Empowering High-Risk Males Through Street Outreach

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THESIS

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FNCG

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Chapter 3, the methods section, has some overlap with components of the methods section of an unpublished manuscript (Gorman-Smith & Cosey-Gay, 2014) that can be found on the Cure Violence website in the results tab on scientific evaluations (http://cureviolence.org/results/scientific-evaluations/mccormick-foundation-chicago-evaluation/).

In 2013, the McCormick Foundation commissioned a quantitative and a qualitative evaluation of the 2012/2013 Cure Violence Illinois program in four target police beats in two Chicago neighborhoods, North Lawndale (Police District 10) and Woodlawn (Police District 3). I was the secondary author and co-investigator of the qualitative evaluation. I conducted 40 interviews with Cure Violence clients and non-clients in the four target police beats. I also supervised the data collection of 35 interviews with adult residents in the four target police beats. This dissertation focuses only on the 40 interviews with clients and non-clients. This dissertation also includes four interviews with outreach workers that were not part of the 2013 McCormick Foundation commissioned qualitative evaluation.

The principal investigator, Dr. Deborah Gorman-Smith contributed to the writing of the manuscript, and there is some overlap in the methods section of the dissertation and this unpublished manuscript.

Also, in Chapter 4, there are an overlap in ten quotes from this unpublished manuscript. There are 78 quotes in this dissertation that are not in the McCormick Foundation Qualitative report which are unique to this dissertation.

PREFACE

I want to introduce my research interests through what Etherington (2004) describes as the subjective lens through which one views research. I chose this approach because my interpretations are partly rooted in my reflections on growing up in the working-class community of Park Manor in Chicago, attending school in a low-income, yet historic community known as Bronzeville, and delivering interventions and conducting research in some of the lowest income communities in this city. These experiences in childhood and as a researcher has contributed to my understanding about how policy decisions related to housing, jobs, schooling, and crime have disrupted low-income communities, further isolated their residents from much-needed resources, and ultimately weakened communities' ability to enforce community norms and beliefs. In this study, I propose to examine how Cure Violence outreach workers can empower a small percentage of the African-American males who are at high-risk for violence victimization and perpetration to contribute positively to their own lives and their community. The study utilizes a qualitative approach.

Maxwell (1998) advises that the qualitative investigator should consider himself a research instrument and that the qualitative researcher's eyes and ears are tools to be used when making sense of what is going on throughout data collection. Elliot, Fisher, & Rennie (1999) argue that when the researcher includes their perspective, it improves the credibility of the research by acknowledging not only one's theoretical orientation but also the personal experiences that account for any investigatory biases. Malterud (2001) describes this process as reflexivity, which he also believes improves credibility by "identifying preconceptions brought into the project by the researcher, representing previous personal and professional experiences, pre-study beliefs about how things are and what is to be investigated, motivations and qualifications for exploration of the field, and perspectives and theoretical foundations related to

education and interests" (p. 484). Etherington (2004) suggests that an increased understanding of the role of researcher reflexivity has contributed to the development of auto-ethnography, which has been defined as "a blend of ethnography and autobiographical writing that incorporates elements of one's own life experience when writing about others" (Scott-Hoy, 2002, p. 276). By these considerations, this study is a qualitative inquiry in the ethnographic tradition. However, to capture the reflexivity of the researcher, I will begin with a brief auto-ethnographic account of why I have chosen this topic. The primary objective of this approach, as Etherington (2004) explains, is to take adequate account of how the cultural context of the researcher's lived experience, including in my case my childhood and work experiences, inform the study's qualitative inquiry by structuring the way the researcher understands and interprets the social world.

On the 39: My Social Connection to a South Side Street in Chicago

I attended a Catholic elementary school in the Bronzeville community on the South Side of Chicago. Much to my delight, every first Friday of the month we would have no school. First Fridays meant having the opportunity to follow my dad while he worked. In the 1970s through the early 1980s, my dad worked for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) as a bus driver while completing his degree at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. The University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UICC) was also known as "Circle" because of its proximity to the large cloverleaf circle interchanges of Chicago's three major highways. These bus rides were an opportunity for me as a young child to see the city. I always had the first seat on the bus, and an unobstructed view of the diverse neighborhoods and their residents traveling to their homes, jobs, and various city businesses, among others. My dad drove some buses out of the Archer Garage: the 62/Archer line, Canal/Wacker, 35th Street, 47th Street, and the 39/Pershing Road are

some of the lines I can remember riding with him. From an early age, these rides instilled in me a passion for the hustle and bustle of city life.

The most memorable bus route was the "39," the 39th Street bus route. Thirty-ninth Street was also named Pershing Road after a World War I army general, John J. Pershing. The 39 route took you through the working- and lower-class communities and industrial corridors along Pershing Road on the south side of Chicago. Starting on west 39th street, the riders were all white. This was a different experience than my commutes to elementary school on the number 3 bus, King Drive, which was packed with all black riders. On the 39, I would play a game that consisted of counting the number of white riders and tracking how this quantity dwindled the further east we went. One of the CTA's shorter routes, the 39 route extended seven miles along Pershing Road from 3500 West at St. Louis Avenue to 1000 east at Lake Shore Drive.

Riding eastbound, the white riders would number in the double digits through Ashland Avenue. After we passed Halsted Street, the number of white passengers would diminish into the single digits. When we reached Canal Street, right before the viaduct of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, the bus would empty; it would then just be my dad and myself. Leaving the damp asphalt road and the shadows of the viaduct, I would be blinded by the bleached white paint of the old Comiskey Park stadium, which stood valiantly in the northern background at 35th Street across four blocks of vacant parking lots. Seconds later, we would approach Princeton Avenue, where the housing structures reminded me of being on my dad's college campus, "Circle," consisting of lifeless cement block structures with patches of grass and trees to break the monotony of the dominant concrete. On the north side of Pershing Road were two-level blocks of Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) units called Wentworth Gardens. The Wentworth Gardens housing complex seemed like an aberration among the segregated communities on the

South Side. By comparison, when I rode the 35th and 47th street buses with my dad, it was clear

that the Dan Ryan Expressway served as a physical dividing line separating white and black. On

Pershing Road, the Wentworth Housing Projects were on the west side of the expressway, while

to the east, its 16-story towers served as a clear geographical boundary. At this eastern point on

the bus route, the division between black and white resembled a battlefield; the Dan Ryan

Expressway was a human-made concrete bunker, and the concrete forts were the towering

Stateway Gardens and the Robert Taylor Homes. Crossing the Dan Ryan Expressway, the bus

ride went from being a playful counting game to a time of quiet introspection. Why had these

buildings been built? Why were they so expansive yet equally monotonous? What was it like to

live and work there? As we proceeded through the viaduct of the Rock Island and New York

Central Railroads, which carried the Metra commuter train riders to their southwest suburban

homes or workplaces, the darkness of the viaduct created a continuum of blackness along with

the shadows of each towering complex that converged on the intersection of Pershing Road and

Federal Street. On the northern side of Pershing stood the southernmost tower of Stateway

Gardens, which stretched from 35th to 39th and Pershing, and across the street stood the

northernmost tower of the Robert Taylor Homes, the largest public housing development in the

world, which stretched south from 39th to 51st Streets.

By this time, everyone who boarded the bus would be black. The setting was highlighted

with the sidewalk activity of African-Americans traversing to and from the major physical

structures that now dominated this eastern portion of the bus ride: motels with room rates by the

hour, liquor stores which highlighted bargain sales of hard liquor, bars with no visible windows

from which one might peek into to see the activity inside, and dozens of storefront churches.

Continuing east, we passed Wendell Phillips High School, a school with a rich history named

after a leading abolitionist during the anti-slavery movement. My dad would tell me about the

famous folks who had come from Phillips, including Nat King Cole, Dinah Washington, and

John H. Johnson, as well as three of the original members of the Harlem Globetrotters, the

famous basketball comedy exhibition team. A four-block ride would take us away from the

dominating presence of the Robert Taylor Homes and the Stateway Gardens only to be greeted

by yet another "superblock" of public housing developments: The Ida B. Wells Homes, named

after the civil rights and women's suffrage movement leader. These projects were personal and

familiar to me because my elementary school, Holy Angels, sat one block away at Vincennes

Avenue and Oakwood Boulevard. I was exposed to this community for over twenty years, which

included my tenure as an elementary school student and my attendance at various events for my

younger siblings who went to this same school through 1998. During my elementary school

years, before the morning bell rang, I would often venture a few blocks away from the school,

risking suspension, by sneaking to a corner store to play the Pac Man, Space Invaders, Asteroids,

and Galaxy video games, which were the craze at the time. I also became familiar with this

housing complex because our school had no gym, so we would walk through two blocks of the

Ida B. Wells developments to use the gym in Madden Park, the unofficial town square of the Ida

B. Wells Homes.

The design of the Ida B. Wells projects was less intimidating by sight than the towering

Stateway Gardens and Robert Taylor Homes because it was a mix of four-story buildings

covering nearly eighty percent of the land between its eastern and western borders at King Drive

and Langley Avenue, respectively, and its northern and southern borders at 37th and 39th Streets.

However, across Langley Avenue stood four fourteen-story towers that resembled the Robert

Taylor Homes in stature and crimson color, called the Darrow Homes. These homes were

named after Clarence Darrow, the famous labor, civil rights, and criminal defense lawyer. These

buildings would cast a shadow over 39th Street between Langley and Cottage Grove Avenues.

One of the final stops before the lakefront was at 39th and Drexel. At this corner sat the El

Rukn gang headquarters, known locally as "The Fort." My dad told me the fort used to be an old

movie theater called the Oakland Square. The building's original masonry had been painted

green and black with drawn images of Egyptian structures. Above the door was a bright red sign

that displayed a crescent moon and star. I thought, "Why would a gang advertise its

headquarters?" The El Rukn's members wore fez caps similar to what I would expect to see

worn by an African Muslim. Because of this image, El Rukn's was also called Mo's, short for

Moorish. As a result, I had always associated El Rukn's with a religious group rather than an

organized gang. They had also been known to engage in political activities in the neighborhood,

such as creating job training programs. It was later that I learned that its leader, Jeff Fort, had

changed the name of the former street gang, Black Stone Rangers, to El Rukn's when he

converted to the Islamic faith after serving time in prison. The name, Black Stone Rangers, did

resonate with me as that of a street gang. I recall my mother sharing a story that during her senior

year in high school, a member of this gang had killed her teen friend and neighbor in front of his

house just ten feet from her front doorsteps. As we passed "The Fort," we approached the corner

of 39th Street and Lake Park Avenue, about a block from the lakefront. On this corner would be

the final set of CHA homes on the "39," called the Olander Homes, which were named after a

labor activist, Victor Olander. To the north and east would be unobstructed views of downtown

Chicago and the lake, and I imagined that the fifteen-story Olander Homes must have the best

views of all the CHA buildings along the 39. I could also only imagine what that west view must

have looked like at dusk from the top floors: a mile of CHA housing complexes along 39th Street leading into the burnt orange sun as it set on the distant horizon.

