is a factor. It doesn't necessarily have to be an extenuating circumstance...Predators go where there is easy pickings...deep pockets. We've got some friends that live over on Ladue Road...their house got broken into. They moved out of North County to get there...if you're gonna be a crook you go where the money is...it would be wise to be aware of your circumstances and not look to be a victim...Most criminals are cowards. They take the path of least resistance...don't be the path of least resistance.

Some research participants, mainly females, acknowledged that their spouses, friends, and family were more concerned about their safety than they were. Personally, they were reassured that the individual procedures they adopted assisted in their defense.

-...this is my community...I don't worry if I walk home from a city council meeting in the dark ...if I walk home from a friend's...This is my town...You don't want to mess with me...My husband will say, 'I wish you would be more aware...I wish you would be more careful'...I belong here...I don't walk around meek and mild, like there is always a boogey man. I walk around like I own this sidewalk. I'm not walking haltingly. I look like I can take care of myself.

- I just take my cell phone, my stick...I'm very conscious of the area...I just walk a different way...each time...If someone is watching me, they don't know which way I am going...I don't feel afraid. I feel happy. I wave to people and speak to people...I don't want to be worried. It interferes with your activities...I haven't been afraid since I got robbed...when my youngest daughter left...I said... 'I am not going to be afraid.'

In an extreme endeavor to ensure the safety of his wife in her late night adventures, one husband sent their daughter to look after her as she strolled through the neighborhood. The Black female also conveyed the gratitude she had for neighbors who watched over her like an extension of the family.

- I went out for a walk about 10:30...The cop got out of the car and they pulled my daughter over...I said, 'what's the problem?'...They said, 'Oh, we got a couple of calls...they said somebody was stalking you'...People in my neighborhood know that I walk late at night...they called the police...But what happened, my husband sent my daughter to trail me...so I didn't know she was trailing me. It was my own family...I asked her, 'what are you doing?' She said 'dad told me to come follow you'...Wasn't it a beautiful thing that I have neighbor?

Older adults expressed their sense of safety in different manners. One research participant articulated that safety meant that she and her dog could roam freely without reservation.

- It makes me feel warm and fuzzy that I have my dog...This is not my dog. I was babysitting this dog for five days, two years ago...Here's an animal that can't do anything for himself. Dependent totally on me...He can roam around and enjoy...I don't have to be afraid that somebody's going to steal him...



I've made a safe haven even for the dog. Figure 26. Dog.

She also had no personal intention of altering any of her current activities, walking proud and strolling through her community as she always had.

- ...out walking the dog....Lots of young people walking around, mostly guys...Their pants hanging down...Some of them knew me, some of them didn't...Even though its busy, I'm still able to take my dog out with no reservations...The guys are walking slow...I'll say, 'coming through'...They open up and let me through...That says a lot about my community.

- Most people think when you see a liquor store there's all the people hanging out... People would...shy away from there...I'm not shying away from there. I'm going up there. I'm passing there...I got a lot of respect from those people that stop in there...A little corner store for a lot of people that don't have cars...It's so orderly and clean that I don't have a problem passing it.

A Black male communicated his frustrating experiences as a young paperboy in North St. Louis City and observing older adults taken advantage of and robbed regularly. He also acknowledged the extreme security measures some older adults have taken in order to protect themselves.

- ...younger thugs have a tendency to feel that they can take advantage of older people...In the neighborhood that I grew up in they...were less reluctant to try to rob...older people...They were afraid they might be armed...Not only that, people respected older people...

Male and female, Black and White research participants spoke about their satisfaction with the work that their local police officers were undertaking to maintain safety in the community; expressing that police genuinely cared for and were concerned with the safety of

older adults. One Black female recognized that police regularly passed by her place of business to provide her assurance that they were watching out for her.

- Safety. I've got a lot of windows...I do have an alarm system...I am at my building sometimes as late as 9:00 and 10:00 o'clock...I am not a bit afraid. The mayor has let me know that he will have policemen coming by...Every now and then I will hear a horn blowing...It's a policemen...just passing through...It gives me assurance...People are looking out for the residents.

She also spoke about the safety that she felt in her neighborhood where her home was located and how the police regularly patrol that area.

...in the morning the doors are open. All down my block the doors are opened...I can see policemen coming up and down my street two...three times a day...I feel comfortable there.

However, not all of the older adults were as optimistic about their personal safety in the community as others were. One White female stated:

- I no longer feel comfortable working in my front yard...I never leave my car parked outside...I have an alarm system (I couldn't continue to live here by myself without it). My doors are locked at all times.

Another Black female stated that although she felt very safe during that day in her community she recognized that there were certain threats that existed during the evening hours.

- I don't travel a lot at night...I'm very cautious about my surroundings...I park my car in the garage...I have to come out of the garage to get into my front door...I would be afraid that somebody can come up on me especially if they know I live alone...

Two White males recognized that although most of Ferguson was relatively secure, there were particular areas where more crime appeared to transpire.

- There are areas that are a part of the City of Ferguson that are probably more problematic...Apartment areas...across West Florissant that used to be called Canfield Green...There have been lot of troubles in the past, but recently hasn't...There's the Sharon Dale Apartments behind McDonalds over by West Florissant, but they're putting a lot of money into. They put up wrought iron, six or eight foot tall fences all around the property...It's nice looking...I would feel safer...The fences would prevent someone from parking along...Ferguson Avenue...running into the apartment building...I see that as some real improvement to those apartment areas.

- By the transient nature of the apartment buildings that we have...There's robbery...shootings... domestic violence...It's unfortunate...It's primarily on the victims...who live there...It's self-predatory...An unfortunate situation...The city can send our cops in...I think the most frustrating thing is...it must be terrible to be in a mindset that is so hopeless that you allow that to continue...It seems like...people involved with that would say enough of this. But it doesn't occur...There must be powerlessness that goes along with that. I don't know how to image that.

Research participants spoke about particular measures taken by the City of Ferguson to enhance the safety of their community.

- This is our new emergency sign...There's five of them...If you're walking...see something happening there's a phone...It automatically go to the 911 operator...Anyone that would see this would say well the city's really taking a step to protect their

citizens...but it depends on how you look at it. So there must be a lot of crime here; look they've got these on every corner.

A couple of research participants spoke about reckless driving being a major issue in the community and some of the measures that the City of Ferguson had taken to try to address the problem.

- The speed on my street...The city has tried to address...Put the dividers in the street...They paid for a study...because we had people coming down that street at 60-70 miles per hour.

Research participants spoke about specific crime related incidents in their community and the impression it had left upon them. One Black female communicated how she felt after discovering damaged business vans that she utilizes for her public charity work.

-...one of my vans was vandalized...The same night, they removed a catalytic converter off of one of the other vans...I felt violated. I felt anger...I'm there a bunch of hours to give support to those in need...The cops stopped by...They felt sorry for me... When you've been violated...you think about it all the time...I started using the lights...bought the burglar alarm...I felt frustrated...I thank God that I was not angry at what we do...It never crossed my mind to quit...It made me more determined...We are doing goodwill... But I do want you to know...this is not utopia.

She also spoke about an incident in which the local veterinarian office was robbed and the frustration and perceptions associated with the broken window on the front façade of their building that has not yet been repaired.

-...there's a window here boarded...That bothers me...Out of all the goodness that we have going on, there are some things that can be distracting. This



Figure 27. Business burglary.

looks like there is some type of...decay. When you see boarded up buildings, you wonder why...When people don't have the right information, the mind can conjure up anything...Could have been a shooting...a robbery. Somebody could have died...they had a break in...They had their monitors working...had their alarm set...somebody was bold enough to go in and take lab taps...dog heaters...That caused me pause...I have been in my building at 3:00 o'clock in the morning...

One White female spoke specifically about the number of incidents that she had experienced in her own home. These included two separate break-ins and several windows shot at with pellet guns throughout the years.

-...we have had quite a number of incidents in this house...We put that lock in because at 3 o'clock on a Sunday morning a man tried to kick in the door so forcefully that the door is permanently warped...Our back door is a replacement...that got kicked in...That has really messed up my ability to sleep through the night.

-...there's my little pellet gun. This is in my garage...Why haven't I gotten it fixed?...I'm waiting for it to happen again...I also have a little pellet...in one of these side light storm windows...From the same kid...he shot out quite a number of the other windows in our barn which is older than the house...It was a real loss and it was too expensive for us to

replace it with that same quality glass...His punishment...I taught him how to replace the screen...

One research participant spoke about the sadness that she felt when she learned that someone's property in her neighborhood was vandalized. Although she felt sad, she also believed this was a very isolated occurrence.

- This is a house down the street...In front the homeowner...planted a row of small trees...Somebody came through...cut down all the trees...They certainly weren't mature trees...they weren't little saplings...We stopped one day...I said how sorry we were...It sounded like it might have been targeted for personal reasons...I don't think it is indicative of something going on in the community...it just made me sad because I hate to see trees destroyed...We have just lost a hundred-year-old tree in our front yard...I was particularly feeling bad...

Another Black female described her own past personal experience being robbed at gunpoint, but also described how she has not let that affect her future endeavors.

- I was robbed...at the Normandy bowling alley...at gun point...I had my keys in my teeth...I was picking up my ball to put in the car...he said, 'just give me the purse, just give me the purse.' I handed him the purse...I went back into the bowling alley and told the people that I had been robbed...The police, they caught him...I had to be in my 50's...I didn't want to go bowling anymore alone...I was not going anywhere alone anymore at night time...I've gotten over that...The only thing that's keeping me from going out at night is my vision. My vision is very, very bad. If they don't pick me up, I don't go.

Finally, a White female described an event that occurred shortly before her research interview in which a young lady was robbed at gunpoint outside of one of the local bars in Ferguson. Precautions were now taken to minimize victimization in the future.

...7:30 on a Saturday evening. She was getting in her car...He pulled his car around and stopped behind hers and said he had a gun and...said 'give me your purse' ...she tried to...talk him out of it and he said 'lady I'm not messing around' and pulled the gun...she pushed his hand away...he grabbed her and pulled her out of the car and took the purse and left...I thought nothing of tripping on out to my car...Now you're more aware of how you get in your car; you pull your door shut quickly...I look to see is there any one standing around me; are there any cars that are just sitting? ...I hurry up get in my car and lock the door. The guys go out until we get our cars started and drive away and then they come in.

Community investment. For the older adults in Ferguson, community investment depicted an immeasurable phenomenon. They reported inspiring stories of people investing in their community and in turn the community reinvesting in them as a maturing adult. They also spoke about their encouragement in witnessing young and vibrant visionary investors taking a leap of faith in their community to make it a better place. This also included the impressive efforts of the City of Ferguson to improve opportunities and infrastructure to promote engagement among their residents.

Older adults described Ferguson as a “hidden jewel” with many “positive things going on.” They felt “fortunate”, “hopeful”, and “optimistic” about the amount of positive “progress” occurring in their community. Older adults also spoke of their “inspiration” in the number of volunteers in their community working towards the “betterment of Ferguson” and how countless

volunteers came together, assisting friends, family, neighbors, and strangers, with tornado damage repairs from past years.

Research participants exhibited an almost indescribable affection for their neighborhood and community. Neighbors had quickly become friends and then family through the years. One older adult explained that being part of a community meant,

- loving where you are, loving it with all its quirks. It's hard to explain the feeling...From the very beginning we had felt like we belonged here.

When one is part of a genuine family, they become invested and are able to look beyond the minor blemishes and idiosyncrasies that exist, demonstrating an authentic affection unfounded anywhere else.

Older adult spoke about how their love for the appearance of the “house” drew them into the neighborhood and community. However, it was the bond that developed that moved them beyond a beautiful and suitable house, to a home with neighbors they trusted. Neighborhood children became their nearest and dearest, just as neighbors had fostered a relationship with their own children when they were small.

-...we bought this house...We liked the house...When we found out that we loved the community...we were...beside ourselves...We were part of...history because this...is an older community.

Some research participants grew up in Ferguson, raised their children in Ferguson, and now entertained their grandchildren in Ferguson. They are invested in Ferguson. Ferguson is their home, big or small.

-...neighborhoods are people...I love it. They think...when you have arrived, you should have a big house. I'm very comfortable...When I want to come to a big house, I'll come to your house.

- I haven't moved more than two yards away in 69 years...I'm either very blessed or very boring...I'm always told that I am very blessed.

Another lifetime resident, so indefinably acquainted with her community, could not imagine living anywhere else. She was invested in her home and neighborhood while she cared for her aging mother.

- I like it. It's comfortable. I like my house. It's quite. It's pretty. I like my yard. My house is perfectly comfortable for me...It's convenient to everything I know....My mom and dad live within blocks, my dad is deceased now but my mother still lives there...I visit her all the time.

One Black female spoke about her neighborhood in comparison to the hustle and bustle of city life that she had come accustomed to; she had become invested in Ferguson's tranquility.

-...overall I still enjoy my neighborhood...When I first moved here I couldn't even sleep at night...It was so quiet and peaceful. I was used to the noise.

One older adult invested in her community by conveying a helpful and approachable manner to those traveling through her community in need of assistance. She described a circumstance in which a man driving through town was trying to find his way to a particular street. He asked another man on the street for directions, but he was unable to assist him.

-There was a new guy that I never seen when I was out on this day...He was trying to get to Georgia...I said... 'you have to go back to Harvey...make a right...then you will be on Georgia' ...It never crossed his mind to approach me...What...I did...was let him know...in

this neighborhood we are approachable....Guess what, the old lady knows how to get you where you want to go.

Ferguson has been plagued with a series of misfortunes over the past few years.

However, research participants spoke about how some of those tragedies have unified their community and brought them closer together.

- Community—when you get those first four letters...put them to the side...put a dash after the last “m” you have the word ‘unity.’ That’s what we are. We are unified.

-...it is a neighborhood...There are people that care about one another...A neighborhood is first a place where I live. This is my dwelling place. This is where I rise and shine.

Research participants spoke about their experience with the tornadoes that occurred in 2011 and 2013.

- I think people tend to help each other. When we had that tornado, people in the streets and people helping out the next day. I don’t think you find that everywhere.

- All the churches came together...We worked like dogs...FEMA estimated that we did over a half a million dollars’ worth of work for that first tornado...The CERTs...People could not afford, with their insurance, to get that kind of work done...We had people that came from Iowa...come from everywhere with CERT...chain saws...big as me...We came together...It was beautiful...We had a lot of men on my team and I was the one, a woman here, that’s in charge. They had no problem...they called me ‘ever ready’ because everything we needed was ready...We came together...We had meetings before and after. It was just wonderful...A lot of us got to know one another...We was working so close together...

-...Urban Chestnut, you ever been down there? It's a nice restaurant downtown. I heard the guy that is the manager...on the radio...He said that they got all new furniture made from the oak trees that came down...from the tornado two years ago.

Male and female, Black and White older adults volunteered heavily in other daily activities and events throughout the community.

- There's a group in Ferguson that heavily volunteers...You get sucked into it.

- Do not label me a racist – I am a realist. The racists have already moved...I am among a very dedicated group...who work very hard in various volunteer capacities toward the betterment of Ferguson. There are many wonderful residents, business owners...city employees...Ferguson is my home, I love Ferguson and hope I can always live here until I too, get 'carried out feet first.'

-...I service people...in need...Pack up food for them at night...in the mornings the food is ready to go...It's a big turn over...I get a lot of emergencies...It's not like I can tell somebody, 'oh, come next week'...We're total volunteer...nobody gets paid...More people are in need than ever before...During the day I'm talking on the phone...ministering...prayer...They are looking for hope.

Research participants also invested in their community through their participation in other various events throughout the community and the surrounding area.

- Everything that goes on in Ferguson...the neighborhood meetings, I go to that...birthday parties around our little ten house block...I love it...We trade off barbequing...At Thanksgiving and Christmas...they'll come over and get dressing...then they'll send me a crumble cake...