The bus concluded its eastern route with nature reclaiming the scenery. A revitalizing view of Lake Michigan could be seen as we rode on the bridge riddled with potholes over U.S. Highway 41, along Lake Shore Drive, and towards an unspoiled scenery of blue and green. This was our turnaround point on the 39. We would sit for 10 to 15 minutes next to miles of rolling green grass among huge breakwater rocks splashed by the cobalt blue Lake Michigan waters. The vistas to both the north and south were marked by splendid skyscrapers that seemed so close that I felt like I could easily reach the buildings in a 30-minute brisk walk. To the north were the business towers of downtown and to the south were the regal residences of the Hyde Park neighborhood. However, looking slightly to the north of Hyde Park you would immediately be met by more CHA towers, along Lake Park Avenue between 43rd and 41st Streets, appropriately called the Lake Michigan Homes. This CHA complex consisted of four additional 15-story CHA towers which unabashedly sat between Lake Park Avenue and the Illinois Central Railroad tracks that serviced commuter trains to northwest Indiana and the south suburbs of Chicago. This area along the lakefront, between downtown and Hyde Park, constituted a void that seemed to belie the local conventional wisdom that anything close to the lake is prime real estate. I asked myself, "Why are there no desirable developments along the western border of Lake Shore Drive similar to the popular residences in Hyde Park or on the North Side of Chicago?"

Reflecting on my interest in urban health issues, my thoughts begin with this 39th Street journey. The 39 route represented a snapshot of change in a city. Along the 39 we would pass under train tracks that had represented some of the busiest train lines in the world from the 1920s through the mid-1960s. The Pennsylvania, New York Central, and Illinois Central were the

dominant forms of interstate travel before airplanes took their place. Chicago was the epicenter

of interstate travel. However, by the 1960s, the interstate travel through Chicago shifted to

O'Hare International Airport, which became the busiest airport in the world in the 1970s. Now,

these train tracks are primarily used for commuters between the city and the suburbs. Riding the

39 in the late 1970s, the effects of change on the city were evident along the western portion of

the route. My dad told me that in the early 1970s, the 39 used to be packed with riders headed to

factories along the industrial corridors between St. Louis Avenue and the Dan Ryan Expressway.

However, by the late 1970s ridership was down. This could be attributed to the highway

development in the 1950s that marked the beginning of movement out of the cities for families

and businesses towards the suburbs and Sunbelt states. Also, the effects of the globalization of

capitalism included the movement of industries out of Chicago and out of the United States.

Cities change; how does this change affect their residents? How do residents adapt to this

change? Would the neighborhoods along the seven CHA complexes down 39th ever change?

"**CHA**NGE"

       The above description of what I saw along the bus route provides a snapshot of my

experience growing up in Chicago. Themes from this experience include how structural changes,

such as economic and housing shifts, contributed to the creation of a dense homogeneous

African American poor community exposed to high levels of violence. As an adult, I had the

opportunity to work in the city beginning as an ethnographer with the Families and Communities

Research Group (FCRG) on the Chicago Youth Development Study (CYDS) conducted by

investigators from the Institute for Juvenile Research in the Department of Psychiatry at the

University of Illinois at Chicago (Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 2003). My experience with

this research group continued as a coordinator for multiple studies, which mainly included

providing school- and family-based interventions and assessing the impact of these interventions through longitudinal surveys designed to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. These experiences provided opportunities to come into constant contact with city life, especially in low-income communities. While tracking participants of the CYDS longitudinal study, I also had the opportunity to come into intimate contact with numerous residences in the African-American community along 39th street.

The CHA buildings that greeted me when I was on the bus with my dad as a child are all gone now. I have heard about the urban planning politics of revitalizing public housing and transforming these developments into mixed-income communities. However, the billboards that I have observed around 39th Street do not seem to reflect the purposes of mixed-income housing. For example, the Darrow Homes Towers were replaced by new developments under construction on acres of land protected by ten-foot chain-link fences. On their southeast corner is a billboard for new developments billed as "The Arches—*close to the lake, close to the Loop, close to perfection*—homes from $200,000." What does this change mean for residents in this area? How are youth affected by these changes? The old El Rukn's gang headquarters has long been demolished and in its place are new developments called the Oakwood Shores with a billboard proclaiming: "The new wave of contemporary living, spacious 1, 2, 3 bedroom, washer/dryer, patio deck, walking distance to Lake Michigan, easy access to Lake Shore Drive." The Stateway Gardens and Robert Taylor Homes have been razed and replaced with billboards advertising new homes in the $250,000s. The Wentworth Gardens complex proudly displays a sign that describes the revitalization. The sign reads: "**CHA**NGE: Wentworth rehabilitation under the plan for transformation." This is the only sign that indicates some commitment to the people that live

there. The letters CHA are displayed in bold red, evidently standing for the Chicago Housing

Authority, while the black unbolded letters NGE have been added to spell "**CHA**NGE."

It is clear that many of the neighborhoods along Pershing Road east of the Pennsylvania

railroad viaduct have now "**CHA**nged." If you ask long-time residents in my parent's

neighborhood, Park Manor, our community has **"CHA**nged" as well. This past autumn on the

way to my parent's house, I encountered one of my neighbors, an elder on our block and other

than my parents, the last of the original black families who have remained on the block since my

childhood. He looked around in disgust at what our neighborhood had become. He said, "Can

you believe what these folks from 'da Jects' have done to our neighborhood?" When I asked him

what he meant, he explained that former CHA residents had been relocated to our neighborhood.

I wasn't certain whether this information was a fact or a rumor, but it emerged that he has

consistently, and especially of late, been concerned about the changes in the community affected

by long-time residents of the neighborhood as well as those who have moved there from other

neighborhoods, some of whom I have come into contact with while working as a Project

Coordinator on numerous studies for the FCRG. I never considered my neighborhood to be one

of the nicer, middle-class South Side communities, like Hyde Park, Beverly Hills, Chatham,

Marynook, or Pill Hill, but there has been a noticeable deterioration in this neighborhood since I

lived there while growing up. The differences include the presence of abundant litter that

includes empty beer bottles and bags of snacks strewn about on lawns, the fact that most homes

in the neighborhood have deteriorating structures, and the presence of unsupervised youth on the

streets throughout the evening, regardless of the time or even the weather conditions.

Riding along the eastern portion of Bus 39 was a powerful experience for me that led to

many unanswered questions. Why were the housing projects built? When were they built? What

was it like to live in and around this community? How did living in communities such as these influence youth's behaviors and their outlook on life and their future? What factors do youth believe serve as opportunities and barriers towards their future goals? What do these youths think make them susceptible or a risk of violence and what factors help them resist or protect them from violence? When visiting communities similar to those along the "39", I could not help but think about the exposure to violence in my own life. Events that have contributed to my feelings about neighborhoods such as this include being chased, being intimidated, seeing others get jumped, and even getting into a few fights. This was part of my experience growing up in this neighborhood. I was aware that fighting would often earn respect among my peers, but for some youth, respect seemed so vital as cultural capital that there tended to be a lack of concern for the consequences of the actions that were undertaken by them to command it.

Reflecting on my childhood, it seems to me that the kids around 39th Street seemed to lack time to be kids and that any future they might have was clouded in their minds and so given little importance. My reflections led to more questions. What was life like for youth who were actively involved in gangs? What would be considered too far when related to efforts they would take to achieve and maintain respect? As an outsider and insider within the culture, my perspective was that the "here and now" was most important for the small percentage of males at the highest risk for violence perpetration and victimization. However, as I aged, I learned that there were peers in my neighborhood who shared the same perspectives of the "here and now", and although I was chased and intimidated by some of them as I was traveling to school and through my neighborhood, some of my older peers who were gang-involved were friendly and in many cases served as my protectors in the neighborhood. In retrospect, it would have been great to interview those few gang-involved youths who not only protected my closest friends who

were not gang-involved but also played the role of guardians of their community, Park Manor

and me. In the next section, I will share how some of my experiences in my childhood

community of Park Manor informs the current qualitative inquiry and informs an aspect of my

worldview.

On the 1 and Death Rhodes: Growing up on 71ST and Rhodes

A few years ago, my siblings and I were discussing our growing frustration related to

visiting my parents' home on 71st and Rhodes. The frustrations were related to the constant

shooting that had been occurring on our childhood block as well as the surrounding blocks. 71st

street is colloquially described by many in the neighborhood as the "1". During my

conversations about our frustrations related to the constant shooting, my brother described our

block as "Death Rhodes," a verbal pun about death row. We were commenting and complaining

from a privileged perspective. We no longer lived in the community and we are only constrained

by our desires to stay connected to our parents as we reap the benefits of all they still provide for

us. However, we have the privilege of choice and the resources to live in other communities.

Like spoiled children, we also have the privileged position of utilizing our parents to support us.