- *My friends, we all hang out...the little bar across the street...If we got out during the week, we just grab...a hamburgers...chopped salads...They have dart contests...All kinds of stuff going on...*

- *...group of our friends...We meet at the local bar one night a week...We're all involved in the community as far as different committees...We like to BBQ...enjoy each other company...I just like being involved...I like the outcome...It's satisfaction when you're done.*

- *I swim at the Y...bowl at the Big Webber...I go dancing...go out to the clubs...I walk a lot...I've been an active person all my life...I'm still doing my own lawn.*

- *We visit the restaurants...attend the farmer's market...use the walking/hiking trail that goes from downtown, the Ted Jones Trail over through UMSL.*

- *...there are a lot of people that do a lot of walking in Ferguson...As the weather starts to break in March, you'll see a lot of people riding bikes...I never seen anybody getting mugged. I never heard of anybody being harassed...Not in the 30 years I've been there.*

Several older adults spoke that they had become invested in the small town accessible feel of their community. It was a place that was safe for their children to walk to school on their own and a place where they felt comfortable growing old.

- *...we both came from smaller towns...It feels like a small town...in a big metropolitan area.*

- *We were talking to an exchange student in Florissant...She was saying that she felt so isolated...She was from someplace in Europe...She could walk every place or bicycle...here you had to have a car...That really struck home...I thought... 'that's not true of Ferguson' ...I can walk to the post office...grocery store...library...restaurants...That*

enhances the feeling of community...As we get older and contemplate not being able to drive, that is also a plus.

Male and female, Black and White research participants had consciously invested in their neighborhoods by getting to know everyone on their block.

- I like that neighbors know one another. I know everybody on my block. I know everybody on the block in front of me....Even though my house butts up into another subdivision...know everybody on that block...it's the camaraderie of the neighborhood...

- It always feels safe. Maybe it's because we have made the efforts...We have laid roots....We met the neighbors because we ran and jogged, so we would see people and stop and talk...

- Know your neighbor...That's easy to do...That is contagious. When you grow up greeting people that you don't know...other people see you do that...

- I describe Ferguson as a community with people who live in houses with front porches...greeting the people...walking the streets...There are...communities where you pull into your subdivision...pull the garage door up...pull the car up...You don't know your neighbor...Speak to your neighbors...socialize with neighbors...This is an asset...that draws people together...

- People need to get to know each other, to interact...exchange phone numbers...ideas... Once the residents show an interest, the city shows more of an interest...They still function off that squeaky wheel gets to oil thing...If you are not in their face telling them about it all the time, then you kind of get left behind.

Several older adults, both Black and White, spoke about how important they felt it was that young families with children invested in their community; to enjoy the same lifelong fulfilling relationships that they had enjoyed.

- I'm always glad to see young people in our community. It's extremely important to me that families live in Ferguson. If my husband and I as senior citizens leave, it's not such a big deal. But you always need those next generations...to see grade school kids coming and going to school. I have a garden in the front yard. The kids always speak to me. They will ask me what a plant is. If they feel comfortable walking the street, I feel comfortable having them out there.

- ...a group of girls who were walking home from Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Parochial School...It sort of typifies to me what living in the old town part of Ferguson is...in this day and age that's really important...The girls after school bonding...That's a real draw for families to be able to move somewhere where their kids can walk to school.

- Because of the size of the houses...price of the houses, we are seeing a lot of young families moving in, which is refreshing...very hopeful...There are a good many people in the neighborhood that realize the value of the neighborhood and the community...

Not only was it important to see young families with children, but they also expressed their desire to be a positive influence on young people in their neighborhood.



Figure 28. Girls walking home from school.

-...I would get out here...try to learn how to...talk and deal with the younger generation. To give them some inspiration and some hope...I used to tell my son, and my daughter... 'it may seem like I'm raising...a lot of hell, but...I want you to do better than I did...if you and your sister did better than I did...I've done some correct'...that's all I want...

One Black female spoke about teaching young people to be respectful neighbors and living harmoniously with one another.

- The little guy on the corner, he's been there for about nine months...I heard this 'baboom, baboom, noise' ...I went over in my robe and...said, 'hey, this is a neighborhood. You can't have this noise here...I don't want to have to put a sign up about noise.' 'Oh, no ma'am, no ma'am.' I said 'okay, tell all your friends' ...He told all of his friends don't come here with all that noise...They work in a band...They are real good, too...but you're not going to play over here like that.

She spoke about how they have developed a mutual respect in their neighborhood and how the young man comes over and borrows things from them, seeks advice, and asks for help with various tasks.

-...when he first got his lawn mower, he came over...asked my husband to show him what to do...He bought this big barbeque grill...he called my husband over and said 'can you come over and show me how to use it?'...When he had to go somewhere where he had to wear a tie, he came over...and showed him how to tie the tie...

All older adults were very enthusiastic about the continuous growth and improvements they saw in their community. They were excited about investors coming to the area and the time and money that they City of Ferguson was investing to improve resources and opportunities for

their citizens and visitors. Several of the research participants were also heavily invested in their community through various opportunities.

Nearly every research participant spoke about all of the positive progress occurring in Ferguson. They were particularly excited about the new community center being built. Participants were enthusiastic about the prospect of having a place to hold meetings and community gatherings. They spoke eagerly about the grass roots efforts that many of them were involved in to launch the project.

-Ferguson has a ton of projects going on right now...a new fire department...police department...community center...A number of good, positive things



Figure 29. New community center.

going on. If you've always lived here...you are very thankful...People...have lunch from Emerson or Express Scripts and they say, 'wow, we never crossed the property line coming into Ferguson. We didn't know this was here.' This is a great hidden jewel...that's important...it says we care. We are moving forward...progress.

-...when you have a community, you need a community center...We have a number of youth organizations here...they need somewhere to gather...I thank the city staff...city council for realizing that this was something that our community was lacking...They are willing to put the money into this...As people drive by they are thinking, 'wow, look what's going on in Ferguson.'

Research participants boasted about the community-wide effort to assist in obtaining the church to transform it into the new community center.

...the citizens got together and said save that church...It is one of the cornerstones of our community...It took door-to-door canvassing...asking for votes...The archdiocese said they would sell it...With the money that the city paid, with the increase in taxes, the church was able to upgrade...we got the property.

Research participants also spoke about how fortunate they felt having a major university close to their hometown. They felt that having a major university nearby not only provided opportunities for community members that might not otherwise exist, but that various business opportunities, students, staff, and professors were drawn into Ferguson because of the proximity to the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

-...Mark Twain Recreation Center at UMSL...The city is really fortunate to have the university...Classes that are open to the public...a new pool...They are good about letting...the surrounding community use their facilities... We have a number of apartments...for university students...If they are living there, they are also eating there...joining in community events...When their experience is positive, they are telling people about that...



Figure 30. UMSL Mark Twain Recreational Center.

In addition to the new community center, older adults also felt that the City of Ferguson was doing a number of other things to promote community engagement throughout the city.

Many of these community engagement opportunities were free to residents in an effort to promote socialization.

-...they have concerts there in the summer...

fall, spring. It's a place for people to gather...listen to music. It's maybe two or three year old...It's a good feeling...It looks like it's something the city did to...promote community togetherness...The city is concerned about...older retired people...It is something that they can do that doesn't cost them anything and get enjoyment out of it.

Older adults in Ferguson were thrilled about the number of positive projects developed by investors in their community. In the past few years several stores, restaurants, apartments, and other businesses have been revitalizing the main strip in the old town part of Ferguson.

-...a new young man...has taken this building...added apartments above it...This is what can be done...if someone has faith in the community...Puts a smile on my face. I'm always encouraged when someone has the ability...money...time...to start a big project...

Another great building with opportunity to bring in new residents...new business people on South Florissant Road.



Figure 31. Community gathering place.



Figure 32. New downtown development 1.

The unofficial community center in Ferguson has become the Corner Coffee House. Several research participants spoke about their amazement in the rehab of this building, how it has become a meeting place for several community organizations, a place to meet friends, and grab a cup of coffee.



Figure 33. Corner Coffee House.

-...the Corner Coffee House...was an auto parts store...before that it was a car dealer...He took this extremely filthy, disgusting, dirty, greasy building...made it into a charming coffee house...There are teachers who stop there every morning for coffee... senior citizens who gather there...Most of them are men...If your group has a meeting, you can hold it down there...Been our community center for a number of years...Makes me smile to see all these men sitting around communicating...They are all cheerful... laughing...teasing one another...There is somewhere you can go in the morning...you know that a friendly face is going to greet you...It also shows that...a small community-minded man can start a business like this and have it be successful.

Older adults also expressed their excitement with a number of other businesses that have invested in Ferguson over the past



Figure 34. New downtown development 2.

several years. Several research participants told their own individual stories about a progressive minded lifelong resident who decided to invest in making his home a better place. He invested not only architecturally and in terms of community development, but in the soul of Ferguson. Everyone felt individually touched by the man's efforts to improve the city. These positive contributions regularly overshadowed crime related events that the media chose to cover about their community.



Figure 35. New downtown development 3.

*-...Things have changed a lot.
When I was growing up...
there was brick buildings all
along the street...pictures of
Ferguson in the 50's, 60's...
almost all of those buildings*



Figure 36. Ferguson Brew House.

*are gone...For a long time there wasn't any new stuff going on...This building was the beginning...He did this...he did the Brew House...his son has The Cork and Vincenzo's...
Now he has had a stroke...his son has taken over...Now we have a new investor in
Ferguson...There's a lot going on...*

*-...the Post-Dispatch is writing up good reviews about the restaurants...There's an
element here that you find in some of the more trendy suburban cities; Cottleville,
Webster, Kirkwood...When people start talking now about urban blossoming, they are*

talking about places like Richmond Heights...Ferguson has come in to....That kind of counters the murder...domestic violence calls that you hear about on the evening news... The totality of this is optimistic.

One White male spoke about the optimism that he felt about new investors revitalizing some of the historic homes in the area.

-...it's a home...It's vacant...They are repairing it...You feel hopeful when you see this going on...People are interested enough to



Figure 37. Remodeled historic home.

try to preserve what we've got...the oldest frame home in Ferguson...A beautiful house.... They sort of talked about it being a party house for wedding receptions...It shows a lot of pride in the city...Someone who had the money to do it stepped up to preserve it...North County...is thought of as not having very much to show...It certainly is a show place. People had talked about this house through the years...You feel good that someone recognized the value of it...

Vacant property. Male and female, Black and White older adults were particularly concerned with the amount of vacant homes in their community. Some of those homes were vacant due to foreclosure and some were due to tornado damage that occurred in 2011 and 2013. Vacant properties made older adults anxious about decreasing property values in the neighborhood, the image of the neighborhood, and crimes that may occur in or around those

vacant properties. They described various vacant properties throughout their community as a “genuine mess,” a “black hole,” “an eyesore for the neighborhood,” “extremely dangerous looking,” and “tacky.” Research participants believed that these properties “cast a bad light on Ferguson” and they expressed “frustration with the city” because “no progress seems to happen” on some of the properties. They also felt that the situation with the enormous number of vacant homes was “frustrating,” “unfortunate,” “upsetting,” “discouraging,” and “disheartening.”

One older adult was concerned about the appearance of some of the vacant homes in her neighborhood and the length of time that the foreclosure process seemed to take.

- I saw a couple of houses that are really looking kind of bad...I know there is one down the street...where the grass is growing quite tall...sometimes the door is left open. It's probably in the process of being foreclosed. The foreclosure process just drags on and on...I think it had a blue tarp on it at one time...I don't know if they corrected that problem or not. But then there's another house...It's vacant and the gutters are falling down...It's looking very tacky.

Unfortunately, in conjunction with the lengthy foreclosure process the essential components of the home begin to fail as it sits uninhabited. Historic community gems become quickly dilapidated and frequently if repaired, cheaper materials are used, compromising the architectural integrity of the home.

- We have two vacant houses...just past my next door neighbor's house, they have both just been sold...One has been vacant for a couple of years....The people just walked away...Then the one right next to this one was a darling little red brick...Tudor style...on a double lot...It had a beautiful tile roof...it did have a leak. So did Bank of America fix

the leak? No, they ripped off all the tile roof...put on a cheap asbestos roof...there goes half the character of the house.

Another common concern among research participants were the official notices placed on windows and doors on the front of the house. These notices become an obvious sign that no one lives in the house and thus became a target for criminal activity.

- The house next to us has...official notices...Every month they send somebody out to check on the house...I commented that that is a real problem...that says... 'boy, here I am empty now' ...legally they had to do that...We are very watchful of the house, but we are not here all the time...

Several research participants commented that they had vacant properties next to or near their own property in which they had personally taken it upon themselves to partially maintain or keep a watchful eye. Two male research participants mowed the lawn at neighboring vacant homes to make it look lived in and less of an attraction from crime. This also helped maintain the image of their home and property. One research participant spoke about his frustration with a man breaking into the vacant house next door to him and the action that he took to help prevent it in the future. These residents have become the unofficial neighborhood watch group, looking out for and reporting suspicious activity in the community.

- ...this house was vacant...The guy I see him going through the neighborhood all the time...I saw him in the back of the house...I immediately called the police on him...When he saw me he left...He had removed the garbage disposal out of the house...I went over there...put some screws in the door...so that he couldn't walk go back in...He would have to break a window...I'd automatically hear him...When I called the police I told the officer... 'that a personal threat to me because if the guy comes over here on my

property...climbs over that fence...touches anything... I'm going to take person action against him. You won't have to, I'll do it.'

People in the community were particularly upset about the condition of this home because it is on a main thoroughfare in the community and is considered one of the historic charms. It was well documented by several research participants.



- This is the old century house...Some opportunistic flippers got in and they either bit

Figure 38. Old century home.

off more than they can chew or they just don't care...It's just a genuine mess...They bought the house and then the tornado happened...The one we call the Good Friday...One of the things that Ferguson is proud of is the old Victorian houses. The old railroad...houses that were built; two-story, three-story...this was one of them...Some of the gems of the community don't get the attention that you would think would...On my bad days, it shows the neglect of the city...There are a good number of people that look at some of those houses...and say those are the prime of the city...It just casts a bad light on Ferguson as a whole...If this were in Kirkwood, this wouldn't occur. And there are houses in Ferguson that rival anything in Webster and Kirkwood.

Another common theme were homes that were abandoned or turned into rental property because of older adults passing away in the community. The homes were not worth enough

money to encourage their family to do anything and are left to deteriorate and become a blight in the neighborhood.

- This is a house that has been empty for 10 years...It overlooks Jeske Park...An elderly gentleman lived here



Figure 39. Abandoned home overlooking Jeske Park.

died. All the family is out of state...can never come to a conclusion on what should be done with the property....People have looked at it and wanted to buy it. The city has contacted them. They do not keep it up. It's not for sale. They have refused any overtures...It's a black hole...It is an eyesore for the neighborhood...It's a level of frustration with...housing values in the city...If it was a quarter of a million dollar house sitting there...somebody would have been doing something with it...There's days that I feel wonderful about living in Ferguson and then there's days that I'm thinking, 'man, I've got to get out of here quick...'

Other older adults expressed a tremendous emotional attachment to vacant and neglected homes in their communities. Their friends and families once resided in these homes and they had very fond memories from when they were growing up. In some cases, research participants almost appeared to give these homes humanistic qualities and characteristics as they described the heartache they suffered over their declining state.

-...I went to brownie meetings in this house when I was a little girl and one of my friends lived there...makes me sick...How could you misuse a house and a property that badly? ...The city should never let it get that bad. They seem to go around Ferguson with their

little blinders on and pass things...Aren't these inspectors going by and seeing these things on their own? Do we have to be complainers and tell them?...It's just frustrating...breaks my heart...such a waste...The owner doesn't care, the city doesn't care enough to protect everybody on the block.



Figure 40. Abandoned brownie meeting home.

-...there's nobody that lives here. These bushes are all growing up...their bird

bath...It's knocked over...no windows...no curtains...It just looks like...somebody could see no one lives here and...steal copper...It's unfortunate...My best friend in high school used to live in this house...It means something to me...I've been in this house...We would walk



Figure 41. Abandoned high school best friend's home.

home from school every day in junior high and high school...and we would watch American Bandstand. Iconical...I hate to see it treated like this.