Our mother, a retired city employee with 33 years of service, has provided free childcare for all

of our preschool children as well as watching them on "date nights, " while my father plays the

role of a rideshare driver for our school-aged children with daily after-school pickups. Initially,

our frustrations about neighborhood shootings started by not being able to access our parents'

home for visits. One example that comes to mind is when I couldn't join my Pops for our daily

Sunday routine of watching Chicago Bears' football because the block was inaccessible due to

police cars blocking the street following a shooting. Soon, those frustrations would grow into

fear, fear for our parents but also fear for our children. One scary moment occurred when my

sister and her husband, concluding a "date night", could not access the block to pick up her one-

year-old daughter, because the police were searching for evidence related to the August 27[th,]

2016 shooting death of Mahdi Herring, a 19-year-old who was shot outside the corner store

(Hussian, 2016). Another incident involved me dropping off my one-year-old daughter last

summer on July 24th, 2017. As I was unlocking my daughter's car seat, a conflict on the street

was brewing. I hurriedly attempted to get my daughter out of the car and into my parent's house

before this conflict escalated. As I got her out the car, a bottle was thrown targeting a male, and

the bottle just missed hitting the backseat of our car. The next day, I read that target of that

thrown bottle, Darius Gavin, was shot and killed the same evening I saw him in a heated

argument across the street from my parent's house. He was murdered just a few days before his

21st birthday (Cherney, 2017). I decided to take my frustrations and turn them into action by

attending Chicago Alternative Policing (CAP) meeting. The meeting had low attendance, and I

found the conversations about the death not useful. The few attendees had a typical reaction

about the small percentage of folks responsible for most of the violent crime. The conversations

were more related to the gang problem, the need for more policing, and how residents won't talk

or "snitch." Discussions about restoration and healing were non-existent. So, instead, I decided

to reach out to a Cure Violence outreach worker in Woodlawn with whom I had established a

working relationship during an evaluation of Cure Violence work in 2014. Woodlawn is the

Chicago community on the northern border of Park Manor. It was a stretch, but I reached out to

this outreach worker to see if he could provide me any street-level insight on what could be

possibly going on in my childhood neighborhood. Immediately, I was impressed that despite

being in a different community, he knew what was going on on my parents' block and

neighboring blocks. He explained to me that the clique—defined as men and women who are

involved in ganglike activity minus the structure related to traditional street gangs----on my parent's block was "into it" with a clique on Vernon Street (two blocks west of Rhodes). He informed me that the Rhodes avenue clique was drillin' (shooting aimlessly with no target in mind) on Vernon. The problem with this gesture of disrespect was that the Rhodes avenue clique were what he described as "pretend gangsters." These are young men and women who carry guns and sometimes shoot in the air with no intention to shoot someone. This behavior is known colloquially as drillin'. However, he explained that the Vernon street clique were real shooters, that they carry guns with the intention of hitting a target if needed. He then stated a phrase that still haunts me, "Your guys (the young men on my block) are good at getting shot, but the Vernon guys are for real." His statement brought some face validity to my brother's pun of our block being "Death Rhodes." Less than a week later, there would be two more shooting victims on St. Lawerence avenue, the street one block west of my parents' block (Brisco & Malagon, 2017). Frustrated and scared, my thoughts were that my parents' neighborhood needed more than just a CAPS program. Death Rhodes in particular and Park Manor, in general, needed a street-level investment like Cure Violence in the Woodlawn community. Based on my experience going to schools, living, and working in communities with high levels of exposure to violence, I believe all communities need this type of community investment.

This dissertation aims to make a compelling argument for why such an investment is needed. Meanwhile, my siblings and our spouses still have fear and concern about our aging parents living on "Death Rhodes." We also carry sadness for the lives lost and the shooting victims in our childhood neighborhood. We possess great empathy for the struggles and the absence of strong informal social controls in our community. This sympathy and empathy are expressed not only for the victims but also the larger percentage of residents that choose to

isolate themselves away from youth in the community. Many older residents are frustrated with

the younger generation's lack of respect for expected community norms like not littering, no

loud noise after sunset, and not arguing on the street. These residents, like my parents, are

constrained by their ability to connect with many youths and especially the youth at the highest

risk for violence. Unfortunately, many of the youth in my neighborhood get stigmatized as

violent even though only a small percentage of individuals are involved. Currently, the ways to

enforce the belief systems of the community, defined by Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls (1997)

as collective efficacy, is complicated. However, this block was not always "Death Rhodes."

In 1946, my maternal grandparents were among the 3.1 million blacks who fled the south

during the great migration periods which happened in two phases during World War I and World

War II. My grandparents, like many other blacks, established some stability in the Bronzeville

community and like many men, my grandfather worked at a factory. In 1952, they left

Bronzeville and purchased a two-flat home on Rhodes Avenue in the Park Manor community.

My grandparents were the second black family to move on Rhodes. The first family moved in

one year before them and caught hell from white neighbors. Mrs. Doll, who during my childhood

was considered the matriarch of Rhodes, had her house repeatedly firebombed as racist tactics to

get their family to move. A year later my grandparents were the second black family to purchase

a home on 71st and Rhodes. Thankfully, they were spared from being victims of firebombing or

other terrorizing acts. My mother believes it was because they rented the downstairs unit to an

African-American police officer, Mr. Earnest. However, the demographics of Rhodes would

soon change as more African-Americans moved into the community. When my mother began

school at Park Manor elementary as a kindergartner her school was 50% White and 50% black.

Park Manor elementary student was 100% black by the time she was in 2nd grade in 1954, and so was her community. White flight was quick.

In 1979, my parents moved into my grandparents' home in part to provide care for my grandfather who experienced a deep depression after he was permanently laid off by Republic Steel Mill. My grandfather was one of 16,000 Chicago-area steelworkers who lost their jobs between 1979 and 1986 (Bensman & Wilson, 2004). My grandfather's identity was through his work. For five years he laid on a couch in the backroom speechless until 1984, when he emerged from his depression and went into a furious phase of home repairs and gardening. His masterpiece was building a house in his hometown of Northport, Alabama where he returned to live until his death. He left behind a solid home for my family to live in and strong social connections in the neighborhood for us to access. Even though my grandfather was gone, there were many other proxies on the block from his generation: hardworking black men and women from the south who came to the north for better opportunities. They kept us all organized by enforcing rules of the block, holding block club meetings, and hosting annual block club parties. I still shudder when I recall my nervousness about performing a dance routine to the Gap Band's *Early in the Morning*. In retrospect, the block was organized, and although there was certainly gang activity, the block seemed safe. However, this block level organization would soon change.

Like my grandpops, many of the adults on the block were losing jobs, and some of the grandparents on the block were returning to the south. During summer vacations, I began to notice that more of my friends' parents were home during the day while my parents worked. Some of my friends' parents had to take jobs at odd hours and wouldn't be home in the late afternoons and evenings. As a result, there were more unsupervised kids out in the community and the streets while their parents were out. It was during this time that I learned about the term

"neutron" which meant that you were not affiliated with gangs. A small group of my friends and I created a made-up traveling "Strike out" team. Strikeout was baseball's version of a basketball pick-up game except instead of nine fielders you would spray paint a box against a Chicago Park District Field House or a school building with a large parking area (Bey, 2010). The pitcher would use a rubber ball and aim the ball at the spray painted box which served as the strike zone. The rubber ball would typically bounce or fly back to the pitcher which nullified the use of a catcher. The school lot or grass behind the park fieldhouse would be the diamond, and the outfield and a team would consist of a pitcher and one to two outfielders. We considered our squad to be the Strikeout Kings of Park Manor. We had a crew of three: a pitcher and two outfielders; in our naiveté, we would go to our neighborhood park, Meyering Park as well as the neighborhood schoolyards like Park Manor, Daneen, and Tanner elementary to challenge other neighborhood kids a game of Strike Out. Our crew was neutrons, and we soon learned that not being affiliated with gangs would lead to constant harassment and fights as we traveled to play baseball. I learned how to run and when that didn't work, I was good at getting beat up.

Nevertheless, once we made the play lot, playing the game would help build bridges with a few well-respected gang members who happened also to like playing baseball. The key members that come to mind went by the names of Butter, Bo Bo, and Papa Smurf. I never knew their real names, but I did know that this trio were all Gangster Disciples. They were also known in the neighborhood for an ability to fight but also for being fair and social with everyone in the neighborhood. They often gave us advice on the who, what and where to avoid. On many occasions, they stopped us from getting beat up for being neutrons. However, these "real gangsters" weren't my only protection.

I am certain that my father's reputation also played a significant role in keeping me safe. My father and his brothers grew up in the farther south side community called Morgan Park. In the mid-1960s construction of interstate 57 bisected the Morgan Park neighborhood into a black and a white neighborhood. As teens, my father and his brothers had a reputation for winning fights on both sides of Morgan Park, black and white. I believe this fighting spirit stayed with him through the Vietnam War and in my childhood neighborhood, Park Manor. My father had a reputation for his street smarts but also academic acumen. As a young father, he completed his Bachelor's degree in Accounting and received his CPA in 3 years while working full-time for the CTA. He was known in the neighborhood for his skill at winning arguments but was also known to threaten anyone who disrespected him. His reputation was crystallized at a row of taverns on 71st. Chicago grew its reputation as a working-class city and as a result its working-class taverns; 71st street was no exception. In just a two-block stretch between King Drive and Eberhart Avenue was a unique tavern culture deserving of a vivid ethnography.

As a pre-teen and teenager, I spent a significant amount of time in a few of these taverns next to my dad, drinking sodas while he socialized with neighborhood men and women. Near King Drive, my father was a regular at The Gold Room. My dad socialized and drank with men that were 10-20 years older than him. The Gold Room was known as the drinking hole for white-collar employees, school principals, politicians, neighborhood business owners, and post office employees. On many occasions, my father would introduce me to men who held professional degrees like law, journalism, and accounting yet worked at the Post Office most of their lives. My dad was giving me a lesson in the infamous legacy of American history: how it didn't matter what degree you had -- it was rare for black folks to be given employment opportunities in the pre-civil rights era. But the Post Office was always hiring. The Sportsman Tavern just east of

Vernon Avenue was a gathering place for blue-collar laborers and artisans -- men who worked in factories. Near Eberhart was Annie Mae's Tavern; the patrons of this bar were hustlers of the neighborhood, primarily thieves, drug dealers, and pimps. My dad had built a reputation with many of the men and women who frequented those bars. As I result, those relationships provided me with another level of protection as I traversed the neighborhood. I recall many times walking down 71st street and adults would stop me and say, "Hey, its Bennie's boy" or returning home after hours playing in the neighborhood and my dad would know where I was because a buddy told him that he saw me. These older men were eyes on the street. I am certain that all these characters played a role in keeping me safe as I frequently traveled throughout Park Manor.

As I got older and attended high school outside my neighborhood, the city began to expand for me. I found myself socializing in a broader area than simply within Park Manor. When I started my undergraduate education, I moved away and never lived at my parent's house again. While in college, every time I visited my parents, I would always see signs of change and trauma. One of the saddest visits was when I returned home to a street protest because Bo Bo, one of my protectors, was choked to death by a police officer. My cousin's aunt, my dance instructor for block parties as a kid, had become a crack addict. Many residents stated that she "copped" her drugs from Ms. Doll's house, the home of the first black family on the block. Ms. Doll still lived at her house but had lost control of the organization and rules within her home. Many of her children were impacted by the economic shifts of the 1970s and 1980s and were unemployed. It was rumored that some of Ms. Doll's grandchildren sold drugs out of her home. Eventually, Ms. Doll would lose her home due to her inability to pay taxes. A few years later, my mother told me that Ms. Doll died from a broken heart. The eyes on the street that I remember were also gone. Many of the older men from the taverns had died, and many of the jobs in which

they had built up decades of service were no longer there for the younger generation. However, this is just my perspective from my experiences in elementary school and in my neighborhood. These experiences are now decades behind me. However, many questions remain. Such as: What are present-day youth experiences like in neighborhoods that, economically and structurally, resemble the neighborhoods along 39th street and 71ST street? More importantly, who are the Bo Bo's, the Butters, and Papa Smurfs in today's communities -- communities that have been impacted by the loss of jobs, the disruption of housing, the illegal drug economy, and the exposure to violence? BoBo, Butter, and Papa Smurf, like my father and the Tavern patrons, were assets in the community that is stigmatized as being full of criminals. They were protectors whom other men listened to, respected, and were drawn to. This dissertation describes the empowering role that street-level guardians have -- not simply for those who are active in the streets-- but to the wider community.