- How many of those in the neighborhood do you need?...The general idea is...things are not looking good...My neighborhood is maybe not as healthy as it used to be.

One research participant felt discouraged about the manner in which society had begun to view homes in the community as merely disposable properties.

-...a vacant home...boarded up...an abandoned property that could be a health hazard, a fire hazard, people could move in there...Kids could go in there...do drugs...My tendency like most peoples is avoidance...It's upsetting...discouraging...disheartening, it makes you feel as though any



Figure 42. Abandoned, boarded up home.



Figure 43. Dilapidated home.

money that you sink into your home now is just an absolute waste; you're just flushing it...it's...difficult to tell what is neighborhood deterioration and what is social deterioration...Thinking of...your home...as strictly financially just an investment...was a very bad move for society to take...It has hurt communities...made it just seem so horribly self-centered...Took away a lot of the feelings that people ought to have about their homes and communities.

Research participants expressed their frustration with homes that had unfortunately been damaged by fire. These homes were left vacant in a dilapidated state for many years with no action taken on them.

-...this is a house that caught fire...almost two year ago...nothing has been done. I don't know whether they are waiting on insurance...It is so discouraging...discouraging for people who live around it...It certainly has to affect property values...I've been in the house...It's a good house...We have another one in the neighborhood that caught fire about a year ago...They just sit there...I don't know whether it is an attraction for crime, but...doesn't speak well for the neighborhood.

-...I was...in the neighborhood that day the house caught fire...something really needs to be done here because all the houses around there are impeccably clean...This means that the property value in that neighborhood is going to go down...It upsets me that that was such a nice neighborhood...One that I grew up in...I knew the people that owned the house originally, it was a gorgeous house...boarded up...just sitting there waiting for something to happen...A boarded up house, literally with boards looks a whole lot worse than just a vacant house...

Boarded-up homes were more disturbing to research participants than homes that were simply vacant. Boards were most likely present as a security measure to keep vagrants from busting out all of the windows in the home or to cover up windows and doors that had already suffered damage. However, research participants agreed that a building covered in boards conveyed a grimmer reality than did a merely uninhabited house.

-...vacant houses that are boarded up that appear vacant ...What I mean by that is if you have a vacant house...you leave the drapes up, leave it look like its lived in...keep the grass cut, people really don't know its



Figure 44. Abandoned home; plywood over doors and windows.

vacant....If you put plywood over the windows...over the doors so that people can't come in and steal your copper well that looks like an invitation...They know nobody could be living in a house that's got that kind of stuff on it.

One research participant thought that if the situation necessitated that a vacant home must have plywood over the windows and doors, that it would be beneficial if the plywood were painted the same color as the house as to not make it so obvious that the home is empty.

-...you've got some big tall bushes by the front door...They can hide someone entering entering this vacant house. The plywood over the windows is painted to match the house so you don't see the issues right away...because the wood is painted...There was some effort to make it not become an eyesore in the neighborhood...



Figure 45. Abandoned home; painted plywood.

-...you can't tell if the car maybe belongs to the neighbor who parked it in the driveway to make it look occupied or if someone in the house is there. But because of the board up on the window it makes you think that it's vacant. The car, don't know who it belongs to makes you think... maybe it might not be vacant...The



Figure 46. Abandoned home; neighbor parked in driveway.

neighbors trying to...reduce the vulnerability of this house to burglars...I'm not sure if there's a mailbox there or not...I worry...if I see a property that doesn't have a mailbox at the curb...somebody's knocked it out and nobody's put it back up...Therefore, it indicated to whoever knocked it out that there's an opportunity available.

Vacant homes in the community where nothing was done to improve their current condition often conveyed to older adults that the City of Ferguson did not care about the deteriorating image of the community and the effect it had on other individual's property in the neighborhood.

-...there could be crime...They could be using that house....It's getting more... deteriorated and the people on both sides of this house keep a very nice yard...That's gotta bring down property values...That's a perfect place for people if they are selling drugs...They could be...inhabiting that house...trash all over the front yard, the doors hanging off. Would you want to live next door to that?...The neighborhood's

deteriorating and the city...doesn't care...They wouldn't have let that go that long...I go by it every day going to work...Every day's worse and worse.

-...this has been this way for years...The tornado's hit the roof...They have not done anything about it...The city has not been vigilant about...vacant properties, run down properties. There have been others in the last ten plus years that the city has purchased...torn down...rehabbed...This is one that they have not touched. Part of it is anger that it's been allowed to sit there and nothing be done...It shows deterioration...That the city doesn't really care...

In some cases, research participants were happy to see progress on vacant and dilapidated properties in their community.

-...big equipment bulldozing a house down. This house was damaged in the tornado



Figure 47. Bulldozed home.

...beyond repair...This was something positive to me...in this instance, the homeowner and the city did not let that linger. It was taken care of...There's progress being made...It no longer drags the rest of the homes on this street back. It shows progress...It makes me feel like someone cares.

Several older adults were also concerned about the condition of a number of vacant and distressed businesses in their community. Two White research participants, one male and one female mentioned the condition of the Math Center.

- Math center. It used to be a bowling alley. Then it was a batting cage area...then it sat vacant for 10 years...then it was donated...but it's just a shell...There wasn't anything in it but just mold...There's a roof on it but here is



Figure 48. Math Center.

leakage...The city continually harassed her about it while there are other properties like that one...When she was still here a year ago she called me to tell me that someone had gotten into her stuff and stolen some of the things...What she found...was a room...on the back of one side...all her stuff was back in there...Some kids had taken some tables and apparently gotten three fold out tables...An old cash register that was of some value...was in there...That has since been sold...She lost her house through default...It describes frustration with the city...The city really, I don't think, did much to encourage the math center...If she...found someone who...had the money to rehab it...it would have been a wonderful thing...

Older adults felt that vacant businesses not only cast a bad light on the image of the community, but added to the perception of advanced decay and criminal activity.

-...there aren't lots of vacant buildings...glass is broken in it...boarded up...I would hope that someone would want to open a business...Sad that it sat empty for some time...No progress seems to happen...They are easier to break in...Kids see that as fair game. No one's going to be...around there to even care if it does...If that's all you have

to go on, you could think that may be an indicator of crime...I don't know what has kept anybody from moving in...I don't know if there are landlords that don't really care or rent is too high...people are always looking to open businesses and that one is sitting...vacant for at least a year...



Figure 49. Vacant commercial building.

- This is the Chandler Construction Company Commercial Building ...It has been in disrepair for...years. The roof is caving ...Someone has ripped siding off to expose a



Figure 50. Chandler Construction building.

window on the side...It's extremely dangerous looking...It looks like that street is in decline. The rest of the property owners keep their homes up...It's a terrible reflection in the city. It's depressing. It looks like it does not belong in the City of Ferguson...

It is not only vacant homes and businesses that are problematic, vacant land can also become a symbol of community decay if it becomes an area for illegal dumping and other criminal activity.

- The airport came through
...bought all of the buildings
across the street...That's why
it's vacant. They took up all
of the streets...sidewalks...
after the airport bought it, it
was looking like a park...Then



Figure 51. Vacant lot.

North Park Development bought it...took out all the trees...now it looks like the
desert...There was actually a big apartment building right around the corner; an eight-
family building. Across the street there were like three three-family duplexes...lots of
activity...It's not too bad if they maintain it...this year...it's been okay. They cut it once,
which is a milestone...They don't pay attention, act like it isn't there unless you call...
They will send someone out...chop the weeds down...leave them in the street, and go
away; cut the paper up...let it fly around.

Racial integration and community transformation. Many of the older adults who participated in the research study were lifetime or longtime residents of Ferguson. They remember when the community was predominantly White and have witnessed the racial transformation that occurred. However, most felt that the change was not something they considered disruptive. Older adults described their community as “integrating with variety,” and the transformation as “positive.” One participant described the individuals moving into Ferguson as “icky” and contributing to “increased crime.”

-...the diversity in Ferguson has changed amazingly...usually not in a bad way. When I was growing up...there were no Black people in Ferguson...now I think we are about 60/40...over a 50 year period.

A White male felt his community continued to become more and more integrated throughout the years with a variety of races emerging.

-...the neighborhood has become more integrated...both races moving in and out...That's a positive...The rest of the city is still becoming more integrated...it's not just one race coming in...It's still integrating with variety. Which is good.

Two White research participants, one male and one female moved to Ferguson from another community because they valued the diversity Ferguson had to offer and wanted their children to have a broader education.

-...we moved here at a time when the Ferguson and Florissant school district was going through voluntary desegregation...Everyone thought we were crazy...You know, you're going to have problems...We wanted a community that was not lily white. We wanted a community that was diverse...we have continued to value that.

One Black female spoke about the importance of churches integrating and coming together for various events.

-...We are integrated...I love that...There will maybe be 20 churches that come together. We call it a church exchange...There's no Black or White congregation...Everybody comes together.

This research participant also spoke about the importance of integration in her neighborhood.

- My neighborhood is not all Black ...very much integrated...so I like it.

However, not everyone interviewed felt that racial integration was a positive change in the community. One White female perceived that the racial transformation of the community brought some socially undesirable individuals into the neighborhoods.

- Trash is all over the place...People just throw it down...It's mostly the Black people I see doing this...It's a cultural these people have come from airport buyout in Berkley and Kinloch. Very much I mean always consider those icky...people I think more recently have come from the city...They tore down Pruitt Igoe...A lot of these people never have bought a house...They don't know how to take care of it. They didn't know they have to pay their rent or their house payment...This has always been a target because we have a lot more reasonably priced houses.

- All of the changes over the years (particularly our demographics) have contributed to increased crime.

Two White females also noted that it was difficult to attract desirable businesses to the area because of the change in demographics. They felt White residents moved to more affluent communities with better schools.

-...when I grew up here...this was an all-White community... White people are comfortable living...with a 28% Black minority... We are now at over 70%...we're in the minority...businesses look up their demographics...and they aren't coming here.

-...Our public schools are populated mostly by African American children. I know many former public school teachers who have given up because of behavior and learning problems in the schools...Young professional and middle class couples do not wish to purchase homes here...They must send their children to private or parochial schools... The entire school issue is a major cause of concern...

However, one White male felt that although white-flight had become the norm in certain areas of St. Louis County, he did not feel that applied to Ferguson.

- The trend in St. Louis County, for entering communities, is white-flight. The vacuum is almost deafening...the infrastructure, crime, so forth. It deteriorates very quickly. That has not been the case in Ferguson. And you see that by God's grace or careful planning of both of our leaders, there seems to be a nonaggressive but determined feeling from people that care and have a perception of place...thus so far are trying to make the effort to make it better.

Natural surveillance. Male and female, Black and White older adults were apprehensive about obstructions that hindered their natural ability to observe activities within their neighborhood. This might include lack of street and porch lighting and unbridled vegetation growth that conceal nefarious activities from public view. Homes without lighting were described as “dark” and “uninviting.” Other overgrown areas “hide activities” and “intimidate” older adults.

One research participant described a vacant home that had no lighting because of the lack of electricity present in the house.

...porch lights on the left...porch lights on the right...nothing in the middle...Well, houses that don't have porch lights on...it becomes dark, it's inviting...When there's no porch lights, vacant houses quite often don't have electricity on and so criminals see those Black houses and they become targets...Burglars that's don't want to worry about having to meet people while they are in the house...

Older adults were also concerned about lighting in some of the neighborhood parks. Parks had specific hours to prevent individuals from entering them in the evening hours,

however they admitted that people went there at night and participated in activities that hid them from view.

- It's a pocket park that looks ok in the day time. There's no lighting at night...a nice dark area to conduct illicit business. The addition of some solar powered LED lights might make a difference in being able to see...There's some



Figure 52. Pocket park.

opportunities that...could be taken to improve its...function and its visibility...Neighbors across the street would be able to see more of what's going on...

Research participants were also concerned with the condition of some lots and land in their neighborhoods. In particular, it appeared that mowing an abandoned vacant lot was part of the city maintenance code, but trimming of landscaping was not. Older adults felt that this should also be included in the code so that criminals would not have places to hide.

...a deep empty lot that has overgrowth on both sides which effectively hide activities from being viewed from the street...The grass still gets mowed, but there's isn't trimming of overgrowth done here. That's not part of the part of the code...if I had an empty lot next to my house I



Figure 53. Overgrown lot.

would be looking at what would it cost me to obtain that lot to make it part of my property so that I could eliminate that issue...Cleaning up the over growth on both sides so that a clear visual sideline could be seen from the street.

Another common concern was overgrown vegetation around homes that concealed individuals from view who might have crime in mind. This included both property crimes and crimes towards people in the community.

-...the person can be standing behind the tree and I wouldn't be able to detect it until I was close up...I'm very cautious about my surroundings...I would trim back the tree and bring it up where it would not obstruct my view...During the day they can see me coming and be on



Figure 54. Overgrown bushes.

one side and then as I'm passing by...they can come around and I would never see anything...There have been times when somebody kicked in a person's front door...that would prevent a neighbor from actually seeing it. We'd hear the noise but we won't see nothing...

-...these bushes. If you're walking down the street they are unable to see what's on the other side. It intimidates me to the point that I would probably cross the street. Especially at night time... Years



Figure 55. Overgrown landscaping.

ago I probably would have walked down there and not give it any thought...but nowadays you looking at everybody and everything...I want to know what that code enforcers doing for real...We've had issues...it would attract...home invasion, burglary, care tampering because it's blocking the vision of the automobiles there...Assault because you can't see whose up on you until they're there.

One research participant knew overgrown landscaping was a safety issue in the community and local police officers had stressed the importance of properly maintaining it to not giving people places to hide around the home. However, she thought that in some circumstances, the overgrowth looked pleasant.

- Ok, way overgrown...The police always give out these helpful hints about how to make your house look lived in is keep your bushes cut back...If you're trying to talk about somebody who has nefarious activities could hide...Although personally I think it looks kinda nice...Just because it's overgrown doesn't mean that I don't like the way it looks...It makes me feel like some strange old lady lives here and I think I'd like her!...I personally hate to think that you can't do this anymore...In the 70's this would really been ok...It's kind of wild, it's not neglected... Overgrown with a purpose...



Figure 56. Overgrown with a purpose.

Maintenance. Male and female, White and Black research participants were equally concerned about maintenance in their community. When older adults addressed the topic of maintenance in their community, they used words and phrases such as “contagious”, “ashamed”, “your house should be an example”, “control how it appears”, and “responsibility”. Several older adults felt that how someone cared for their property was an indication of personal character and how much they care about their community. Deferred maintenance did not “send a good picture of the neighborhood” and sent the message that “they don’t care about the community.” They felt that homeowners had a responsibility to the community, “being a homeowner does not mean that you just inhabit the home...If you choose to live in a community...you have responsibilities to other people...” Research participants were concerned that a lack of maintenance in the neighborhood would “impact my home values...the general neighborhood...the impression of the community.” In contrast, research participants felt that when someone did take good care of their property it indicated that, “somebody has values...somebody cares...about the neighborhood...the community as a whole...” Many research participants seemed to agree that they did not feel that “...there weren’t a lot of things...inducive to crime in the neighborhood as much as individual homeowners not maybe taking the best care of the property.” Research participants agreed that outdoor maintenance was contagious in their community. When homeowners in their community did not properly maintain the outside of their homes and did not follow exterior city maintenance ordinances, it also encouraged others to do the same.

- This is the house with all the trucks...two recreational vehicles...two cars...pickups...part of a man's body underneath one of the RVs repairing it...You cannot repair vehicles in your



Figure 57. Home with numerous vehicles.

driveway...The city inspectors have not done their job...It makes me furious. I can't understand anyone needing or wanting this many vehicles...It draws the neighborhood down...Outdoor maintenance is always contagious...There is someone on your block that you are trying to keep up with...you keep repainting...planting new things, making sure your grass is cut...When you see slummy looking properties...why should I bother?...The homeowner must think that his home is his castle...he can do what he chooses...It would attract...more hoosier trash.

Research participants also admitted that sometimes, outdoor maintenance had little to do with violating the city's outdoor maintenance ordinance. It was simply a matter of personal preference for the homeowner that others in the neighborhood might consider unaesthetically pleasing.

-...the front porch is loaded with junk...This bucket garden that she has in her front yard...the city has tried for years to talk to her about the condition of her property... There's no ordinance against having a bucket garden...Her husband died a couple of

years ago and she promised she was going to move but she hasn't... You have to divert your eyes.



Figure 58. Bucket garden.

In other cases, it seemed as though the condition of one's property may be due to differing ethnic and cultural values. Unfortunately, some saw the condition of the property as offensive to neighborhood.

-...all the junk on the front porch...She's an immigrant...She's a character...Her place looked so bad that a group of kids as a missionary project came from North Dakota or South Dakota...volunteering for some church here locally in Ferguson and cleaned up her yard...She considered that a point of pride... Why aren't you ashamed of that?



Figure 59. Home with overgrowth.

Older adults were concerned about other homeowners not being aware of the way that their home was impacting everyone else in the neighborhood.

- The blue tarp...somebody that is just not vigilant about caring for the property... Whenever you



Figure 60. Home with tarp on roof.

have a situation like this...it's not beneficial for the neighborhood. I don't think that some homeowners understand that they are not living in a vacuum. This is going to impact my home values...It impacts the general neighborhood...The impression of the community...

-...this is our neighborhood hoarder...He's got a vine that is...swallowing his house... Everything's just horrible... The city has...gone up there with crews...cleaned his stuff... taken everything out of his yard...dumped it two or three



Figure 61. Neighborhood hoarder.

times...He also owns another house...He would take everything out of that one...move it down to that one...They would inspect that...say 'ok well that's alright'...then he'd fill em' both up...It really does impact that lower block...Who would move next to that?...It frustrates me...the neighbors...the city...they don't know what to do with him. He's a nice guy if you talk to him...he could be on that hoarders show.

Older adults were troubled by the enforcement of ordinances in their community. It was felt that the City of Ferguson had some very good ordinances, but they were either not being properly enforced or that homeowners were not taking the fines seriously enough.

-...that scaffolding has been sitting there. For years...it is the next step to the house deteriorating those people don't care about how it looks...They don't care about the community...It's not safe or somebody could break in...We have some pretty good

ordinances...They try to enforce them...If you go to a meeting where people are paying fines...they are packed...

-...they certainly are not cleaning up their storm damage...The city...after 5 months...still not forced them...to deal with it...They cite them...The ordinance is



Figure 62. Scaffolding.

very specific that you cannot have dead...trees or fallen branches...unbridled growth... Your grass can't be taller than 7 inches...You'd think 'wow good ordinance'...we gotta enforce them. After a lengthy time the city will come in and clean it up...bill the property...It's always a combination of sadness and disgust. And when it gets bad enough outrage!...I am convinced that when cities do not have strict enforcement... there's a grapevine that goes out; people communicate...they say 'eh your lax on maintenance, no

problem. They'll never bug you...just be a slob and feel right at home.'



Figure 63. Storm damage.

...so overgrown I can't really tell whether anybody lives here...It's hard to even see the house...It doesn't look overgrown with a purpose...Don't care or else maybe they're incapacitated and can't



Figure 64. Home with extreme overgrowth.

care....What about the Ferguson rules?...for all these rules...they have they're either not enforced or...It just doesn't send a good picture of the neighborhood period...I gather that...the City of Ferguson does send people like this notices but if the fine is not great enough that they go the hell with it and don't bother. It's too much trouble to clean it up.

One research participant was particularly concerned about the lack of and/or confusion about responsibility taken on some properties in or near the City of Ferguson. These properties were impacting homeowners because they were taken advantage of for illegal dumping.

-...the overgrowth hangs over...You don't really have access to the full street...There's paper and trash intermingled...Looks disgusting...tires and bumpers...mixed in there...

Somebody needs to go...and clean it up. Nobody wants to take any action on



Figure 65. Overgrowth hanging into street.

it...Ferguson says it's Berkeley...it's not Berkeley...It's Cool Valley...It's a little irritating...It's not a major task if they clean that up...make the street look a whole lot better...I would clean it up...have somebody be responsible for it. Some of the residents have taken responsibility...and cleaned it up a little bit...The others just sit back and wait.

Not all maintenance issues in the community were related to individual properties, but concerned aging infrastructure in the community.

- ...diminishing tax base, and the infrastructure suffering for it...For the portion of the community that the city is supposed to be taking care of, there's is just not enough money to support that...Some days...it doesn't bother me a great deal...other days, this place is going downhill...If you



Figure 66. Aging infrastructure.

allow it to, it can make you hopeless...I've got some neighbors that think the city doesn't care...just looking for somebody to blame.

One White female believed it was the duty of homeowners, especially this well-known predominant city leader to set an example for others in the community.

- ...that house is a real problem...The people that lived in this house, one of the reasons they moved is because of this homeowner. This house is just so annoying...I have spoken to this homeowner. I said to him... 'your house should be an example' ...you're not supposed to have your garbage cans in front of the house, there is a tree kind of growing out of the gutter...He has a broken window up here...It is reprehensible...The back yard

at one time was overgrown...It is disgraceful...The things that would correct this don't cost a lot of money...I don't think it necessarily represents the neighborhood...The rest of the neighbors are very conscientious...It represents...a lackadaisical homeowner who knows better...Being a homeowner does not mean that you just inhabit the home...If you choose to live in a community...you have responsibilities to other people and to the community as a whole...That's why it's called community.

Rental property. Many research participants were disturbed by the number of rental properties in their community, the transient population associated with rental property, and how the lack of upkeep to these properties ultimately affected property values in the neighborhood. Research participants described renters as a “transient population,” “don’t care,” “don’t have any pride,” and who “bring trouble.” Participants were concerned with landlords because it appeared that some of them were not local landlords and “don’t reinvest it (money) back into the property” to maintain the home. If landlords were local, it was less of a problem. However, when landlords lived further away, the attitude became “out of sight, out of mind” and it became much more difficult to track them down and hold them responsible. Research participants agreed that the City of Ferguson was beginning to take some very proactive steps to control the cycle of renters and to make sure rental property was properly maintained. One Black male stated:

-...it's changed quite a bit in the last 30 or so years...It's gone from middle class to a major portion of rental property...

Research participants felt that because renters had no real investment in the properties, there was no incentive for them to take good care of them.

- Renters. They don't really take care of their property...They don't have the pride to do anything...They really don't own the house...They just don't care...If you've got money in something, you're going to want to take care of it.

- I think ownership is better than rental when you've got someone that owns. Typically, they would take better care of their house, than renters. Renters tear them up.

Research participants were also concerned about the transient nature of renters in their neighborhood. Often when the lease is up on the property; renters are moving on. This creates an unstable population in the community who doesn't have a solid investment in the betterment of the neighborhood.

- ...This little yellow house...is a rental house... that has been a problem off and on...Rental property is an issue...It's just this transient population...Not a stable situation...It's very cute inside, but it's teensy...



Figure 67. Yellow rental home.

We're probably not going to get a nice young couple with children. The original owners had kids, but...people had smaller houses then...

-...our properties are rentals...transient I don't care...not investing myself in your community... inhabitants...I don't think that does the community any service...The percentage keeps going up...

Unfortunately, rental properties were often left abandoned because the amount of money needed to bring the property up to the standard maintenance code cost more than it was worth to the landlord.

-...it's gotten progressively worse...You're seeing more...vacant houses...That's a landlord situation...In my neighborhood there's quite a lot of...rental houses...They're just sitting. The property values going down...What they paid for them is a lot more. They don't want to put any more money into them.

-...the house is vacant

...The door it's in perfectly fine shape, there's no glass damaged...The only reason that the plywood is on there is to prevent



Figure 68. Boarded up; abandoned rental property.

something from happening. It makes me feel apprehensive...The owner of the vacant house took into his hands to put this plywood up...that drives the property value down of the occupied houses...He owned the house...was renting it, but he could no longer rent it to new people...He couldn't get his...landlord license renewed...You have to pass the exterior and interior inspections...It cost too much for him to do that.

In addition to properties being left completely abandoned, some landlords were not quick to make improvements. One Black male felt that the landlords were not taking the money that they were making off of the properties and reinvesting it in maintenance.

- It's only that one particular property right there that was a...so to speak ghetto landlord. Rents the property out to make the money...then doesn't take the money that he makes off the property and reinvest it back into the property...Well, it makes me angry...I really keep a watch on the property...Whenever I hear a noise I...go out and check or I'll call the police if it's really loud.

Another common theme among abandoned rental properties were the neighboring community members who looked after them to make sure that no nefarious activities occurred and that some minimal maintenance transpired. Primarily males, both White and Black, took on this responsibility.

-...it is an empty house....a rental property...The landlord has been very slow about making any improvements to it...The guy that lived there before let a few things go down... didn't keep it up... We all



Figure 69. Vacant rental home.

kind of take a turn around the house to see if there are any open, broke windows, any evidence like...anyone's broken into it...It's kind of odd to have that piece of the puzzle...not filled in...See probably some cars in the driveway...kids playing.

-...the house next door...He was renting it out...since she's moved out nobody's moved in...The house is up for either auction or...quick sale...Being that's there no one here to

take care of this property I do what little I can to keep it clean...to keep...my property from looking so bad.

One Black male was also concerned with the cultural values that renters brought to the community.

- a lot of times it appears to me that the neighborhoods up for sale...Being with present economic condition the banks are now talking about renting homes out instead of selling the homes...If you move somebody into the home that doesn't have the same values as the residents that are living there...it messes up the neighborhood. It messes up...the community...You've got two different sets of people...people who don't have values equivalent to the people living there who want to take care of their property...Want to see the neighborhood look better. Keep it clean and livable.

A Black female felt that certain price points on property brought in types of people with dissimilar values.

-...certain prices...bring certain type of people. If it's Section-8, you bringing other type of people...bring the wrong group of friends to the neighborhood...bring trouble when you're a homeowner...I got away from the city because of things like that so I don't want to turn around and have to face the same thing...I'm invested in my property.

However, one White male felt that the City of Ferguson was taking very proactive steps to control the cycle of renters in their community and encouraging them to become better renters.

- The city is...taking some very proactive steps in rental housing, to control the cycle of people moving in as renters that maybe haven't had a background in home ownership or maybe their extended family is all the culture that they know. Sometimes that brings in

people...that bring bad things in with them...That was very proactive and very wise of our city leaders.

In addition to helping control the cycle of renters in their community, one Black female also felt that the city was taking various proactive measures to try to hold landlords more accountable for the properties they own.

- When we rezoned...we were going to hold landlords accountable. Commercial landlords...You cannot tell that those businesses are not doing business, except for the sign saying for sale or lease. The area does not look abandoned...They don't intend for it to become an issue...I can tell by how much they monitor me...They are doing the same to everybody else.

Another Black female also felt that some of the petty crime that occurred within their neighborhoods was due to the transient population of renters not invested in their community.

-...that rental property...just loud...the people that they bring to visit. Too many cars all in front of the neighbors' homes...When you see a lot of vacancies...they are out of rental...After the year lease is up they're moving out...another families moving in. We have periods...that is somewhat disturbing...it's due to rental property...having little break in and stuff.

Synthesis of the Experience

The true essence of the phenomenon is maintenance or “to maintain.” The Latin word for maintain is manu tenere, meaning to “hold in the hand (Merriam-Webster, 2014).” As people age, their emotional grasp tightens, holding onto that which is still in their control at a time when control is slowly slipping away. They want to “hold in their hand” the nostalgic image that was

Ferguson when they were growing up and preserve it as they continue to grow older. One research participant so eloquently captured this concept through his spoken words.

- I need to say this about the audience that you have been seeking out. When your years get less, you've got more behind you than you've got in front of you. We all start feeling our mortality a little bit and that's frustrating...When we were younger we thought we were more tolerant...now we are finding out that we're not. We like to have more control over something. So a lot of the belly aching you hear, it seems related to the fact that we have less and less control over our lives. Well, the perception is that control is slipping away from us. And this is belly aching about something like this is a good relief.

It is quite simplistic to equate *maintenance* to the way that a particular piece of property is cared for and how this affects the perception of crime in the community. However, *maintenance* of physical, spiritual, mental, and social well-being becomes increasingly important as older adults work to combat some of the fears and frustrations that they experience from the perception of crime in their community. Connections between friends, family, and neighbors must be *maintained* to not only determine and preserve the social norms of the community, but also to establish natural surveillance within the neighborhood to protect individual investments. As demonstrated, many things in Ferguson have not been *maintained*, but have instead dramatically transformed. Racial homogeneity, the integrity of the housing stock, and many of the fundamental small town businesses that attracted and retained older adults in the community have not been *maintained*. However, older adults' attachment to place has been *maintained* stronger than ever, in addition to their *maintained* physical and social connection in the community. The preservation of many historic features throughout the community have been *maintained*, as well as the picturesque natural landscapes, giving older adults throughout the

community an opportunity for mental restoration that prepares them to deal with the daily challenges of community life.

For these older adults, their subjective perceptions illuminate the objective reality captured through their personal photographic illustrations of the community. Their insider perspectives demonstrate virtually unproblematic personal safety concerns. Nevertheless, the contagious nature of poor private property upkeep exemplified through inadequately cared for and dilapidated rental houses, vacant properties, single-family dwellings, and locally owned businesses; symbolizes a cultural insensitivity to the consequences of damaging outsider perceptions regarding the safety of their community. Older adults' personal concern with the generational deterioration of values appears to manifest itself through undesirable actions and encounters in the community. Particularly, littering and illegal dumping became a reprehensible exploitation by both community insiders and outsiders; symbolizing an objective devalued perception of their dwelling place as well as a subjective diminishment of the spirit to those who call Ferguson home.

Racially integrated community churches, businesses, and schools presented a perceived positive experience for many; providing opportunities for diversified involvement. Conversely, it appeared to others a historical trauma to the all-White community; adversely affecting public safety, contributing to a failing school district, undesirable personal property care, and an inability to attract perceived reputable businesses to the area. The eyes and ears of their neighborhoods, elders detect and report suspicious activities, keeping a keenly watchful eye on neighboring properties. Many, with a long-standing physical and emotional bond become instinctively in-tune to the slightest subtlety; thus enhancing the natural surveillance of the community. Apprehension becomes additionally apparent as they observe obstacles within and

around their neighborhood, effectively concealing nefarious activities and altering their proficiency to naturally survey the neighborhood. The union of picturesque urban parks, trails, gardens, and markets with personal narratives thread past youthful remembrance's to a present day utopia, and onto progressive-futuristic opportunities to further unify the community with nature. Inspiring accounts of day-to-day personal and entrepreneurial investment signifies a community laboring to revolutionize an identified tarnished image to one that inspires individuals to grow up and grow old within their neighborhoods. The presence of historic community elements become a fundamental foundational root in Ferguson, conjuring up nostalgic images for those growing old in the community. When well maintained, they become a beacon of hope, representing a long established element unchanged by the tides that are the chronology of community transformations.

Older adults have verified the significance of community perceptions through the photographs of their world. As insiders in the community, these older adults comprehend the stable firm foundation that is Ferguson. Nevertheless, they recognize the power of perception to those viewing Ferguson from the outside. They recognize the past decades of transformation that have shaped and molded Ferguson into what it currently is. They (community members, the City of Ferguson, and outside investors) recognize the image that Ferguson is working to improve. They do not ignore this image, they recognize it, and work to build a stronger Ferguson. As demonstrated, the presence or absence of actual community safety can be concealed or exemplified through images of deteriorating infrastructure, symbolizing a larger social decline. Conversely, carefully maintained homes, streets, and business districts symbolize that someone cares about the image of the community, and thus must care about the safety of the people who reside and visit.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to learn more about older adults' perceptions of crime in Ferguson, Missouri and how their quality of life was affected. The results of this research study indicate that concerns with crime in the form of neighborhood disorder do exist. However, for the most part, older adults did not feel that their own personal safety was compromised and did not worry about personal victimization. The presence of lower level neighborhood disorder created some anxiety about whether signs of physical and social deterioration suggest the onset of future significant decay in the community. Race seemed to play a contributing role in how older adults interpreted lower level disorder in their community. However, class potentially acted more significantly in how they interpreted physical and social disorder. These older adults' attachment to place combined with their social and physical investment in the community seems to counter the fear of crime they could experience from the presence of neighborhood disorder. Thus, their quality of life has not been gravely affected.