Turning Toward the Phenomenon

My dissertation provided me with the unique opportunity to uncover answers to some of these questions through a small evaluation of Cure Violence in four police beats in two Chicago neighborhoods: Woodlawn and North Lawndale. While conducting interviews with high-risk urban males as part of a qualitative evaluation of Cure Violence in two Chicago neighborhoods, themes similar to those I used to hear along 39th and 71st street such as "living for the now" and "respect at any cost" emerged. The relationship between violence and the demand for respect seemed to be connected to the structural characteristics of neighborhoods and macro-level economic changes that have impacted how men, particularly men of color from low-income and working-class communities, view themselves. This phenomenon has been captured vividly in ethnographic studies such as Phillipe Bourgois's *In Search of Respect* (1995), Sudhir

Venkatesh's *Off The Books* (2006), and Elijah Anderson's *Code of the Streets* (1999). These ethnographic investigations combined with research on how neighborhoods are organized (Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson et al.,1997; Wilson, 1987), shape human development (Tolan et al., 2003), and impact behavioral outcomes (Drake & Cayton, 1945; Park, et al., 1925; Shaw & McKay, 1942) all contribute to this study's epistemological position (Mason, 2002). This position represents the knowledge base that this study uses to understand the social reality of being high-risk for violent victimization and perpetration.

In the spirit of creative auto-ethnography, Etherington (2004) claims that art and poetry can be used as vehicles to convey meanings by capturing a creative source that inspires us to learn more about ourselves and our world. My life and professional experiences have inspired me to conclude this forward with a prose poem that captures some of what I have learned about cities through historical, theoretical, and lived accounts, and that perhaps also gives some suggestion of what cities in general and the city of Chicago, in particular, have come to mean to me personally. It is the impact of change in the community:

Cities are dynamic. Cities change. Cities evoke civic pride. Cities unite. Cities segregate. Cities bring industry. Cities bring together old cultures. Cities create new cultures. Cities commute. Cities communicate through intellectual exchange. Cities exchange commodities. Cities build. Cities tear down. Cities work. Cities furlough. Cities house half of the seven billion people who populate the world. Cities develop. Cities destroy. Cities are resilient. Cities are vibrant and full of life. Cities drop dead. Above all, cities are complex.

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ACE   Adverse Childhood Experiences

AOC   Administrative Office of the Courts

CDC   Centers for Disease Control

CPS   Chicago Public School

CPD   Chicago Police Department

EIG   Economic Innovation Group

IRRPP   Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy

PE   Psychological Empowerment

UICC   University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

US   United States

SUMMARY

Violence continues to be a leading cause of death and injury for men of color in the United States (CDC, 2016). Violent crime rates have remained high in low-income communities of color in Chicago over the past 40 years (Papachristos, 2013; Sampson, 2012). Some researchers argue that the persistent rates of violence in communities on the south and west sides of Chicago are inextricably tied to multiple generations of structural inequities (Moore, 2016; Sharkey, 2008).

This study uses Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Zimmerman's (2000) Psychological Empowerment Theory to construct a conceptual framework to explain the processes involved in how Cure Violence outreach workers (n=4) engage a sample of males (n=40), at high-risk for violent victimization and perpetration, to shed the stigma of being a gangster and a criminal.

The outreach workers used their cultural capital as a lure to draw in high-risk males, but a dominant theme was that outreach workers' human capital kept the high-risk males engaged in activities that interrupted not only violence but also the hyper-isolation that the males had previously used to remain safe. The high-risk males explained that witnessing, imagining, and experiencing outreach workers connecting them to social and job opportunities, as well as handling conflict in non-violent ways, helped them feel a sense of self-control, self-efficacy, and competence that they can live a non-violent life. Interview participants described behavior change as small steps that required persistence from outreach workers and accountability from the high-risk males.

I. INTRODUCTION

A.   <u>Overview</u>

In the United States, homicide is ranked in the top five causes of death for youth after the first year of life through mid-adulthood at the age of 44 (CDC, 2016). Youth violence is among the leading causes of injury and death with approximately 5,000 youth deaths between 15-24 annually. The young victims are overwhelmingly male (86%), primarily killed by firearms (85%) and mostly African-Americans (77%). In the United States, for every 100,000 black men, there are 1,341 years of potential lives lost due to homicide (Sharkey, 2018 p. 70). Excluding suicide, there were approximately 16,000 firearm-related deaths in 2017 in the United States (Vlahov, 2018). Chicago ranks second in the nation with a rate of 160.4 shooting victims per 100,000 residents (Kapustin et al., 2017). In 2016, a Chicagoan was shot every 2 hours and 9 minutes (Chicago Crime, 2016). The phenomenon of high shooting rates in Chicago was the motivation for a 2017 public radio podcast, entitled "Every Other Hour," that sought to understand why individuals shoot and what can be done to reduce the rate of shootings (Smith, 2017). While Chicago's high shooting rate brought local media attention, in 2016, Chicago's violent crime was national news after eclipsing 800 homicides. Despite a surge of violence rates in Chicago in 2016, violence rates have gone down in Chicago in the last few decades much lower than the high totals during the entire 1970s decade and the first half of the 1990s. As Hagedorn (2017) explains, "2016 homicides did not represent a spike but more of a return to Chicago's historical levels of homicide". Chicago violent crime rates peaked in 1974 with 970 homicides and in 1992 with 943 homicides (Chicago Crime, 2017). Although violent crime has largely gone down in the Chicago and large cities in the United States over the past 20 years, in approximately ten to

fourteen Chicago communities, violent crime has remained stable since the 1970s (Papachristos, 2013).

In a 2011 National Public Radio interview, the former Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department Jody Weiss suggested that a small percentage of Chicago neighborhoods together constitute a wholly different world than nearly the rest of the city. When Weiss explained that in 2010, 8.5% of Chicago contained all the city's shootings and homicides, he aptly provided a structural description of what researchers have long known: poor urban neighborhoods are "different" worlds consisting mainly of African-American and Latino families whose communities are known for the durability of poverty across generations (Sampson, 2012; Sharkey, 2008). Nearly all of the children who live in these neighborhoods are exposed to violence (Gorman-Smith, Henry, & Tolan, 2004), homicide is the leading cause of death for their young men (CDC, 2016), and violence is spacially concentrated (Harding, 2010). The disparity in violent crime between these communities and the rest of Chicago has been described as the "Crime Gap" (Papachristos, 2013). These "different worlds" are also home to the most distressed zip codes in Chicago. In 2018, the Economic Innovation Group released a report that used the following seven metrics to create a measure of community economic well-being: "no high school diploma, housing vacancy rate, adults not working, poverty rate, median income ratio, change in employment, and change in business establishments. Chicago has 40% of its population living in distressed zip codes" (EIG, 2018, p.6). The communities within these zip codes aren't "different worlds" as the former police superintendent described; they are distressed worlds.

Despite the multi-generational structural constraints placed on low-income people of color who live in these "distressed communities" within Chicago, residents of these communities

are marked by their strength and resilience to survive often bolstered by the fair amount of working-class families with strong family ties (Wacquant, 2008). Nevertheless, some residents in low-income communities are forced to respond to constraints by addressing the "immediacy of their needs" (Venkatesh, 2006, p. 40) doing what is necessary to survive through oppressive forces. Some examples of economic survival tactics include involvement in the underground economy, also known as "off the books" sources of income such as in-home hair salons, vacant-lot auto-mechanics, sidewalk salesmen pirating stolen merchandise, and selling drugs in public spaces. However, only a sub-section of residents in these distressed communities resort to community-level violent crime (Sharkey, 2018). Also, this small sample of residents tends to have interpersonal connections with ties to those involved in violent crime (Papachristos, Wildeman & Roberto, 2015; Vargas, 2016).

Strong social ties are a key component of social organization theory that can be traced back to the founding school of urban sociologists, the "Chicago School" at the University of Chicago. Chicago School sociologists examined how population shifts impacted low-income communities and how the ethnic heterogeneity made it difficult for residents, community institutions, and inter-organizational networks to use informal social controls to enforce community norms for expected behavior (Spergel, 1995). Social disorganization became a core theory that has helped explain how it is a risk factor for juvenile delinquency (Shaw & McKay, 1942), disproportionately high rates of crime (Sampson & Groves, 1989), and violence (Sampson et al., 1997) in dense urban settings.

However, some warn that certain constructs of social disorganization theory do not always work well in understanding modern urban low-income neighborhoods (Sampson, 2012). Criticisms of social disorganization theory have been widespread and varied. Challenges to the

theory include evidence that dense ties actually promote criminal activities such as mob activity (Cloward & Olin, 1960; Hagedorn, 2015; Whyte, 1943), gangs and drug-dealing (Patillo, 1999; Venkatesh, 2006), and illegal street vending (Duneier & Carter, 1999), as well as discourage social mobility (Sampson, 2012). Other challenges include the frequent omission of the impact of racism when describing how neighborhoods are spatially structured (Hagedorn, 2007; Sampson, 2012; Waquant, 2008), and the failure to discuss the role of social change and resilience on social organization (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2008). As a result of these contentions, the prevailing theme is that low-income neighborhoods are not lacking social organization, rather they are organized differently, primarily based on cultural responses to structural constraints and racism (Harding, 2010; Lamont & Small, 2008; Wilson, 2009).

The term "cultural response" has been applied to describing how individuals from low-income urban settings see the world around them and the available means to achieve their desired ends (Small, Harding & Lamont, 2010). Whereas previous theories about culture and poverty were mainly concerned with internal and personal values, recent investigators have examined culture using a cognitive theoretical perspective that depicts a diverse set of conceptualizations that help to explain how individuals interpret their environment as well as think about desired outcomes (Harding, 2010; Small, 2004; Small, 2008). These cultural conceptualizations can assist in filling the gaps in social disorganization theory by "unraveling the pathways by which structural disadvantage turns into behavioral choices" (Harding, 2010, pp. 141-42). Such choices can provide insight into how neighborhoods are organized differently through cultural conceptualizations such as an individual's outlook or worldview, and the frames, repertoires, scripts, toolkits, and cultural capital used in their lives (Hannerz, 1969;

Harding, 2010; Lamont & Small, 2008; Small, Harding, & Lamont, 2010; Swidler, 1986; Young, 2004).