The Social Disorganization Theory and Broken Window Theory provide the main theoretical perspectives supporting the development of the results in this research study. Additional theories (Defensible Space Theory, Environmental Docility Theory, and Place Attachment) play supporting roles in explaining some of the intricacies identified through the individual thematic areas. The textural and structural descriptions within the 12 thematic areas interconnect with the theoretical philosophies to explain the dynamic community relationship and provide a platform for discussion and interpretation of the research results.

As described by Clare and Plecas (2012), disorders (social and physical incivilities) are “low-level breaches of community standards that signal an erosion of conventionally accepted norms and values (LaGrange, Ferraro, and Supancic, 1992, p. 312).” Clare and Plecas (2012)

also suggest that obvious visual symbols of neglect such as decaying buildings, littering, graffiti, and vandalism symbolize physical disorder. Particular behaviors and attitudes such as loitering, public drunkenness, and intimidation become signs of social disorder (LaGrange, et al., 1992). Felonneau (2004) defines incivilities “as acts of nonrespect or of aggression towards others and towards the environment, without necessarily reflecting the legal category of delinquency or criminality (Furstenberg, 1971; LaGrange, 1984, 1995; Roche, 1996, 1998). Such behavior are generally not very serious but become unacceptable on a daily basis (Wievorka, 1999) because they trigger a diffuse feeling of the decline of the social order and there a sentiment of fear (Moser and Lidvan, 1991; Derbarbieux, 1996).” Ross and Mirowsky (1999, p. 413) suggest that, “physical disorder—such as litter, graffiti, and vandalism—also indicates that social control has broken down” (cited by Austin and Sander, 2007). Austin and Sanders (2007) additionally suggest that “perceived disorder is also associated with erosion of social ties (Ross and Jang, 2000), which may in turn impact satisfaction with the community (Ladewig and McCann, 1980; Wasserman, 1982).” When informal connections are maintained between one another, community members can combat the effects of neighborhood disorder, “reducing fear and mistrust,” and those who are more trusting and not fearful of one another, bond even more closely, establishing greater “social control in the community” (Austin and Sanders, 2007).

Nearly all of the elements older adults in Ferguson spoke about that contributed to the perception of crime in their community can be considered lower levels of physical and social disorder in their community. These include properties that are vacant and/or rundown, littering, loitering, and other various elements that signify that Ferguson may not be as preferred as a place to live or visit as it once was. This perception is also potentially exemplified by the belief that their environment, as young people growing up in the community, was more socially stable and

physically secure than it is now (Dionne, 1998, p. 93). However, older adults revealed as many positive and promising aspects about their community. These include opportunities for physical and social engagement, opportunities for access to nature, the effort to preserve historic sites throughout their community, and new investors attracted to Ferguson to shape the future commerce and vitality of their community. The positive opportunities offered, help to counter the effects of the physical and social disorder that exist.

Physical and social engagement in the community can formally and informally occur. Formal opportunities for physical and social engagement include attendance at neighborhood watch meetings, city council meetings, gardening clubs, the farmers market, historical preservation groups, and other such organized activities where they get opportunities to meet members of the community who share similar interests. Physical and social engagement opportunities identified by older adults that contributed to informal social connections in their community included walking, biking, and jogging through the neighborhood and on trails that offer them opportunities to recognize faces, activities, behaviors, and informally meet neighbors, their children, and pets in a less prescriptive manner. Both formal and informal social connections provide older adults with the opportunity to discuss physical and social disorder in their community. This is not only how they generate their own social norms about their neighborhood, but also how they learn how others view the social norms of their community. They then decide what might constitute social disorder in their community and possibly what can be done about behaviors and actions that do not fit the social norm. They can also collectively identify signs of physical disorder in their community, what might be done about it, or what it might signify. Thus, these collective actions begin to establish and maintain social control in the neighborhood and community.

Social Disorganization

The above interpretation of the phenomenon ties directly into the Social Disorganization Theory. Serious crimes are often the focus of Social Disorganization research rather than more minor offenses. However, Markowitz et al. (2001) acknowledge that minor offenses often contribute heavily to the fear of crime that neighborhoods experience (cited by Porter, Rader, and Cossman, 2012). On one end of the spectrum, communities are socially organized; on the other end of the spectrum communities can be characterized as social disorganized. Characteristics of a socially organized community include an agreement about norms and values, social integration amongst residents, and solid connections between residents who live in close proximity to one another. The support of these characteristics often leads to lower crime rates in the community (Kubrin, 2009). Kubrin (2009, p. 227) also describes that in organized communities, “there is evidence of (1) informal surveillance, or the casual but active observation of neighborhood streets that is engaged in by individuals during daily activities, (2) movement-governing rules, or the avoidance of areas in or near neighborhoods viewed as unsafe, and (3) direct intervention, or the questioning of strangers and residents of the neighborhood about suspicious activities, chastening adults and admonishing children for behavior that is defined as unacceptable (Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams, 1982).”

As cited by Sampson and Groves (1989), evidence of “low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, family disruption” and a lack of “effective social controls” increase social disorganization in the community (Kornhauser, 1978; Bursik, 1984). For those who participated in the research study, several elements associated with social “disorganization” were demonstrated. While some of these physical and social incivilities affecting social organization were directly observable and easily communicated by older adults, some were more

subtle changes in the community. For examples, loitering, playing basketball in the street, youth walking in the street, and changes in attitude and demeanor may encompass a disagreement about what are acceptable community social norms, thus creating social disorganization. Acceptable social norms may be transforming as an older White generation grows old and a younger Black generation moves in. After the fatal shooting of Michael Brown and initiation of community turmoil, the nation began to see the scale of social control tipping as disorganization seized the moment. Those who felt powerless dominated the streets of Ferguson and other cities around the nation, questioning what they felt were the unacceptable social controls and standards put in place by those in power.

At the time of data collection for this research study (October 2013 - June 2014), older adults demonstrated many examples of ways that social “organization” were upheld. These features associated with community organization help to maintain current social controls and standards and curtail aspects of perceived social disorganization from dominating the community. One such way that older adults demonstrated social organization in their community was by directly questioning strangers and setting an example of appropriate norms and behaviors for the neighborhood. A Black female described a man in her neighborhood seeking out directions:

- There was a new guy that I never seen when I was out on this day...He was trying to get to Georgia...I said... 'you have to go back to Harvey...make a right...then you will be on Georgia' ...It never crossed his mind to approach me...What...I did...was let him know...in this neighborhood we are approachable....Guess what, the old lady knows how to get you where you want to go.

She may have viewed her actions as cordial. However, what she unintentionally accomplished was an exhibition of social control by sending the message to the stranger that people are informally watching out for their neighborhood and can identify those who do not belong. Because she conversed directly with him, she would also be able to get a feel for what his possible intentions within the neighborhood were and be able to easily identify him in the event that it became warranted.

This same research participant also demonstrated social control through her interaction with young adults, helping to establish and preserve the social norms and values of the neighborhood.

- The little guy on the corner, he's been there for about nine months...I heard this 'baboom, baboom, noise' ...I went over in my robe and...said, 'hey, this is a neighborhood. You can't have this noise here...I don't want to have to put a sign up about noise.' 'Oh, no ma'am, no ma'am.' I said 'okay, tell all your friends' ...He told all of his friends don't come here with all that noise...They work in a band...They are real good, too...But you're not going to play over here like that.

However, she also demonstrated that when these social norms and values are respected among the neighborhood, solid connections are strengthened and mutual respect is established, reinforcing the social organization of the neighborhood.

- ...when he first got his lawn mower, he came over...asked my husband to show him what to do...He bought this big barbeque grill...he called my husband over and said 'can you come over and show me how to use it?' ...When he had to go somewhere where he had to wear a tie, he came over...and showed him how to tie the tie...

Another element described as contributing to social disorganization in the community was the presence of ethnic heterogeneity. Nearly every participant noted the dramatic shift in the racial demographics of their community. Most research participants felt the integration was positive, some did not.

-...when I grew up here...this was an all-White community...White people are comfortable living...with a 28% Black minority...We are now at over 70%...we're in the minority...businesses look up their demographics...and they aren't coming here.

For them, they felt that the social control of their community was shifting along with the social norms of the community they once knew. The social norms were beginning to resemble that of other deteriorating inner ring suburbs and inner city neighborhoods and not that of which attracted them to and kept them in Ferguson for the long haul.

Social disorder. In a study conducted by Kelling and Wilson (1982), Kelling invested hours walking with a Newark, New Jersey police officer “to see how they defined ‘order’ and what they did to maintain it.” One of the roles of the police officer was to not only keep order in the formal legal context, but to keep order in the sense of informal but also “widely understood” rules within the neighborhood or community. For example, “drunks and addicts could sit on the stoops, but could not lie down. People could drink on side streets, but not at the main intersection. Bottles had to be in paper bags. Talking to, bothering, or begging from people waiting at the bus stop was strictly forbidden.” The definitions of the social rules were decided by the behavioral norms of the rest of the neighborhood. Much of what the police officer was doing could probably not be described as “enforcing the law,” but involved steps to protect the informal rules established by the neighborhood itself. In this study, the people of Newark, New Jersey “assigned a high value to public order” and were alleviated when police maintained that

order. This is because disorderly streets in the form of “distasteful, worrisome encounters” contribute to fear and anxiety about potential crime.

Undesirable attitudes and behaviors. Older adults were also concerned with other low levels of social disorder such as loitering, particularly by youth walking down the middle of the street rather than on the sidewalk. This was a characterization made by both White and Black female research participants.

- I personally am not comfortable when I see groups of African American youths walking up and down the middle of the street...They're always screaming at one another or fighting.

- The groups...intimidating to seniors...walking in the streets instead of on the sidewalk.

As part of the recruiting process, I attended many neighborhood watch/community meetings to try to engage older adults in the research study. Although I was unable to recruit any older adults from the predominately Black Nesbit Newton neighborhood, I listened to their many concerns intently. The Nesbit Newton neighborhood is also located adjacent from the Canfield Green Apartment Complex. Residents of this neighborhood were also extremely concerned with the presence of loitering teens and young adults. I distinctly recall them asking the police officer present at the meeting why they no longer stop and question the groups of loitering teens. The residents stated that these groups often caused problems for the neighborhood and were involved with drug dealing and other illegal activities. The police officer responded to the group that his officers were no longer instructed to stop and question groups of teens without a reasonable cause because this was an action that could be seen as profiling (racial, gender, etc.). Despite what the officer had told them, these Black residents were encouraging law enforcement to take action against loitering teens in their neighborhood.

Two months after the conclusion of the data collection for this research study, Michael Brown and Dorian Johnson were initially stopped by police officer Darren Wilson for walking down the middle of the street near the Canfield Green Apartment Complex. Although not extremely criminally negligent, the behavior was identified through this research study as socially disruptive by older adults. Therefore, it is possible that Office Wilson's initial contact with Brown and Johnson related to maintaining the current overall informal *community* social standards even when the social standards in this particular *neighborhood* had already shifted.

Community image. Research participants in Ferguson also seemed to assign a high value to public order in their community. Several of the social incivilities older adults were concerned with in their community could be described as the perceived violation of the social, informal unspoken rules established in their community such as loitering youth, the presence of homeless people in their community, the perceived infiltration of undesirable businesses, and the exodus of more desirable businesses from their community. One research participant described the appearance of homeless people in Ferguson as unattractive. She noted, that some appear to be mentally unstable, making people passing by uncomfortable. This added to the perception that Ferguson was unsafe. However, she acknowledged that she did not think that homeless people in the community were responsible for crime. A study conducted by Newburn and Rock (2004) investigated violence and victimization among homeless persons in the United Kingdom. They suggest that homeless people are often seen as crime committers, when in fact, they are far more likely to become victims of crime than to actually be an offender. A quantitative research study conducted by Gallup, Inc. on behalf of Fannie May (2007) also investigated America's perceptions and attitudes about homelessness in America. Among their findings, "one in every two adults surveyed (51%) completely agree that 'communities are safer when people don't have

to live on the streets' and fewer than half (44%) completely agree that they 'want to live in a community that provides for the care of its homeless citizens.'" According to Donley (2008), people seem to associate criminal behavior with homelessness (Barak, 2002), whether or not it is "empirically supported." Mostly people are fearful of what they view homeless people as: "dirty, smelling of alcohol or carting a multitude of belongings, they cannot easily blend in with the people around them...they may stay for hours on a bench, in a public library or in a park. Their visibility, appearance and demeanor make many people nervous" (Donley, 2008).

Another concern among some of the older adults was the presence of what they considered marginal shops such as beauty supply stores, liquor stores, and traffic law centers that catered to "poorer demographically and African American's" and added "an element that is not healthy for a community." Beauty supply stores throughout the St. Louis area have also been targeted for theft of hair extensions, which can be easily stolen and resold. "They're relatively small and easy to grab, and have no codes or serial numbers that can be tracked" (Bell, 2013). Therefore, the concern amongst older adults may also tie into the fact that this type of store may attract additional "actual" crime to the community. A couple of research participants were also concerned that their community could no longer attract quality businesses such as department stores, hardware stores, and reputable dentists and doctors to the area because of the changing racial demographics of the community. However, research participants also acknowledged that they felt Ferguson was turning the corner. It had begun to attract and retain new restaurants to the downtown area.

Although both Black and White research participants felt that Ferguson did not have the quality businesses that it once had, it was only White females who acknowledged the shift in racial demographics as contributing to the decline. Interestingly, both a White and Black female

research participant spoke about what appears to be the same liquor store in their community.

The first is an abbreviated account told by one of the White female research participants and the second account is told by one of the Black female research participants.

-...a liquor store...that disturbs people...They feel it attracts an element that is not healthy for a community. A group of friends and I used to go up every Sunday morning and pick up litter...We finally stopped...It was so hopeless...After about 3 or 4 years...we quit...discouraging.

- Most people think when you see a liquor store there's all the people hanging out... People would...shy away from there...I'm not shying away from there. I'm going up there. I'm passing there...I got a lot of respect from those people that stop in there...A little corner store for a lot of people that don't have cars...It's so orderly and clean that I don't have a problem passing it.

In a study conducted by Sampson and Raudenbush (2005), they found that “neighborhood racial context helps shape residents’ perceptions of disorder...Black residents reported lower levels of disorder than White residents for the same neighborhood.” This could help to account for differing perspectives about the presence of the liquor store in the community. The White older adult female potentially saw this as a violation of her perceived social values and norms, thus signifying disorder and compromising community safety.

As cited by Small and McDermott (2006), “the de-institutionalization of neighborhoods is the product of middle-class flight and the ensuing concentration of poverty. Because middle-class residents economically sustain neighborhood establishments, their absence undermines the latter’s stability and survival (Wilson, 1987, 1996).” Pollard (1996) finds that in South Central Los Angeles, as the number of “poor and non-White” individuals grows, the quantity of banks

decreases and utilizing figures from “metropolitan Louisiana and Cook County Illinois,” Graces (2003) found that “‘payday lenders’ such as check cashing establishments are especially likely to be found in low income non-White neighborhoods” (cited by Small and McDermott, 2006). There is also a disproportionate amount of grocery store in “poor communities of color, compared to wealthier, whiter communities” (Flournoy, 2006). The Center for Food and Justice at the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute conducted a study and their findings indicated that “middle-and upper-income communities in Los Angeles County have twice as many supermarkets per capita as low-income communities...predominantly White communities have three times the supermarkets of predominantly Black communities, and nearly twice those of predominantly Latino communities (cited by Flournoy, 2006). However, according to Morland et al. (2002), “research on ‘negative’ businesses such as bars and liquor stores finds that poverty increase their prevalence” (cited by Small and McDermott, 2006). Therefore, it could be hypothesized that the infringement of shops such as liquor stores, beauty supply shops, and other such businesses are viewed as attracting low-income minorities. This makes some older adults perceive the infiltration not so much as a threat to their personal safety, but as a threat to their community’s social norms and the intrusion of a less than desirable population in their community. As previously noted, the acceptable social norms and behavioral standards of the community are changing as the demographics of the population change, becoming uncontrollable and unpredictable to older adults.

Rental property. Older adults were concerned with the number of single-family homes that had become rental property in their community. Particularly, they were concerned with the lack of maintenance to rental property, the transient nature and differing values of renters, the type of people (friends and family) that renters brought into the neighborhood, the nature of

crimes associated with the increase of renters throughout the neighborhoods, and the accountability of absentee landlords. This also ties into the Social Disorganization Theory in which residential mobility leads to social disorganization in the community. Although various rental properties were mentioned throughout the City of Ferguson, two older adult White males mentioned the apartment areas off West Florissant Avenue and the problematic issues associated with them.

- There are areas that are a part of the City of Ferguson that are probably more problematic...apartment areas...across West Florissant that used to be called Canfield Green...There have been lot of troubles in the past, but recently hasn't...There's the Sharon Dale Apartments behind McDonalds over by West Florissant, but they're putting a lot of money into. They put up wrought iron, six or eight foot tall fences all around the property...It's nice looking...I would feel safer...The fences would prevent someone from parking along...Ferguson Avenue...running into the apartment building...I see that as some real improvement to those apartment areas.

- By the transient nature of the apartment buildings that we have...There's robbery...shootings...domestic violence...It's unfortunate...It's primarily on the victims...who live there...It's self-predatory...An unfortunate situation...The city can send our cops in...I think the most frustrating thing is...it must be terrible to be in a mindset that is so hopeless that you allow that to continue...It seems like...people involved with that would say enough of this. But it doesn't occur...there must be powerlessness that goes along with that. I don't know how to image that.

Unfortunately, these apartment complexes were the location where the deadly encounter took place between Officer Darren Wilson and Michael Brown. The incident escalated when

Brown attacked Officer Wilson and as a result, Brown was shot and killed in August, 2014.

Older adults believed this was an area of Ferguson where more crime existed. In a report from 2010, “nearly half of the city’s police calls were going to the apartment complexes. Places such as Oakmont Townhomes, Park Ridge Apartments, Northwinds Apartments, Versailles Apartments and Canfield Green...” (Bogan, 2014).

Bogan (2014) also acknowledges that after the destruction of the notorious Pruitt Igoe public housing complex in North St. Louis in the early 1970’s, the United States Government started new affordable housing programs that included Section-8 housing. Section-8 is a tenant-based program giving renters vouchers to live where they want, ideally in the broader community. Bogan states that according to a Post-Dispatch newspaper analysis, data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development suggests that the number of Section-8 vouchers has doubled in St. Louis County since the mid-1990’s. Section-8 vouchers appear to be clustered in lower income areas. Many inner ring North County suburbs such as Ferguson are disproportionately absorbing the tenants who have flocked the aging apartment complexes. Pruitt Igoe was located approximately 11 miles from Ferguson, Missouri. Acknowledging these changes, one White female felt that the Lambert Airport expansion as well as the destruction of public housing projects such as Pruitt Igoe displaced residents into the nearby suburban communities.

-...it’s a cultural these people have come from airport buyout in Berkley and Kinloch.

Very much I mean always consider those icky...People I think more recently have come from the city...They tore down Pruitt Igoe...A lot of these people never have bought a house...They don’t know how to take care of it. They didn’t know they have to pay their

rent or their house payment...This has always been a target because we have a lot more reasonably priced houses.

An older adult Black female who was not a lifetime resident of Ferguson also stated her concerns with Section-8 renters in her neighborhood. She knew of a home near her in which they were no longer accepting Section-8 renters because of the problems they had caused. Renters, in general, many of whom are low income, were perceived as bringing the “wrong” values to the community. They were perceived as not being invested in the future of the neighborhood, and presented various problems for homeowners.

-...certain prices...bring certain type of people. If its Section-8 you bringing other type of people...bring the wrong group of friends to the neighborhood...bring trouble when you're a homeowner...I got away from the city because of things like that so I don't want to turn around and have to face the same thing...I'm invested in my property.

An older adult Black male stated:

- ...if you move somebody into the home that doesn't have the same values as the residents that are living there...it messes up the neighborhood. It messes up...the community...You've got 2 different sets of people...People who don't have values equivalent to the people living there who want to take care of their property...Want to see the neighborhood look better. Keep it clean and livable.

Both of the above older adults were not lifetime residents of Ferguson, Missouri. At one time, they had both resided in the City of St. Louis. They left the city and it is possible that they chose Ferguson because in comparison to other North County St. Louis suburbs it is considered relatively safer and more socially organized. Ferguson's housing stock is affordable enough to be attainable for those wanting to escape city life and enjoy a more suburban lifestyle. However,

as suburban growth in the St. Louis region moves westward, so do those who can afford to move westward and build new homes. This leaves inner ring suburbs such as Ferguson to those who are in search of affordable housing options outside the city, but also bringing “physical and social issues” associated with city life with them. These are issues often unwanted to those who presently reside in the suburbs because they challenge the current social norms. McGraw (2015) argues, “many Whites won’t publicly say, but is in the forefront of many minds (especially older ones), is that suburbs like Ferguson came to prominence in the late 1940s and early 1950s as a result of White flight. The thought process follows that we (Whites) came to places like Ferguson to get away from them (Blacks), and now they’ve followed us. So we (Whites) had to move further out.” I would extend the argument, based on the results of this research study that this also applies to older adult Black residents within a certain class. They moved from the city, and they don’t want people with what they view as incompatible views following them and damaging the social norms of the neighborhood. There is not only a racial division in Ferguson, but a class division as well.

In an interview conducted by Laurie Goering (1994) from the Chicago Tribune, Louis Masotti, a former Northwestern University specialist on the suburbs states that “just like people go through phases in their lifecycle, cities go through phases” and “...inner-ring suburbs are much more like the central city than the next ring of suburbs. The problems of the city have suburbanized.” Problems of the city include the negative connotations associated with poverty such as “crime, violence, drug use, homelessness, abandoned properties, and a lack of commercial institutions” which further neighborhood collapse (Kovarik, 2008). Although one may think of segregation in terms of geographic racial issues (Whites live there, Blacks live here), segregation can take on many other forms. According to Cooperman (2014), “geographic,

cultural, and economic” segregation have all become the norm in the St. Louis area. “North of Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis neighborhoods are about 95 percent Black. South of Delmar, they are almost two-thirds White (and the median household income is \$25,000 higher) (Cooperman, 2014).” Long after racial discrimination was deemed unconstitutional, St. Louis has “chopped itself into bits, remaining socially and economically segregated (Cooperman, 2014).”

However, research participants also felt that the City of Ferguson was taking some very proactive steps to control the cycle of renters in their community and encouraging them to become better renters.

- The city is...taking some very proactive steps in rental housing, to control the cycle of people moving in as renters that maybe haven't had a background in home ownership or maybe their extended family is all the culture that they know. Sometimes that brings in people...that bring bad things in with them...That was very proactive and very wise of our city leaders.

In response to residents’ concerns with high concentrations of rental property in their neighborhood, Ferguson began their “responsible landlord initiative.” It is grounded in “property maintenance code enforcement” to promote and preserve single-family homes and stable neighborhoods. Landlords are classified as: “responsible, provisional, and suspended.” Based on the “Livability Code,” landlords who are considered provisional or suspended must have their property “inspected by a certified ASHI (American Society of Home Inspectors) inspector at the expense of the landlord” (Missouri Municipal League, 2006). Unfortunately, older adults also acknowledged that some rental homes were being walked away from because the expense of bringing the homes up to code was more costly than what the home was worth. Thus it leaves a further blight on the community as a vacant and abandoned home.

Rephann (2009) outlines four thoughts that align with the Social Disorganization Theory and acknowledges that various arguments exist as to why homeowners are less prone to generate crime and become a victim of crime. First, homeowners do not move because of the associated costs (Dietz and Haurin 2003; Rohe and Stewart 1996). Also because of their longevity in the neighborhood, they have established social connections (Rohe, Van Zandt, and McCarthy 2002; DiPasquale and Glaeser 1999; Rohe and Stewart 1996). Second, because they invested in the community, they also invest in property maintenance and security for their home. This also intensified “their sensitivity to declining property values and ‘quality of life factors’ that weaken these values (Dietz and Haurin 2003; Rohe and Stewart 1996)” such as lack of maintenance and abandoned homes. “Third, homeownership has been connected to better child outcomes (Dietz and Haurin 2003; Rohe, Van Zandt, and McCarthy 2002; Harkness and Newman 2002).” Youth are less inclined to commit crimes because they are living in a stable environment in which they are not transiently moving frequently. “Fourth, homeowners have better health, mentally and physically (Dietz and Haurin 2003; Rohe, Van Zandt, and McCarthy 2002), responding more robustly to stress, and are “less likely to react violently or unpredictably.” In this research study, all participants were homeowners. This was likely an enormous factor for older adults in how they viewed renters and rental property in their neighborhoods.

Physical Disorder. In addition to the presence of social disorder in the community, physical disorder was also demonstrated by research participants through dilapidated and overgrown vacant properties (homes, businesses, and land), negligent maintenance, and an increased problem with litter and illegal dumping. Research participants viewed activities such as littering as distasteful and disrespectful to current and future generations. Physical disorder such as lax maintenance, littering, and illegal dumping were also described as contagious

because their mere presence warranted unspoken permission to other individuals who pondered trash dumping. While social disorder can be explained through the Social Disorganization Theory, physical disorder can be described in part through the fundamentals of the Broken Window Theory and the Defensible Space Theory. The Broken Window Theory describes that, “if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken...one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares...” (Kelling and Wilson, 1982). This leads to serious social breakdowns in the community and can accelerate physical and social deterioration in the community. “A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, and a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out and unattached adults move in” (Kelling and Wilson, 1982). This theory also applies to negligent maintenance in the community, littering and illegal dumping, and the further destruction of already vacant properties in the community. These are properties that may have become vacant for some other reason such as foreclosure or abandonment, but when others learn that they are empty they begin to become repeated targets for theft, vandalism, and other illegal activities.

Maintenance. Coinciding with the concepts of the Broken Window Theory, several older adults felt that residential maintenance had a contagious nature to it. Everyone in the neighborhood was responsible for upholding the social norms of the neighborhood. This meant following city maintenance codes and setting an example for those nearby. Those who violated the norms were outspokenly providing permission to those who had similar intentions, and setting the standard for a snowball effect of potential lax maintenance principles in the community.

While research participants may have expected local police to enforce both formal law and informal social community standards, they expected the City of Ferguson and their code enforcers to ensure physical order and hold individuals responsible for the condition of their properties. They were displeased when they felt that maintenance codes were not uniformly enforced, that enforcers were being careless with their responsibilities, and that homeowners did not take fines associated with code violations seriously. Research participants reported code violations to the City of Ferguson when they felt that those violations were particularly offensive and had not been corrected in a reasonable amount of time. Other maintenance issues did not necessarily violate any city maintenance codes, but seemed to violate either the social norms of the neighborhood or the personal standards of the person who found the issue offensive. Many issues become quite subjective, such as a concern about one residents distasteful “bucket garden.” Therefore, what may appear offensive to one person may not be at all offensive to another; especially that person who is violating the perceived offense.

Littering. Nearly all older adults who participated in the research study were concerned with the presence of littering and illegal dumping in their community. Problems with illegal dumping relate to the Broken Window Theory in which older adults felt that if littering and dumping were not controlled, others who had similar intentions would also use properties for dumping. This is because it appeared that no one was taking ownership of the property and did not care about the condition of the space.

- The hardest thing is to keep it cleaned up. If you dump something, get it cleaned up right away so that other people don't think, 'oh, we can bring our stuff and dump it there.'

Several older adults expressed that they had taken it upon themselves to improve the image of their community and reinforce positive social norms by picking up trash. They thought that if people became familiar with clean areas they would be less likely to litter because it appeared that someone cared about the area. Unfortunately, several older adults also admitted significant frustration because the process of cleaning up trash seemed like an endless task in their community.

-...My husband and I are big about littering. He is going to be known eventually as the 'trash man cometh'... We walk daily... We have different routes... As we walk he picks up trash... It is totally amazing what people will throw out of the cars or leave in the parking lots...

Natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement described as part of the Defensible Space Theory also help define the issue with illegal dumping and littering. As related to illegal dumping and littering, natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement seemed to go hand in hand in -- when one was present, so was the other. At the same time, when one was lacking, it also impeded the other. Natural surveillance is defined by Oscar Newman (1972) as “the capacity of physical design to provide surveillance opportunities for residents and their agents (p. 78).” On the other hand, Oscar Newman (1972) describes territorial reinforcement as “the capacity of the physical environment to create perceived zones of territorial influences (p. 51).”

Particularly, as related to illegal dumping, disposal of larger items occurred in areas where opportunities for natural surveillance were deficient. People who illegal dumped items went to places where they were unconcerned that people would see and report their actions; areas hidden by brush and overgrowth, areas with poor lighting, and areas where the rear of homes back up to the street instead of facing the front of the street.

- Just paper...trash...This is the side that people dump the most...because the residents can't see...If they would clear it out that would stop...They would think people are watching...They wouldn't be dumping stuff...

Illegal dumping also appeared to occur in areas that lacked territorial reinforcement. These areas included creek beds screened off by brush, absent fences or warning signs, and vacant land in which no ownership of the space was exhibited. This lack of ownership over the land breeds a condition in which those who are destined to abuse the area, will do so.

-...by Maline Creek. It appears to have already been used for a drinking and dumping area...beer cans...a tire here by the culvert...Whoever is responsible for the creek access by the road has not taken precautions...to minimize...trash dumping...Maybe a fence should have gone up...Somebody's taking advantage of this area. So how do we minimize that from occurring?

Finally, another older adult spoke about regularly cleaning up the front of her business and defining her personal territory.

-...a lot of dumping has stopped...People see a clean area and they are less likely to litter...When it's busy traffic, that's when I clean my windows. It's when I clean my doors. I'm out there sweeping...I want people to know...

Not only was she setting the social norm for littering on her property, she was also letting people know that someone owns, cares for, and is watching out for their own personal property. She demonstrated a more subtle approach to conveying the message that someone is looking out for the well-being of his or her property and the neighborhood.

Vacant property. Older adults were exceedingly concerned with vacant property in their community. This included vacant homes, businesses, and lots. Often, vacant homes included

plywood boards over doors and windows to keep vagrants either from breaking all of the windows and doors and entering the house, or to covering up damage that had already occurred. Research participants felt that the presence of boards on the doors and/or windows of a house looked much worse than a vacant house without boards; possibly attracting the type of people that they were trying to keep out. One research participant demonstrated with pictures that if the necessary plywood was painted to match the house, it made it less evident that the house was empty. Also, older adults agreed that in many instances it might be difficult to even determine if a home is sitting empty except for key obvious signs. The presence of plywood over the doors and windows, untrimmed and overgrown landscape, and code violation stickers on the windows and doors became obvious signs of an empty home. Despite this, it seemed that older adults were less concerned with the presence of crime associated with these properties and more concerned with the blight they created in the neighborhood, how property values were affected, and whether new homeowners would be attracted to the neighborhood. Older adults felt that there really was not much to steal in a vacant home, but acknowledged that copper theft had been a problem. Older adults were also concerned that no one was being held accountable for abandoned properties and that the City of Ferguson had not taken some sort of action on vacant properties. However, the City of Ferguson took some initiative against problem properties and began to tear down some of the vacant homes and businesses during the course of the research study.

Several older adult males stated that they had taken initiative to care for vacant homes near them. This helped to prevent their personal property from looking unpleasant and to reduce the effects of possible crime and vandalism to the vacant property. This in turn increased territorial reinforcement and natural surveillance because: 1) it appears that someone is taking

ownership over the property, and 2) someone is looking out for the well-being of the property and reporting suspicious activity. Thus, reducing the vulnerability the home may experience to crime and vandalism.