However, the concept of culture used to explain behavior in low-income settings has been controversial and thus often typically avoided. Described as the "third rail of scholarship on urban poverty" (Harding, 2010, p. 141), culture as a concept has mainly been avoided because it appears to blame the victim and ignores the impact of structural constraints in low-income communities. Furthermore, descriptions of cultural responses such as frames, scripts, and repertoires have often been portrayed as homogeneous responses that fail to describe the complexity of various means that individuals from low-income settings must utilize to accomplish basic needs. Venkatesh (2006) further elaborates that such homogeneous framing "does little to advance our understanding of their lives, because such opinions are always in flux, adapting to the needs of the moment, and they may never be articulated precisely enough to create a comprehensive worldview" (p. 38). Another criticism is that "cultural" explanations seem to imply that low-income communities are somehow isolated from pro-social mainstream norms and values (Massey & Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987).

Over the past decade, however, some researchers (Harding, 2010; Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Patillo, 2008; Wilson, 2009) have brought culture back to the forefront of research inquiry. They have sought to understand and explain how and why low-income residents make choices that may seem non-normative and risky by mainstream standards. Rather than 'blaming the victim,' an approach that was evident in the past, the main argument of this group of scholars has been that there are no homogeneous beliefs and value systems. Instead of defining culture as the link between behavior and values, this group of scholars aims to carefully "distinguish values from perceptions and attitudes from behavior" (Small, Harding & Lamont, 2010). They define culture

as strategies of action based on structural constraints and opportunities. The larger mainstream cultural values and norms still permeate these neighborhoods despite the intergenerational transmission of poverty. However, individuals will view the world in a certain way regardless of the values, primarily due to structural constraints (Small, 2009).

Ultimately, social disorganization theory has not accounted for how heterogeneous cultural responses to constrained structural characteristics contribute to the complex ways low-income communities are uniquely organized. Wacquant (2008) argues that low-income black communities are organized differently because of oppressive forces. Despite the shortcomings of social disorganization theory, Sampson (2012) contends that researchers should "recognize what is useful about social disorganization theory while modifying or discarding what is no longer relevant" (p. 150).

B.   Statement of the Problem

Since the 1970s, there has been a large shift away from investing in community-level approaches to violence prevention to investments in crime suppression, primarily through disproportionate criminalization and incarceration of residents (Clear, 2007) which further hurts the community's potential for strengthening its existing social capital (Epperson & Pettus-Davis, 2017; Spergel, 1995; Sharkey, 2018). Social capital is weakened through the "forced removal of large numbers of individuals which disrupts social ties, weakens social networks, and damages informal social control mechanisms" (Bocanegra, 2018 pg. 119). The divestment in community-based assets approaches to crime can be traced back to the late 1960s when cities like Chicago and Los Angeles followed the federal government's precedent and invested heavily in crime control, with a focus on gangs and the illegal drug market. These criminal control approaches were war-like efforts directed at the community through counter-intelligence, conspiracy, and the

assassination of black leaders (Diamond, 2017; Hagedorn, 2015; Sharkey, 2018). Beginning with the Nixon administration and its "War on Drugs," federal and local government divested in funding that benefited cities such as mental health clinics (Diamond, 2017) and community-based organizations (Sharkey, 2018).

Over the past 50 years, local and state governments including Chicago and Illinois have been aligned with this divestment approach by supporting an imbalanced funding structure that tilts heavily on the side of crime suppression instead of community-level investments. Some local examples of community divestment include a disproportionate funding in prisons such as Illinois annually committing approximately to 1.4 billion dollars on the Department of Corrections, (Chicago Million Dollar Blocks, 2015; Hendricks, Lewis, Arenas, & Lewis, 2017), the installation of 22,000 surveillance cameras in Chicago public spaces including streets, public transportation and school (Sharkey, 2018), as well as the current 95-million-dollar investment in a new police training academy in the high crime and distressed community of West Garfield Park (Bryne, 2018). Behind health care expenditures, more state of Illinois governmental dollars is spent on criminal justice than "on parks, recreation, libraries, and hospitals" (Hendricks et al., 2017 p. 126).

The divide between distressed communities is further calcified by evidence of the billions of dollars invested in Chicago's central district while collar communities like East Garfield, Douglass, Oakland, Grand Boulevard and North Lawndale experience the disruption of social networks, informal social controls mechanisms, and social support systems through the mass closing of public housing units (Popkin, 2016) and the largest school closings in United States history (Ewing, 2018). Some notable examples of this dual investment strategy include the $60-million-dollar development of Maggie Daley Park (Rooney, 2015), the $475 million investment

in Millennium Park, the $675 million for the renovation of McCormick Place, the $250 million

renovation of Navy Pier, and $110 million dollars' investment for the redesign of the Museum

Campus (Diamond, 2017).

The systematic diminishing of community resources has weakened sources of informal

social control within multiple low-income and majority people of color communities. At the

same time, African-American residents have been leaving the cities. Since 1980, the black

population has declined by 360,000, the size of the entire African-American population in

Washington, D.C. (Patillo, 2018). In Chicago, over the last 40 years, these "different world"

communities have been largely transformed into phantom spaces where generations of residents

have moved, businesses and schools have closed, and its residents are nine times more likely to

go to jail than white residents, and youth. Residents who return to these distressed communities

return to a world of suppressive sanctions with a near 400% increase in the number of people on

parole and probation over the last 30 years (Bocanegra, 2017).

The fact that violent crime rates have been persistently high in low-income urban

communities should be an indication that the overreliance in the current criminal justice

approach to violence has not worked. Instead, a result of this oppression is the "code of the

street" where respect and power are the desired capital and achieved by any means necessary as

captured by Elijah Anderson's ethnography in West Philadelphia examining cultural responses to

structural disadvantage (Anderson, 1999). This code fortifies a new subculture of a social

network tied by the web of those exposed to the criminal justice system and its bond. The code

of the street is a product of systematic structural failure in which individuals have no trust nor

faith in the criminal justice system. Some residents, particularly high-risk youth, see the criminal

justice system as functioning solely as a panopticon, a surveillance tower that supervises society,

especially low-income residents (Foucault, 1995). For many residents, the criminal justice system is not a means to receive reform or restoration. As a result, for some high-risk residents, the best means is self-help justice without the help of the police. Unfortunately, this approach leads to only more violence.

C.   <u>Significance of the Problem</u>

The systematic stigmatization, containment, and disruption of "black bodies" and communities have created a grim outlook for the processes that make communities strong (Coates, 2015; Wacquant, 2008). Some fundamental processes include having residents who monitor their community as "eyes on the street "(Jacobs, 1961), and cohesion among residents to achieve shared expectations for the community (Sampson, 2012). Beginning in the late 1960s, examples of disruption include the disappearance of jobs (Wilson, 1996), the murder and incarceration of civil rights and community-based activists (Alexander, 2012, Diamond, 2017; Hagedorn, 2007), and the expansion of drug-based economies and subsequent mandatory sentencing for non-violent crimes (Hagedorn, 2015; Sharkey, 2008). In Chicago, recent examples of disruption include decentralizing institutionalized gangs (Hagedorn, 2007), historically high rates of foreclosures in black communities (Patillo, 2018), and the largest destruction of mass public housing (Popkin, 2016) and school closings in United States history (Ewing, 2018). Examples of containment include the American slave-based economy (Baptist, 2014; Beckert, 2014; Johnson, 2013), Jim Crow segregation (Chafe, Gavins, & Korstad, 2011; Walker, 2018), restricted covenants and mass housing segregation (Popkin, 2000; Moore, 2016; Venkatesh, 2000), mass incarceration (Clear, 2007), and the segregated spatial concentration of residents re-entering society who are either on parole or probation (Miller, 2017).

These massive structural constraints have created a negative outlook among some members of the black community. West (1993) describes this outlook as nihilism. DeGruy (2005) argues further that vacant esteem, which consists of low levels of self-worth, self-efficacy, self-control, and competency, is created as a result of the passing down of post-traumatic "slave syndrome" related to the shared connection of racist socialization. Hagedorn (2015) indicates that these frames are connected to the trauma of slavery and intergenerational victimization due to centuries of racism which has resulted in deep pessimism about the justice system. Hagedorn (2007) argues that the birth of post-industrial age "gangster culture" is a response to structural constraints linked to racism. This gangster culture is not regulated by the institutions that have failed some from the black community; instead, it is operated by the code of the street (Anderson, 1999).

In addition to Anderson's *Code of the Street*, other social scientists have examined how a small subset of African-American men make non-normative and risky behavioral choices as a response to structural constraints as referenced in *Soulside* (Hannerz, 1969), *Tally's Corner* (Liebow, 1967), Duneier's *Slim's Table* (1994) and *Sidewalk* (1999) as well as Anderson's *A Place On The Corner* (2003). A major theme from these ethnographies is the role of the experienced mentor, or the "old heads" (Anderson, 2003). These men play the role of cultural arbiters, a unique group of men who are empowered to determine a strategy of action to survive through structural constraints. The old heads can pass down knowledge and provide social support while navigating existing informal economies born from a structural disadvantage. Harding (2010) explains how older residents who have survived the violent landscape of their community possess "cultural authority" for younger residents who spend an inordinate amount of time worrying about safety. Stuart and Miller (2017) describe a hybridized version of this

mentorship as "prisonized old heads" who know about not only the informal and illegal street-level economy but also strategies of action to navigate the criminal justice system. Wacquant (1997) describes this phenomenon as "when the cultures of the Prison and Ghetto mesh."

This dissertation argues that it is no coincidence that consistently high incarceration and violent crime crimes in low-income communities on the South and West sides of Chicago and the oppressive efforts that disrupt communities and contained its residents through mass supervision-described as "the formal and informal sanctions that govern how formerly incarcerated people can live, work and travel" (Miller, 2017) have followed the same timeline from the late 1960s to the present day. During this time, a subculture was born, that of the post-industrial non-white "gangster life" and the "prisonized old head." In this subculture, individuals can leverage the knowledge they acquired in prison to bolster their cultural capital in communities with high levels of exposure to violence. Hagedorn (2007) states that although this cultural response reflects and reproduces structural conditions, it also has a transformative effect: a cultural identity of resistance. This dissertation argues that this resistant cultural identity has been constructed by experiences of stigmatization, containment, and disruption, specifically the hyper-criminalization, divestment of low-income communities and its "increasing social isolation, economic hardship, political demoralization" of color over the past five decades (Dyson, Jay-Z, & Nas 2007).