Spelman (1993) suggests that “the prevalence of abandoned property has been found to be associated with greater crime” (cited by Rephann, 2009). According to Kraut (2012), vacant properties offer places for criminals to hide and generate crime, symbolize a declining neighborhood in which there is a lack of control and criminal activity is tolerated (cited by Branas, Rubin, and Guo, 2012). “A large number of vacant buildings in a neighborhood symbolizes that no one cares, increasing the likelihood that property values will continue to decline and that further abandonment will set in. In the case of vacant properties, the problem is out in the open, for all to see. The aesthetic impact of abandoned properties, while not easily quantified in dollars, is another cost” (National Vacant Properties Campaign, 2005). The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (2004) report that “vacant and abandoned properties have negative spillover effects that impact neighboring properties and, when concentrated, entire communities and even cities. Research links foreclosed, vacant, and abandoned properties with reduced property values, increased crime, increased risk to public health and welfare, and increased costs for municipal governments.”

Critical Issues

The City of Ferguson (2014B) is working to improve upon some of these issues as outlined in their annual budget that “acts as the City’s most important financial tool to establish goals for the upcoming fiscal year.” According to the 2014-2015 annual budget, “in 2012 the Ferguson City Council established a list of critical issues that should help drive the budget

preparation process each year, to ensure we utilize our limited resources to their fullest extent by focusing on strategic short and long-range goals.” The current list of critical issues includes:

- **Housing** – *to promote home ownership, assist landlords in attracting quality renters, improve property maintenance and better track and manage vacant properties.*
- **Employee Relations** – *to improve on-the-job satisfaction of City employees through better expressing appreciation and improving communications so as to allow for a better understanding of community goals.*
- **Attracting and Retaining Residents and Businesses** – *to improve upon services provided to our existing residents and business owners and to develop better strategies for the promotion of our available residential and commercial real estate.*
- **Infrastructure** – *to continue to focus on improving city streets and sidewalks as two of our primary capital improvement expenditures that aid in fully connecting our community.*

Three of the above critical issues (housing, attracting and retaining residents and businesses, and infrastructure) outlined in the budget parallel some of the concerns that older adults expressed through their photographs and interviews. It appears that the City of Ferguson is taking an active interest to enhance the quality of life for residents and remedy some of the low levels of social disorder that lead to the perception that their community may not be a choice place to live.

Place Attachment

According to Lowe and Altman (1992), place attachment, as defined as one’s emotional or affective ties to a place, is generally thought to be the result of a long-term connection with a place (cited by Smaldone, 2006). As Smaldone (2006) explains, “this is different from saying a

place is special because it is beautiful...one can have an emotional response to a beautiful (or ugly) landscape or place, but this response may sometimes be shallow and fleeting.” Manzo and Perkins (2006) acknowledge that place attachment can also be disrupted by such things as “crime, relocation, and environmental disasters (Brown and Perkins, 1992)” and “cause feelings of loss and alienation (Hummon, 1992).” Manzo and Perkins (2006) also suggest that, “tapping into such feelings and reactions to disruption can, if properly recognized and understood, help mobilize citizen participation to rebuild a community. Conversely, if such feelings and experiences are not well addressed, disruptions could divide a community.”

Although older adults were concerned with the presence of low-level symbols of physical and social disorder in their community, they identified many positive aspects about their community that helped to counter the effects. Many older adults had been lifetime or longtime residents of the community. They had an attachment to not only their own individual home and neighborhood, but were invested in the betterment of their entire community. They were proud of their many beautiful parks, farmer’s market and community gardens, historic homes, and new blossoming businesses and investors. It appears that place attachment in conjunction with older adults physical and social engagement in the community counter the effects they could experience from the presence of social and physical disorder in the community.

Environmental Docility Theory

Older adult participants demonstrated that they are sufficiently capable of dealing with the effects of low levels of environmental disorder in their community. For these older adults, the personal fear of victimization does not appear to be present. The fear that is present is one in which they are afraid that these low levels of physical and social disorder are compromising social norms and thus symbolizing the future deterioration of their community. Their attachment

to place combined with their present ability to be physically and socially engaged in their community has made them sufficiently capable of dealing with the environmental effects of crime and fear of crime in their community. If their present physical and social engagement in the community were to cease, it is possible that they may not be able to sufficiently deal with increased environmental press from fear of crime in their community.

However, in analyzing the statement of one research participant, it is appropriate to connect the concepts regarding the Environmental Docility Theory with the personal mechanisms that older adults utilize to compensate for decreased competency to control particular environmental pressers that may be affecting them.

- I need to say this about the audience that you have been seeking out. When your years get less, you've got more behind you than you've got in front of you. We all start feeling our mortality a little bit and that's frustrating...When we were younger we thought we were more tolerant...now we are finding out that we're not. We like to have more control over something. So a lot of the belly aching you hear it seems related to the fact that we have less and less control over our lives. Well, the perception is that control is slipping away from us. And this is belly aching about something like this is a good relief.

As indicated through this research participant's statement, older adults sense the decline in their competency level and as a result they begin to compensate by further controlling that over which they still have some power. As competency diminishes, they work to control the effects of specific environmental pressers that are appearing to become unmanageable and uncontrollable. Physical and social norms and standards that are changing beyond what these older adults currently feel is within their scope of acceptance. Physical and social standards which may very well become conventional practice to a more demographically diverse

community. As this research participant indicated, older adults attempt to preserve control over the perceived physical and social community values by “belly aching.” This research study became an appropriate outlet to voice concerns about the deterioration of physical and social characteristics in the community. That which they can still control will not become an environmental press too monumental to overtake their personal competency. A personal competency level that is potentially diminished, as the environment spirals out of control, becomes too unbearable for one to physical, socially, and emotionally manage.

This statement may have also unintentionally served as a premonition for the future occurrences that took place in the community in August, 2014. The social norms of Ferguson have begun to change as the demographics of Ferguson have changed. Those in power potentially work to grasp even more tightly onto the rules and regulations which would keep the powerless (those deemed unmanageable and uncontrollable) from spinning the current social norms out of control. This creates a struggle for power in the community; feeding distrust, disrespect, and further social disorganization.

Comparison of Demographic Data

Demographic data for the 15 research participants was collected to understand if any specific characteristics were associated with a higher perception of crime. In this research study, gender did not seem to have a specific impact on whether older adults were more fearful of crime in their community. However, it did appear that females took a more active interest in reporting specific incivilities such as maintenance violations to the City of Ferguson. In contrast, males reported taking a more active interest in becoming directly involved in the upkeep of specific properties. For example, all of the male research participants communicated that they had cared for vacant properties next door to or near their own home. This included mowing grass as well

as keeping a watchful eye to make sure the home had not been damaged by criminals or through weather related events.

The age groups of older adults can be categorized into three major sub-populations. Those who are age 65-74 are considered the “young-old”, 75-84 are “old”, and those who are age 85+ are the “oldest-old” (Trangenerational Design Matters, 2009). In this research study, five research participants were between the age of 60 and 64 years of age. Therefore, they technically do not even meet the definition of someone who would be considered the youngest of the old population. Nine research participants were between the ages of 65-74, thus meeting the criteria for the youngest of the old population. Two research participants were between the ages of 75-79, meeting the criteria for the “old” population. None of the older adults who participated in this research study could be included in the “oldest-old” age category. Therefore, it is possible that this could also have an effect on their perceptions of crime in their community. Those who are younger are also more physically and socially active, assisting in combating the effects of crime perception in their community.

The race of the research participants did not seem to affect whether or not they were more fearful of crime in their community. However, as previously noted, some research participants, depending on their race seemed to view the quality of particular businesses and the type of people they attract differently. Additionally, it was only older White females who identified that they felt that minorities were responsible for increased community crime, littering, as well as other issues symbolizing the decline of their community’s social values and norms.

Although specific issues might relate to particular neighborhoods throughout Ferguson, it was not discovered through the interviews with older adults that one neighborhood was more problematic than another. However, two older adults acknowledged that there had been various

problems at the apartment complexes off West Florissant Avenue in Ferguson. In addition to their own neighborhood, older adults also ventured outside their individual neighborhood to the main business districts of Ferguson as well as other nearby neighborhoods and parks. However, it appeared that older adults mainly took photos of the older part of Ferguson along South Florissant and did not take any photos of the businesses along West Florissant Avenue.

Whether or not one lives alone is a determining factor in crime perception, especially for female research participants. However, of the four research participants who were males, only one lived alone. One female research participant suggested that she felt that age had little to do with whether or not one was more likely to become a victim of crime. She felt that living alone was a more significant indicator of victimization. This was because it is easier for potential criminals to be able to tell when no one is home, that one individual could be more easily taken advantage of, when others were living in the home they were looking out for one's well-being, and paying attention to when they were supposed to be home.

Only one research participant indicated that she considered herself a person with a disability. However, she did not indicate on the Likert type scale to what degree she felt that her disability made her more susceptible to crime. However, based on the interview, she appeared to be a rather active individual so the potential disability did not appear to inhibit her current activity level. Because all of the older adults indicated that they did not consider themselves a person with a disability, it is possible that this also contributed to their low fear of crime in their community. A disability, particularly a physical disability that prohibits one from being physically mobile, would impede their physical and social activities, thus potentially resulting in an increased fear of crime in their community.

Conclusion

When I embarked upon my research journey in Ferguson, I could not have imagined that the unfortunate events of August 2014 that lead to the death of Michael Brown would have taken place. These events sparked outrage in the community and throughout the nation; leading to protests, riots, violence, and destruction. Ferguson has become part of history and will continue to shape the way everyone in the nation thinks about race relations in their own communities, shaping new laws, and public policy in the United States.

Through my initial involvement in Ferguson, several issues sparked my interest and inspired me to begin working on my Ph.D. These issues included several physical and social changes that were perceived as incivilities contributing to crime in the community. However, as older adults in this research study demonstrated, these changes may not translate into an actual increase in crime, but become symbols that their community is not as healthy as it once was. This signifies the perceived presence of longer-term social deterioration in their community in which their perceived social values and norms are challenged. The fact is that the social norms and values of the community are changing.

Although I had previous involvement in the community, the original response to my research study by some of the citizens of Ferguson was not positive. People verbally expressed their concerns about my research study, suggesting that it was going to draw additional bad publicity to their community. As I tried to rationalize my research study to one person on Halloween night of 2013, I was in tears as I was told that I was not deserving of a Ph.D. and my work was nothing more than undergraduate research quality. I was extremely discouraged about my research study. My intent was to cause no harm in the community, but to utilize the results of my study to enhance the life of older adults aspiring to age-in-place in their community.

Therefore, I set out to strengthen my research study. I made additional modifications in order to find some common ground with the residents of Ferguson. As the concerns still flooded in, I proceeded. The mayor received criticisms about my research study, but personally called me, trying to improve communication, and express his support of what I was doing. He believed in my research study because he also wanted to understand people's fears in order to improve his community. Residents' concerns stemmed from the apprehension they experienced from the negative attention drawn to their community by media outlets in the St. Louis area. They did not want my research study to draw further negative attention to their community. Although issues in the community exist, residents felt that not enough positive publicity was given. In the early stages of developing my research study, I also spoke with Dr. Bob Bursik, a Criminology Professor at the University of Missouri St. Louis. He encouraged my work, reassured me that I was on the right track, and pointed me to some very important literature in the field. When I first met Dr. Bursik, I had no idea that he was one of the significant academics of the Social Disorganization Theory. I feel fortunate that our paths crossed because I do not have a background in Criminology. I approached the issue in Ferguson from one that was Environment and Behavior based.

Two key pieces identified in this research study also relate to the death of Michael Brown in August 2014. One issue dealt with the frustration that older adults experienced when teens walked down the middle of the street instead of utilizing the sidewalk in their neighborhoods. This was an issue identified by both Black and White research participants. One Black female also expressed her frustration with teens playing basketball in the street instead of utilizing the local park nearby. This was a complaint often expressed by residents in other various neighborhood watch groups as well. Although walking down the middle of the street or playing

basketball in the street may not be a serious criminal offense, it is seen as one that violates the social norms identified by the residents of the neighborhood. It seems sometimes that a police officer's job is not just to "enforce the law," but to be a general peacekeeper in the community in respect to the social norms and values established by the residents themselves. However, how does one deal with a situation where the social norms and values of the neighborhood are shifting as they have in Ferguson? I have attended various neighborhood watch meetings throughout the City of Ferguson in the last couple of years. Some things identified by members of the community can clearly be defined as breaking the law, however, many things cannot. However, police officers and city officials present at the meetings listen to residents' concerns and try to establish common ground with them.

Several older adults also acknowledged that the apartment area where Michael Brown was shot had been problematic in the past. However, they also felt that the City of Ferguson had taken some very proactive measures to assist in keeping those apartment areas safer. Except for the acknowledgement of the apartment complexes off West Florissant Avenue, I think it is important to note that most of what older adults in this research study spoke about related to the businesses and neighborhoods along the more central arteries of Ferguson and South Florissant Avenue. Research participants spoke very little about and took no photos of the areas along West Florissant Avenue. Conversely, much of the media has based its view of the entire City of Ferguson on what has happened at the apartment complexes off West Florissant Avenue.

Communities are ever evolving, in which the residents of those communities mold and shape its history. The residents of Ferguson, or at least the ones I interacted with as part of this research study, are very dedicated individuals who will continue to make their community a better place for themselves and future generations. They too, will overcome this, learning from

the challenges, and utilizing these events to strengthen the fabric of their community. I challenge people to explore more of Ferguson. It is more than what transpired in August, 2014. It is a community, it is where people have grown up, raised their children, and entertain their grandchildren. Ferguson has fantastic restaurants, shops, and other activities to engage in. Through my work in Ferguson, I fell in love with the community and feel personally heartbroken by the events that have taken place. I spent so much time in Ferguson that it had become my second home. I shopped in their stores and ate at their restaurants. Soon I was dragging my husband to the Ferguson Brew House for burgers and beer. Research participants invited me into their homes, fed me dinner, gave me tours, and I bonded with their pets. For a brief moment, I felt like an insider in Ferguson as I explored through photos and interviews what it was like for older adults to live there. The older adults in Ferguson demonstrated to me what being part of a community really meant. Being part of a community means loving it despite its quirks and peculiarities. It is dealing with the challenges as they come along and working together to find common solutions to make the community better for all who live, play, and work in Ferguson. I truly believe that those who inhabit Ferguson want to become part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. They will work together as a community to help one another and establish peace as Ferguson begins the healing process.

Considerations for future research. The data for this research study was collected prior to the events of August 2014 that resulted in the death of Michael Brown as well as the protests and riots that occurred in the following months. Therefore, it would be quite appropriate to conduct a follow-up research study to understand if older adults' perceptions of crime in Ferguson, Missouri have been altered as a result of the events of August 2014.

This research study had some limitations as every research study does. One included the relatively small sample size. This is common with qualitative research studies, which provided a depth of knowledge and understanding unmatched by a quantitative research study. However, if the interest were to gather a more representative sample and improve the validity of the research results that could then be applied to a broader population, it would be appropriate to conduct a research study utilizing quantitative research methods. Combining the two research method types to develop a mixed-methods approach would also be appropriate for this type of research study. This would combine the particulars of specific research participant accounts formed through qualitative research methods with the generalizability of a larger sample size found in quantitative research studies. Given the events that occurred in August 2014, qualitative research proved to be an appropriate method of data collection. Older adults provided insightful observations about issues present in their community that would have remained undetected in the results of a quantitative research study.

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Appendix A
Recruitment Letter

November 5th, 2013

Dear Ferguson Residents,

My name is Kandace Fisher-McLean and I am a PhD student in Architectural Studies at the University of Missouri. I will be conducting a research study that investigates older adult's perceptions of crime in Ferguson, MO. All older adult's living in Ferguson who are age 60 and older are invited to participate in this study. Participation is completely voluntary and you can choose to withdrawal from the study at any time if you decide to participate.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to walk around your neighborhood and take photos of various physical elements and places that you feel contribute to crime. I would also like to ask you to take photos of physical elements and places that you feel contribute positively to the image of your neighborhood. I will supply you with a disposable camera to take the photos with. You are encouraged to take a friend or family member with you as you take photos if this makes you feel more comfortable with the process. You will then return the camera to me when you are finished. At that time, I will set up an interview with you and have the photos developed. I will be interviewing you about the various photos that you took, the social messages that you feel are conveyed by the images you captured through your photos, and how you feel your quality of life has been affected. I will also give you a brief survey to collect demographic type information.