D.   **Rationale for the Current Study**

The Cure Violence street outreach workers embody the cultural capital of both the idealized gangster life and "prisonized old heads" while also possessing mainstream cultural values and norms. The outreach workers' ability to engage with high-risk males stems from the fact that they lived similar lives as youth. Therefore, as Duncan-Andrade (2009 p. 189) explains,

"they share the same painful path and have made the same self-sacrifices in their own lives that they are asking young adults to make." The street outreach workers strive to empower youth to feel like they can respond non-violently to conflict. Additionally, the workers can facilitate a path out of violence by connecting them to resources that will help with them reintegrate into the community through a different role.

Cure Violence has demonstrated an impact in reducing the willingness to use violence (Delgado et al., 2017), improvements of attitudes toward violence (Milam et al., 2016) and reductions in average homicide rates (Butts, Wolff, Misshula, & Delgado, 2015). Implementation data suggests that the frequency of conflict mediation helps explain variation in program effects (Webster, Whitehill, Vernick, & Curriero, 2013), but little is known regarding the outreach workers' specific strategies or their beliefs about what is effective. A qualitative evaluation can contribute to further understanding of variation in outcomes (Butts, Roman, Bostwick, & Porter, 2015). This methodological approach will be used to understand how street outreach workers use their shared life experience to connect with the highest risk youth from communities with persistently high rates of violence.

Cure Violence represents an investment in community agents through a public health approach that intervenes in ongoing conflicts and changes norms accepting of violence by focusing on the the highest-risk residents, who are involved or were involved in street-level activities, such as gangs, street cliques or drug organizations or those who have a violent criminal history involving previous jail or incarceration. The intervention uses two types of staff to achieve its goals of reducing violence: violence interrupters and street outreach workers. Both interventionist positions require two types of street-level social capital: strong social connections and respect. This social capital is primarily gained by growing up in the target community but

also through the lived experience of the "gangsta life" and they also know how it feels to have their communities, families, and social networks disrupted. The interventionists also share the pain of experiencing containment through living not only in segregated communities but also being jailed and imprisoned and returning communities that are hyper-isolated.

The Cure Violence interrupters serve as "eyes and ears on the street" (Jacobs, 1961), highly specialized informal social control agents for the small percentage of men and women involved in the largest percentage of violent crime. As informal social control agents, the violence interrupters "monitor ongoing disputes" and focus exclusively on "identifying impending violence and responding by providing the participants alternatives for resolving disputes and protecting their honor" (Skogan et al., 2009 p 8). Violence interrupters, drawing from relationships and lived experience, humanize conflict instead of criminalizing the individuals or groups involved. As Butts et al. 2015 explained, the Cure Violence model "does not involve the use of force or the threat of punishment" (p. 40). The violence interrupters represent a community-level solution, especially for residents and stakeholders who are often frustrated by their inability to mediate the conflict. The interrupters serve as an alternative option to simply calling the police, which can weaken the community in long-term ways. Whereas the violence interrupter interventionists are limited in their ability to address some of the causes of violence, the street outreach agents work with high-risk clients to reach an understanding of the social context of their community that can limit their future outcomes to death or jail.

The street outreach workers attempt to assist their clients towards this transformation through three critical roles: case managers, conflict mediators, and client mentors (Skogan et al., 2009). As caseworkers, street outreach workers assess their clients' needs and experiences through consistent street-level contact. After four months of community mobilization, street

outreach workers are expected to build and maintain a caseload of 10- 15 high-risk clients.

Clients are defined as the following:

> "Participants recruited to receive the treatment of the Cure Violence program who meet at least four of the seven criteria: a) gang-involved, b) major player in a drug or street organization, c) violent criminal history, d) recent incarceration, e) reputation of carrying a gun, f) recent victim of a shooting, and g) being between 16 and 25 years of age" Butts et al., (2015) p. 40

As case managers, the street outreach workers spend time listening to clients about a range of topics, such as aspirations and struggles concerning their families, intimate partners, peers, and police (Skogan et al.,2009). The street outreach worker provides strategies to deal with present interpersonal challenges. Regarding aspirations, outreach workers also work to re-connect clients to complete education and workforce development programs. As mentors, street outreach workers pull clients away from risky street-level involvement. As conflict mediators, the outreach workers spend time in the community to spread the message to stop shooting. The street outreach workers aim to change norms through community mobilization including non-violent marches and vigils, and education campaigns, as well as by building positive relationships and strengthening connections with community stakeholders, political leaders, and police officers.

The current study will use qualitative in-depth interviews with 40 high-risk African-American men and four Cure Violence outreach workers from the Woodlawn and North Lawndale communities of Chicago to examine how outreach workers and high-risk males connect, build trust, and shift norms regarding the use of violence to resolve the conflict. This dissertation will present narratives of how high-risk males and street outreach workers describe the context that causes community conflict to become violent. This dissertation will also describe the specific processes involved in establishing interpersonal connections and resource acquisition

between outreach workers and high-risk males and how outreach workers empower high-risk males to respond to conflict without violence.

E.   **Conceptual Framework**

The framework for this study is rooted in constructivist grounded theory in the qualitative methods tradition (Charmaz, 2014). The constructivist adjective is important because traditional grounded theory operates under the assumption that the researcher abandons all preconceived ideas when collecting the data and allows the conceptual explanation to emerge from the processes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, a constructivist approach to grounded theory acknowledges that having a preconceived idea about a phenomenon and being open for other explanations to emerge can co-exist (Charmaz, 2014, Dey, 1999 p.251). Charmaz (2014) suggests that the researcher use reflexivity to write about preconceived ideas to address conflicts that emerge from the data (Charmaz, 2014). This constructivist approach is not simply reflecting what the participants have stated but rather presenting a dynamic construction of the findings that includes a subjective account of preconceived ideas (Charmaz, 2014). The preface of this dissertation described preconceived ideas for this study. Highlighted in the preface was a personal account of how housing and jobs were disrupted by structural changes that impacted predominately African-American communities on the south-side of Chicago and weakened these communities' ability to enforce community norms and beliefs. As traditional informal social controls waned due to massive structural changes, a subset of residents developed a skeptical worldview of institutions and mainstream norms and instead identified with a worldview that was rooted in the code of the street.

This dissertation constructed two models that describe how this shared worldview helps outreach workers to connect with high-risk men to respond to conflict in non-violent ways. The

first model for this framework (see Figure 1) is based on Paulo Freire, the Brazilian philosopher, educator, and author of the book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, who is credited by some for contributing to the idea of empowerment by "using critical consciousness as a way to transform from a state of oppression by reconnecting to one's humanity". (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p. 157). Developing his theory and philosophy on education, Freire defines oppression as one subject, the oppressor, dehumanizes another, the oppressed. Examples of dehumanization include not only how injustice, exploitation, and violence have robbed individuals of their humanity but how the oppressed can rob others of their humanity (Campbell, 2010).

Figure 1 shows how the street outreach workers have shared similar experiences of submersion in oppressive forces, primarily racism, throughout the industrial and post-industrial age through what Wacquant (2008) describes as "spatial confinement, institutional containment, constraint, and stigma" (p. 4). Street outreach workers and high-risk males share the experience of spatial confinement in low-income segregated communities isolated and denied access to quality education, housing, and jobs. An outcome of being oppressed is that some individuals seek to gain power and status by oppressing others, defined by Campbell (2010) as a sub-oppressor and the state of being submerged in oppression. In the context of the current study, submersion includes shootings, violent crime, homicide, incarceration, gang threats, and hyper-isolation. The framework presented in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is useful for explaining how street outreach workers who at one point in their lives were sub-oppressors through their previous engagement in a criminal and violent activity that oppressed residents in the community become transformative persons in the same community.
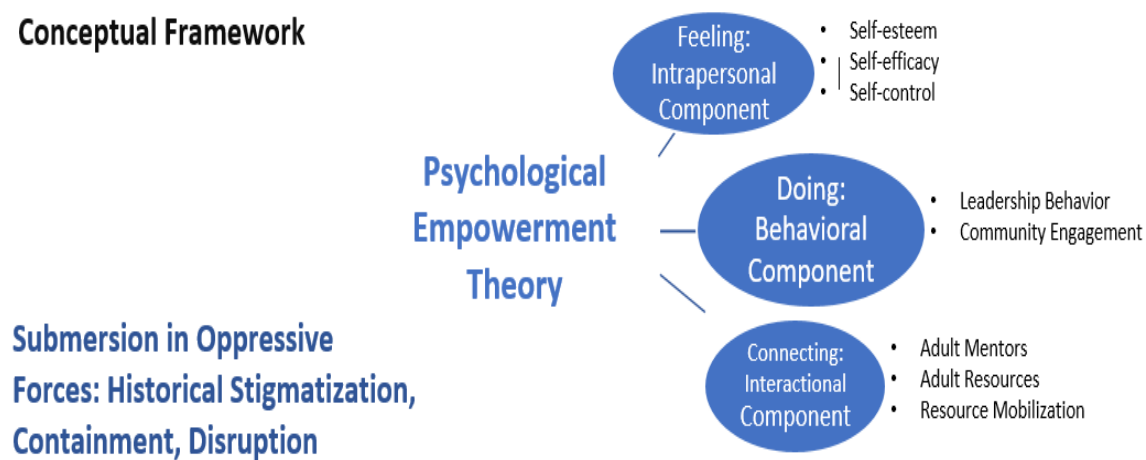
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

These individuals liberated themselves from oppression and transformed their lives to contribute positively to the same community that they previously contributed to oppressing. Freire describes this process as a "problem-posing approach" that recognizes that change is always possible and transformation is constant. Freire describes the liberation process as a three-step process: the recognition of one's oppressive state; the transformative process of struggling through the oppressive force to eventually gain freedom from oppression; and, re-establishing one's humanity. Freire explains that oppressed groups must struggle to transform the situation of oppression. The current study argues that the Cure Violence street outreach workers and violence interrupters represent individuals in the process of this transformation because they have lived through these oppressive forces, yet have liberated themselves from being submerged as sub-oppressors and thus re-establishing their humanity.

Empowerment theory is a useful framework to understand the processes related to the transformation needed to liberate oneself from an oppressed condition (Zimmerman, 2000). Empowerment theory assumes that social problems, like community violence, are directly related to inaccessibility to resources like jobs, housing, and quality schools. Empowerment involves learning new skills to become independent problem-solvers that allow individuals to take action against the social problems that affect their lives." (Zimmerman, 2000 p. 44). Empowerment theory has been examined at three different levels of analysis: individual, community, and organizational. The current study examines empowerment at the individual level defined as psychological empowerment (PE). "PE includes beliefs about one's competence, efforts to exert control, and an understanding of the socio-political environment" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 46) Although PE focuses on an individual level, empowerment operates within a social ecology, and as a result, PE interacts with the community and organizational levels (Zimmerman

et al., 2017). PE operates by enabling individuals to develop critical awareness about one's social context and to develop confidence and competence to exert control to achieve goals and the extent to which individuals are actively participating in action toward those goals.

The current study aims to use PE theory to provide vivid examples of how outreach workers can empower high-risk males through the three components of PE: interactional, intrapersonal and behavioral (See Figure 1). Through the interactional component, described as the "connecting component of PE," this investigation aims to describe the importance of the shared critical awareness and understanding that high-risk males and outreach workers have about how conflict becomes violent in their community, and the importance of the outreach workers' ability to provide resources to enable high-risk males to live pro-social lives. Through the interpersonal component, described as the feeling component, this study aims to highlight how outreach workers can influence the feelings of high-risk males' self-control, competence, and self-efficacy to utilize non-violent responses to conflict. Finally, the current study aims to explain the behavioral component of empowerment by describing the specific actions high-risk males take to desist from involvement in violent behavior.

F.   Research Questions

Mason (2002) suggests that all qualitative research should be organized by an intellectual puzzle, which is the phenomenon that one wishes to explain. This study aims to provide some explanation to the following intellectual puzzle: How do Cure Violence outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violence responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their communities? Using semi-structured interview data, this study describes some solutions to this puzzle by meeting the following objectives: First, providing insight into the source of conflict among a small percentage of high-risk males in the Woodlawn and North

Lawndale and how this conflict becomes violent. Second, describing how some high-risk males are not only inspired by Cure Violence outreach workers but how these outreach workers were able to build up the confidence, skill, and abilities of the high-risk males to desist from their previous involvement in the criminal justice system. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do high-risk males describe the social context that causes conflict to become violent?

2. How connected are high-risk males to street outreach workers and the pro-social opportunities they provide?

3. How do high-risk males describe their feelings of control, competence, and efficacy to respond to conflict in non-violent ways?

4. How do the Cure Violence outreach workers get high-risk clients to behave in pro-social ways and actively participate in the community in non-violent ways?

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study argues that oppressive forces have shaped the lives of many residents of low-income communities, especially residents at the highest risk for violent victimization and perpetration. The divestment in community resources has impacted community social organization, a long-standing protective factor. Missing in the social disorganization theory is the role of racism that has served to stigmatize, contain, and disrupt black bodies, families, and communities. This section will review social disorganization theory, the gaps related to this theory, and the impact of oppressive forces on a community's social organization. This chapter briefly reviews Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and how the process of re-humanizing individuals at the highest risk for violence should be a priority in low-income communities that have been stripped of social and cultural capital. This chapter ends with a review of empowerment theory as a strategy to operationalize the processes needed to re-humanize the highest-risk population. Psychological empowerment theory is a useful framework to describe how outreach workers can use a shared cultural lens to connect with males at the highest risk for violence perpetration and victimization population to get them to feel control, confident, and competent to access resources and re-engage in their community in pro-social ways.

A.   Urban Ecology and Social Disorganization Theory

The scientific study of urban ecology in the United States can be traced back to the founding school of urban sociologists, the "Chicago School" of sociology at the University of Chicago. This group included Park, Burgess, McKenzie & Wirth (1925), Thrasher (1927), Wirth (1928), Zorbaugh (1929), Faris & Dunham (1931), Frazier (1932), as well as Drake & Cayton (1945). Park et al. (1925) represented a group of researchers that set out to understand how the ecology of the city shapes human behavior. They defined urban ecology as "the study of human

beings' spatial and temporal relations, as affected by the changing forces of the environment."

One key contribution of Park and colleagues was their description of how social-environmental

changes affect the organization of a community. Such ecological changes may include

transformations of the population within a community, neighborhood economic bases changing

hands, and social disorganization. Social disorganization is defined as "the inability of a

community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social

controls" (Sampson & Wilson, 1995, p. 45). Park and colleagues cite rapid population changes

in urban communities, specifically through immigration, as contributing factors that affect

residents' routines and the effectiveness of social control, which they identify as two vital

components of the social order of a community.

During the industrial age, many European immigrants congregated in America's larger

cities. This immigration shifted the population in the cities. In Chicago, skilled and non-skilled

immigrants moved in to perform some of the more difficult and laborious tasks that

industrialization required. Various European ethnic groups, including Germans, Dutch, Irish,

Italians, Polish, and Lithuanians all formed their communities in poor, working-class

neighborhoods that were primarily settled by second and third generation Irish Roman Catholic,

English, and Swedes (Asbury, 1940). This immigration contributed to a temporary state of social

disorganization until its residents assimilated into American culture. Once European immigrants

assimilated, they moved from highly dense and segregated communities to improved residences,

which made way for new waves of incoming European immigrants from similar as well as

additional countries.

Shaw & McKay (1942) examined how immigration, and particularly the migration of

lower class populations, not only contributed to social disorganization but how social

disorganization also could lead to juvenile delinquency. According to Shaw and McKay, delinquent rates are highest in areas exhibiting economic decline, residential instability, and ethnic heterogeneity. Shaw and McKay's core assumption regarding the relationship between delinquency and social disorganization theory is that structural barriers, such as poverty and joblessness, inhibit the development of the formal and informal ties that promote residents to work together towards the common good of their neighborhood (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson et al.,1997).

Social disorganization theory explains youth involvement in gangs: "It is the inability of a community, its agencies, and its families to mesh norms, relationships, and resources with the motivation of youths in such a way as to produce effective socialization for youths" (Spergel, 1995 p. 169). Youth gangs were used as informal social controls to attack and defend community boundaries and norms (Spergel, 1995). Gang involvement in violence to protect geographic space, described as "Turf wars" was a common descriptive from this research that examined how these men used gangs to strengthen identity, provide social support, and protection (Hagedorn, 2015; Spergel, 1995). Also, many youths involved in street gangs were driven by the American ideology of economic success. However, when limited access to resources constrained those aspirations, street gangs served as an alternative route to achieve these goals (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; MacLeod, 1995).

Sampson et al. (2002) examined how, during the 1990s, some scholars moved beyond employing traditional structural characteristics, such as concentrated poverty, to predict juvenile delinquency and risk. Researchers began to examine the impact of neighborhood social processes in search of ways to protect children and adolescents from risk. Sampson & Groves (1989) were among the first to test Shaw and McKay's theory of community social disorganization using

British Crime Statistics to create a measure of social disorganization. Sampson and Groves (1989) used Kasarda & Janowitz's (1974) systemic model, in which the community is viewed as a complex system of friendship, kinship, volunteer groups, and community-based organizations whose aim was collective supervision of the common good of the community. Sampson et al. (1997) understood that the structural characteristics of a neighborhood, such as poverty and residential instability, were related to violence; however, understanding *why* motivated their inquiry. They sought to understand how social processes, such as informal social control and collective efficacy of community residents, could mediate the relationship between structural characteristics and violence. Sampson and colleagues theorized that efficacy as a construct works not only at the individual level, but also at the neighborhood level, through "mutual trust and the willingness to intervene via informal social control for the common good of the neighborhood" (Sampson et al., 1997, p. 918). Sampson and colleagues (1997) inquired as to whether structural characteristics, such as concentrated disadvantage and residential stability, affect collective efficacy. This finding was insightful because it suggests that specific strategies, particularly establishing social networks, could be used to combat crime and violence in neighborhoods with structural characteristics that situate them at a concentrated disadvantage.

Contemporary works in ethnographic studies (Duneier, 1999; Patillo, 1999; Venkatesh, 2006) warn that social phenomena, such as social networks and informal social control constructs identified as protective factors in social disorganization theory, do not always work to prevent crime. Patillo (1999) contends that dense networks within stable neighborhoods can more easily develop organized criminal subcultures because neighborhood familiarity is high. Venkatesh (2006) and Patillo (1999) provide vivid examples of how gang leaders are agents of social control within their neighborhoods, motivated to maintain the status quo of informal

economies that have provided a systemic flow of income for gangs. Street vendors in Duneier's

(1999) *Sidewalk* also aim to preserve their underground and illicit economy through the informal

social control of other street vendors of secondhand books, magazines and panhandling. Patillo

(1999) captures the complexity of middle-class neighborhoods consisting of a group of income-

generating gang members called the Black Mobsters, and middle-class residents maintaining

similar values despite dissonance between the ways they respectively earn income:

> The comparable class position of many of the Black Mobsters and their law-
> abiding neighbors makes getting rid of them even more difficult for concerned
> residents. They share many of the same values for an attractive and safe
> neighborhood, and both groups want socioeconomic security, but they have
> divergent strategies for achieving those goals. And because the outcomes are
> often similar, the neighborhood's betterment groups have a difficult time
> convincing their less involved neighbors that there is even a problem, to begin
> with. (Patillo, 1999, p. 88).

Patillo (1999), Duneier (1999) and Venkatesh (2006), using qualitative methods, describe

some of the complexities surrounding social disorganization theory, particularly the challenges

of divergent values of street gangs and sidewalk vendors on the one hand and law-abiding

residents on the other, seeking in the same setting to maintain some level of informal control

within their communities. Sampson (2006) recognizes that there are problems with the definition

of social disorganization and its relationship with certain types of strong and dense social

networks.

One common criticism of studies using neighborhoods' structural characteristics and

social processes to explain delinquency and risk has been the lack of discussion about race. As

described earlier, once European immigrants were able to assimilate, the state of temporary

social disorganization waned. Furthermore, European immigration ground to a halt during each

World War, which opened the door to mass migrations of African-Americans, Puerto Ricans,

and Mexican immigrants (Cruz, 2007; Drake & Cayton, 1945).