If you do not desire to walk around your neighborhood and take photos, but would still like to participate in the research study an interview can be set up with you to talk about the physical elements and places that you feel contribute to crime as well as physical elements and places that you feel positively contribute to your

neighborhood. You will be asked about the social messages that you feel are conveyed by the physical elements and place you described, and how you feel your quality of life has been affected. I will also give you a brief survey to collect demographic type information.

If you agree to take part in this research study, there are no perceived direct benefits of participation. You may expect to benefit from taking part in this research to the extent that you are contributing to social science knowledge. If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept confidential and no personal identifiers will be published.

Please contact me if you would like to participate or if you have any questions or concerns. Please pass this information along to friends or family members who might also be interested in participating in the study.

Sincerely,

Contact Information:

Kandace L. Fisher-McLean

10650 Gateway Blvd.

St. Louis, MO 63132

Ph: 314-400-7657

Email: fisherKL@missouri.edu

Appendix B

Consent Script

Primary Investigator's Name: Kandace L. Fisher – McLean

Advisor: Dr. Ronald Phillips

Research Study Title: Images of Community Crime in Ferguson, Missouri: Older Adults' Perspectives

1. I would like to ask you to participate in a research study.
2. Participation is voluntary; and you can withdrawal from the research study at any time without penalty, if you decide to no longer participate.
3. For this research study, you will be asked to take photos of physical elements and places you feel represent crime in your neighborhood. Additionally, you are invited to take photos of physical elements and places you feel contribute positively to the image of your neighborhood. The photos you take will be developed and used to shape a face-to-face interview with you. In the interview, you will be asked some general questions about your neighborhood, you will be asked to describe the photos you took, the kind of social messages you feel are sent by the images you captured, and how your quality of life has been affected. You will also be asked to fill out a brief survey to collect demographic type information.

If you choose not to take photos, but participate in the interview, you will be asked to describe physical elements and places you feel represent crime in your neighborhood. Additionally, you will be asked to describe physical elements and places you feel contribute positively to the image of your neighborhood. You will also be asked some general questions about your neighborhood, the kind of social messages you feel are sent by the physical elements and places described, and how your quality of life has been affected. You will also be asked to fill out a brief survey to collect demographic type information.

4. The purpose of this research study is to investigate how older adults feel about crime in Ferguson and how their quality of life has been affected by their perceptions of crime. It is hoped that the information collected from

your participation in this research study can be used to better understand and eventually help reduce fear of crime, improve the rate of those wishing to age-in-place, and improve the lives of older adults in Ferguson and other communities.

5. If you agree to take part in this research study, there are no perceived direct benefits of participation. You may expect to benefit from taking part in this research study to the extent that you are contributing to social science knowledge.
6. If you choose to participate, photos and interview data will be shared with others through public documentation of the research study. Your identity will be kept confidential and no personal identifiers will be attached to the photos and interview data published. All hard copies of photos, interview data, surveys, and other personal information associated with the research study will be secured in the primary investigator's office in a locked file cabinet. All research data and personal information stored electronically will be secured on a password protected device.
7. You should not expect to experience any financial charges or costs as a participant in this research study.
8. There is no compensation given to you for participation in this research study.
9. Interviews will be recorded with a digital recorder for later transcription. A professional transcriptionist will be used as part of this process. All interview data will be kept confidential, and interview files will be deleted by the transcriptionist at the conclusion of their service.
10. If you have any questions and/or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this research study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this research study, you may contact the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board (which is a group of people who review the research studies to protect participants' rights) at (573) 882-9585.
11. If you have any problems or questions, you may also contact:

Principal Investigator: Kandace L. Fisher-McLean

Address: University of Missouri-Extension,
10650 Gateway Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132
Phone: 314-400-7657
Email: fisherKL@missouri.edu

Academic Advisor: Dr. Ronald Phillips
Address: Architectural Studies, 137 Stanley Hall,
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211
Phone: 573-882-4575
Email: PhillipsR@missouri.edu

12. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.
13. A copy of this script will be given to you to keep.

Appendix C

ETHICS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

1. **Each person can decide to take part** - In what way can I show respect for a person's right to decide to have a picture taken? How do I talk to them about their right to decide?
2. **Do No Harm** - Am I creating and using pictures in a way that will not hurt the people in the pictures?
3. **Do Good** - What is my reason for taking this picture? How can I use a picture to help do good things and make sure that I do not hurt the people in the pictures?
4. **Honesty** - Am I using pictures in a way that fairly shows the real way something is, the true way a person looks, or the real place seen in the picture? What am I doing to make sure the person who took the picture is known?
5. **Be Fair** - Am I taking pictures of people and places with the same respect I would show to people I know and people I do not know in my home country?

No need to ask the person	Ask person to say they agree to have a picture taken	Ask person to sign a paper saying they agree to have a picture taken
No faces or other signs that can be used to tell who is in a picture	All people in all settings when possible .	When you can tell who a person is and the person is getting a service in an office
People who most everyone knows	Parents, guardians, or teachers of children.	When you can tell who a person is or even if you cannot, in any place where personal, private information is seen in the picture or in writing by the picture, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Health status</u> (e.g. HIV-positive persons, persons living with AIDS/STIs, abortion history, TB, diarrheal disease, etc.) • <u>Health behavior</u> (e.g. sex work, sexual orientation, alcohol and drug use, contraceptive use, female genital cutting,

		etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Criminal behavior</u> (e.g. perpetrator or victim of gender-based violence, etc.)
Crowds in public (e.g. an audience at outdoor concert).	Directors/Managers of clinics or other service programs.	

- **Asking someone to decide if they want to take part**

Get to know a person before you start taking pictures. When you go up to someone, first tell them who you are. Be nice to them. Tell them why you want to take pictures. In a place where someone is getting help like a health center, talk to the person in charge before you begin taking pictures of the workers or people getting help.

e.g. *"I am taking pictures for a study on how much people feel like they belong in this town. The study is for the University of Missouri. Would you let me take your picture? I will not sell it. It will be used to tell people about this community."*

- If you do not speak the same language, use body signs. Smile, nod, and point to your camera before shooting.
 - Do not take a picture if: you think the person does not want to have their picture taken. They are mixed up about what is going on. They do not seem to think it is important. Respect a person's right to not want to have a picture taken.
 - If you are traveling with someone who speaks the local language, ask him or her to ask people if you can take their picture.
 - Find an adult who can tell you if it is okay to take pictures of their children.
- **Ask person to sign a paper saying they agree to have their picture taken.**

Getting someone to sign a paper agreeing to have their picture taken may not be possible all the time. Sometime people cannot read or understand what is

written down. People may not know much about taking pictures. However, the University says we have to get people in our pictures to write their name on a form that says we can take the picture. Here are some ideas to help get people to agree:

- Make sure you have copies of the forms in English and Spanish.
- For people who cannot read or write, ask them to make a mark on the form. If the person does not want to or cannot use a writing tool, have them tell you if they agree. Have someone who can read write see the person agree. Then have that person write their name on the form.

Ideas to make sure that you cannot tell who is in the picture.

As someone taking pictures, you can do more than ask someone if they agree to have a picture taken. To make sure no one will know who is in the picture you can:

- Do not take pictures that make it easy to know who is in the picture. When you take pictures of someone that most people do not know, stay by the back of the person's head. Below is a picture showing you how to do that.



Photo Credits: Photo taken at the University of Missouri-Extension St. Louis County office by Janie Lewis (2013). Used with Permission.

- In a place where people get services, use an actor. Have the actor sign the form.
- When you take pictures of people who may be in some kind of danger, be very careful. If you take a picture of someone who is in danger, the picture could help someone find that person and hurt them. Try to leave out any information that could help someone find that person. In such cases, use false names or no names. It may be necessary to change a picture so that no one will know who is in it.

SOURCE: Photoshare by K4Health (2013). Development and photography ethics. Retrieved from <http://www.photoshare.org/resources/development-photography-ethics>

K4Health, PhotoShare Info The INFO Project, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Communications Project, and USAID from the American People.

Original document adapted by an unidentified author (unknown date) at the Cambio Center at the University of Missouri.

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Source information and document photo were updated by Kandace L. Fisher-McLean (2013).

Appendix D
Demographic Survey

This questionnaire contains 6 items asking about your background information.

Please respond by checking or filling in the appropriate box.

1. Gender: Male

 Female

2. What is your current age?_____

3. What neighborhood in Ferguson do you live in?_____

4. What best describes your race?

 Asian

 White

 Black or African American

 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

 Native American Indian or Alaskan Native

 Other: _____

5. What best describes your current living situation?


 I live alone.

 I live with a spouse or partner.

 I live with others in my household (family, friends, or roommates).

Please respond by checking or filling in the appropriate box.

6. Do you consider yourself a person with a disability?

- Yes
- No
- 

6a. My disability makes me more fearful of becoming a victim of crime.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Thank you for your participation!

Appendix E

Photo Elicited Interview Protocol

Good (morning, afternoon, evening), my name is Kandace.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? We are going to go through each photo individually and I will ask you questions about each photo. If there is a photo that you do not want to talk about or would like to skip, that is ok. We can also come back to photos if you think of any additional observations. I am going to record this session with a digital recorder for later transcription.

A. Starter Questions (general questions about the neighborhood)

First, I want to ask you a couple of questions about the neighborhood that you live in.....

1. How long has you lived in this neighborhood?
 - a. What has kept you here so long?
2. Can you please describe some good qualities about the neighborhood that you like the most?
 - a. Describe why you like them.
3. Can you please describe some undesirable qualities about the neighborhood that concern you the most?
 - a. Describe why they concern you.
4. Can you please describe the kind of things that have changed in your neighborhood since you moved here?

B. Photos of Physical Elements and Places Described (ask question for each individual photo)

I noticed that you captured a lot of incredible photos. I want to ask you some questions about the photos you took (begin looking at each photo).....

1. Can you please describe to me why you took this photo?
2. Can you please describe to me what this photo means to you?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
3. Can you please describe how this photo makes you feel?
 - b. Describe why you think this.
4. If you could change something in this photo, what would you change (for crime related photos)?

- a. Describe why you would change this.

C. Social Messages (ask question for each individual photo)

1. Can you please describe what kind of message you think the photo you took sends about your neighborhood?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
 - b. Describe what you think could be done about it.
2. Can you please describe what factors you think contribute to the image you captured in your photo?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
 - b. Describe what you think could be done about it.
3. Can you please describe who (or what) you think contributes to the image that you captured in your photo?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
 - b. Describe what you think could be done about it.
4. Can you please describe who you think might be attracted to committing a crime in the image you captured? Or what type of crimes this image might attract?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
 - b. Describe what you think could be done about it.

D. Quality of Life (general questions, not pertaining to each individual photo)

1. Describe the kind of social activities that you regularly engage in within and around your community.
2. Has anything changed about the activities that you engage in because you worry about being targeted by crime?
 - a. Why or why not?
3. Describe how the positive qualities in your neighborhood have affected the activities that you regularly participate in.
4. Do you think your age is a contributing factor in being targeted by crime?

- a. Why or Why not?

E. Additional Questions (general questions, not pertaining to each individual photo)

1. Describe any other places that you feel represent crime in your neighborhood that you did not get to take pictures of and would like to discuss.
 - a. Describe why you feel they represent crime.
2. Describe any other places that you feel contribute positively to you neighborhood that you did not get to take pictures of and would like to discuss.
 - a. Describe why you feel they contribute positively.
3. Which of all of these photos that you took represent crime to you the most?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
4. Which of all of these photos that you took represent crime to you the least?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
5. Which of all of these photos that you took represent your community most positively?
 - a. Describe why you think this.

Thank you for contributing to this study. I appreciate your photos and the responses you provided. I hope that you enjoyed taking photos in your neighborhood and I will share the results of this study with you after it is finished.

Appendix F

Interview Protocol (no photos)

Good (morning, afternoon, evening), my name is Kandace.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? I am going to ask you some questions about physical elements and places in your neighborhood. If there is a questions that you would like to skip or come back to later, that is ok. I am going to record this session with a digital recorder for later transcription.

A. Starter Questions (general questions about the neighborhood)

First, I want to ask you a couple of questions about the neighborhood that you live in.....

1. How long has you lived in this neighborhood?
 - a. What has kept you here so long?
2. Can you please describe some good qualities about the neighborhood that you like the most?
 - a. Describe why you like them.
3. Can you please describe some undesirable qualities about the neighborhood that concern you the most?
 - a. Describe why they concern you.
4. Can you please describe the kind of things that have changed in your neighborhood since you moved here?

B. Physical Elements and Places Described

I want to ask you some questions about the physical places and elements in your neighborhood.

1. Can you please describe some of the physical places in your neighborhood that you feel contribute to crime?
 - a. Describe what this means to you.
 - b. Describe how this makes you feel.
2. Can you please describe some of the physical elements in your neighborhood that you feel contribute to crime?
 - a. Describe what this means to you.

- b. Describe how this makes you feel.
- 3. Can you please describe some of the physical places that you feel positively contribute to your neighborhood?
 - a. Describe what this means to you.
 - b. Describe how this makes you feel.
- 4. Can you please describe some of the physical elements that you feel positively contribute to your neighborhood?
 - a. Describe what this means to you.
 - b. Describe how this makes you feel.
- 5. If you could change something in your neighborhood, what would you change?
 - a. Describe why you would change this.

C. Social Messages Described (pertaining to each individual physical place and element described)

- 1. Can you please describe what kind of message you think the physical elements and places you described send about your neighborhood?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
 - b. Describe what you think could be done about it.
- 2. Can you please describe what factors you think contribute to the physical elements and places you described?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
 - b. Describe what you think could be done about it.
- 3. Can you please describe who (or what) you think contributes to the physical elements and places you described?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
 - b. Describe what you think could be done about it.
- 4. Could you please describe who you think might be attracted to committing a crime in the physical places that you described? Or what type of crimes they might attract?

- a. Describe why you think this.
- b. Describe what you think could be done about it.

D. Quality of Life (general questions, not pertaining to places and elements described)

1. Describe the kind of social activities that you regularly engage in within and around your community.
2. Has anything changed about the activities that you engage in because you worry about being targeted by crime?
 - a. Why or why not?
3. Describe how the positive qualities in your neighborhood have affected the activities that you regularly participate in.
4. Do you think your age is a contributing factor in being targeted by crime?
 - a. Why or Why not?

E. Additional Questions (general, not pertaining to places and elements described)

1. Describe any other places or elements that you feel represent crime in your neighborhood that you would like to discuss.
 - a. Describe why you feel they represent crime.
2. Describe any other places that you feel contribute positively to you neighborhood that you would like to discuss.
 - a. Describe why you feel they contribute positively.
3. Which physical places or elements in your neighborhood represent crime to you the most?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
4. Which physical places or elements in your neighborhood represent crime to you the least?
 - a. Describe why you think this.
5. What physical places or elements in your neighborhood represent your community most positively?
 - a. Describe why you think this.

Thank you for contributing to this study. I appreciate the time you took to participate in the interview and the responses you provided. I will share the results of this study with you after it is finished.

VITA

Kandace Fisher-McLean grew up in Tiskilwa, Illinois. After graduating from Princeton High School in Princeton, Illinois; she attended Southern Illinois University – Carbondale where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design and conducted undergraduate research through the McNair Scholars Program. Upon graduation, she attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison as an Advanced Opportunity Fellow and received a Master of Science in Human Ecology: Design Studies and a Specialist in Gerontology Certificate. In addition to her PhD work at the University of Missouri – Columbia, she also serves as a Housing and Environmental Design Specialist with the University of Missouri – Extension and as the Coordinator for the National Healthy Homes Partnership.