Although most immigrant ethnic groups faced some level of discrimination and segregation compared to more established dominant cultural groups, African-Americans and Latinos were particularly constrained by social controls including institutional racist practices, both formal and informal, designed to prevent them from leaving their concentrated neighborhoods (Cruz, 2007; Drake & Cayton, 1945). Often, these social controls were accompanied by brutal violence (Cruz, 2007; Diamond, 2009; Sandburg & Lippman, 1919). African-American and Latino ethnic groups were consequently unable to take advantage of the immigrant cycle described by Park et al. (1925) by leaving the slums in cities after assimilating to the broader society. Race and ethnicity effectively constrained these groups to the same communities for decades. These practices created an environment of concentrated poverty, limited economic resources and employment opportunities, and neighborhood instability. Hagedorn (2007) explains that many Chicago School scholars have gone to great effort to dispel stereotypes of immigrants by explaining that delinquency, crime, and gangs are a result of one's environment rather than a lack of norms or deviant and immoral behaviors associated with one's ethnicity. Unfortunately, one concern has been that race is overlooked in explaining constraints on structural characteristics and social processes. Hagedorn (2007) explains that what goes unacknowledged is the norm of racism when it comes to how communities are structured. Sampson (1999) acknowledged that residential segregation reinforces economic inequalities and access to resources. Wacquant (2008) goes further, claiming that an inherent problem with social disorganization theory is that it measures what individuals and communities lack as opposed to taking the time to study them and understand the unique ways that communities are organized in the context of structural characteristics that are a direct result of "the unusually oppressive and depressed circumstances thrust upon them" (p. 50). The next section reviews

some of the "oppressive and depressed circumstances" thrust upon certain communities by larger institutions like government, banks, and insurance companies, which have created physical and social barriers that, through disruption and isolation, have constrained African-American residents from utilizing existing social networks to preserve neighborhood values and social control.

B.   **<u>Oppressive Forces on Black Communities</u>**

In Wacquant (2008)'s paper on the making of America's punitive state, he explains that since the birth of the mass production, consumption, and marketing associated with the industrial age, the following four oppressive forces have submerged black Americans: stigmatization, constraint, spatial confinement, and institutional encasement. These four forces serve as a way to maintain economic and social superiority for white Americans. Using Wacquant's argument, this literature review aims to describe ways these oppressive forces have impacted the social organization of black communities.

This section begins with a historical review of urban renewal policy and its disruption of routines and networks that Park et al. (1925) describe as vital to social order. One historical thread that had a profound impact on social disruptions was housing policy and the development of Urban Renewal Programs. After World War II, given the population explosion of the Baby Boomer generation, cities, slums, and housing were a primary focus for the nation. National programs were implemented to address these issues. These included the development of the United States' major highway systems, public housing, and new universities.

These national programs all contributed to the disruption of existing communities and the sidewalk culture of cities and communities and the natural social processes within them, such as networking with neighbors, informal social control, and community involvement. Lang &

Sohmer (2000) sketch a portrait of the legislative actions of the 1949 Congress that had such a profound impact on the future of cities. In their summary of the 1949 Housing Act, Lang & Sohmer explain that this legislation was responsible for financing urban re-development through slum clearance and the building of 810,000 new public housing units that displaced many existing families and isolated them from other members of the greater neighborhood. The urban renewal programs were greeted with criticism by grassroots advocates. Jacobs (1961) describes how urban renewal programs used cities as sacrificial victims and contributed to the demise of the structure of cities through the destruction of vital components of neighborhoods, including articulated residences, where neighbors can see residents on the sidewalk and accessible streets that housed businesses and facilitated social interaction. Jacobs goes on to explain that despite billions of dollars being spent on urban renewal programs, "the low-income projects became centers of worse delinquency, vandalism, and general social hopelessness than the slums they were supposed to replace" (p.4). Discussing public housing projects, Teaford (2000) explains how these developments were "islands of modern high rises set on superblocks, oblivious to the surrounding buildings and neighborhoods, and destructive of the existing street pattern" (p.456). Concurrently, mortgage insurance companies provided many working-class white city dwellers the opportunity to leave communities within the inner city by providing them low-interest rate loans and low-to-no money down mortgages to move out of the city, while at the same time discriminating against African Americans by not allowing them the same opportunity.

These are national examples of how the social organization of communities was disrupted. In Chicago, the development of public housing was unique compared to other major cities like Los Angeles and New York City due to its discriminatory local housing policies (Abu-Lughod, 1999; Popkin, 2016). In Chicago 40% of the population living in distressed zip codes

compared to 16% of the population in New York City and 17% of Los Angeles' population

(EIG, 2018). The disparities between violence rates in Chicago compared to the two largest

United States cities has been posited to be partially attributed to the intergenerational housing

segregation of people of color, the fracturing of institutionalized gangs, and investment of public

dollars in policing instead of housing (Hagedorn, 2017). As Lurgio explains in Cohen, Celona, &

Golding (2016) the differences between the rates of violence in Chicago compared to Los

Angeles and New York City, "Chicago's problem wasn't a day in the making-it's 60 years in the

making" (para. 52). In his book, *Boss,* Mike Royko (1972), a syndicated journalist in Chicago,

vividly described how housing programs were used to segregate African-American populations

further:

> Containing the Negro was unspoken city policy. Even expressways were planned
> as man-made barriers, the unofficial borders. The Dan Ryan, for instance, was
> shifted several blocks during the planning stage to make one of the ghetto walls.
> Proposals to scatter public housing, thus breaking the segregation pattern, were
> killed by City Hall. (Royko, 1972. p. 137)

Urban sociologists and criminologists also commented that Mayor R. J. Daley's decisions

regarding where to place housing projects and highways were the epitome of racism because the

erection of high-rise projects was fundamentally intended to contain the Black population

(Cohen & Taylor 2000; Hagedorn, 2004; Venkatesh, 2000).

C.   Constraint and Stigma: Disappearance of Jobs

Deindustrialization led to economic transformations in most northern cities which served

as another structural shift. Hagedorn (2004) illustrated how, as factories closed and desperation

increased during the late 1960s and early 1970s, homicide rates skyrocketed in Midwestern

industrial cities like Detroit and Flint, Michigan, or Gary, Indiana. Chicago and its minority

population were also affected due to an over-concentration on manufacturing (Abu-Lughod,

1999) as most African-Americans were largely undereducated laborers who migrated to the north

for the promise of better wages and social conditions (Wilkerson, 2011). Locally, Chicago was losing jobs at a rate of 25,000 per year, and ten times that many had been lost by the end of the 1970s (Sampson, 2003; Wilson, 1997). Once these jobs disappeared, many workers were not well positioned for new economic opportunities of the service-based economy which required higher education. Families that were qualified for the new economy fled the inner-city to secure new working opportunities.

Some researchers have argued that a result of such major restructuring was a subculture almost entirely isolated from jobs and pro-social role models (Anderson, 2003; Massey & Denton, 1993; Moore & Pinderhughes, 1993; Wilson, 1987). In Chicago, this phenomenon resulted in communities stigmatized as "black" communities with no jobs and limited social networks connected to new economic opportunities. However, Duneier (1994) argues to be careful not to imply isolation from values when we examine what is, in fact, isolation from resources. The phenomenon of aggression and violence directed towards social groups (e.g., violence due to someone's race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, or social or political membership) is a part of the infamous legacy of the United States. Duneier (1994) argues that many Americans are protected from the consequences of these very American behaviors by social processes and economic resources. This phenomenon is further described by Patillo (1999) among middle-class African-American youth who venture into high-risk behaviors, such as gang involvement and drug dealing but are eventually pulled away by their middle-class families and resources.

Conversely, as described earlier, many low-income families are forced to respond to the "immediacy of their needs" (Venkatesh, 2006, p. 40). Hagedorn (2005) explains that poverty and social exclusion often lead to violence when accompanied by a major disruption in society. One outcome is that these communities are not only stigmatized as jobless but also violent. The next

section will discuss how the lack of legal employment opportunities influenced involvement in an expanded underground economy of illegal income-generating practices, including the often-fatal business of drug dealing, which has contributed to one of the highest levels of violence recorded in United States history in the early 1990s, highlighted in Chicago by the second highest level of homicides since violent deaths in over 60 years.

D. **Constraint and Stigma: The Underground Economy**

The changing demographics of large urban northern cities city also coincided with a changing economy. According to Bourgois (2002) and Fagan (1999), drug dealing is one of the most accessible ways to earn income among young unskilled men with limited education. Before the U.S. economy's restructuring away from heavy industries, young unskilled men could obtain work easily in a factory. Bourgois (2002) explains that the new service-oriented economy is in direct contrast with street culture, whereas the hyper-masculinity associated with previously accessible industry work has clear parallels in the drug trade. Fagan (1999) explores how the underground market for inexpensive crack cocaine sparked intense competition from drug dealers for territorial rights and market share. This competition often began with violence, which can be seen in the increased rates of homicide over the following twenty years. Examining drug-related violence is one lens through which to consider the trends of violence over the last 30 years. Drugs and violence have been documented together in many studies (Boles & Miotto, 2003; Goldstein, 1985; Ousey & Lee, 2004). Goldstein's (1985) findings suggest that high levels of violence in poor urban settings are largely systemic. Examples of systemic violence include: "violence by drug distributors in the course of territorial disputes, retribution for selling ''bad'' drugs, the use of threats and violence to enforce rules within a drug-dealing organization, fighting among users over drugs or drug paraphernalia, battles with police, and elimination of

informers" (Boles and Miotto, 2003, p.159; Goldstein, 1985). An investigation by Boles &

Miotto (2003) of substance abuse and its relation to violence perpetration found that

amphetamines/methamphetamines and cocaine were substances that contributed primarily to

systemic violence stemming from competing dealers and gangs warring for profits.

Opioid drugs are recent additions to the underground drug economy. Prescription opioid

addiction for blacks has been largely hidden in the national narrative about the opioid public

health problem despite blacks dying at a rate four times higher than the United States rate.

(Griffith et al., 2018). People of color are disproportionately incarcerated and "people who go to

prison are much more likely to have problems with addiction to relieve anxiety, post-traumatic

stress, and chronic pain" (Western, 2018 pg. 60). In Western's (2018) reentry study sample, he

found that a third of his sample suffered from serious chronic pain. Studies have highlighted that

minorities are less likely to be prescribed pain medicine compared to whites (Johnson, 2016;

Volkow & McLellan, 2016) which in turn creates a market for opioid drug distribution in the

underground economy.

This intense competition by drug dealers seeking dominance of market share of the drug

economy was governed by social norms and rules that, if violated, can lead to violence.

Anderson (1999) describes these norms as a "code of the streets" Ventakesh (2006) illustrates

how the role of the urban gang changed from that of a street-level social support entity to an

organization seeking the high-profit yields of drug dealing:

> For much of the twentieth century, the gang was primarily a social network for
> marginalized or at-risk youth who were having troubles with school, who could
> not find work, and who otherwise gravitated toward like-minded peers…as gangs
> began moving into underground economies---drugs, larceny, extortion---they
> became corporate entities, organized to support the material as well as the social
> needs of young people. (Venkatesh, 2006; p. 66)

The structural characteristics of minority neighborhoods, featuring few economic opportunities for steady work alongside concentrated poverty, made participation in the illegal drug market desirable for many of its residents, especially young men. As addressed previously, this illegal market contributed to some of the highest levels of violence ever seen in the United States, particularly in urban settings. While Chicago did not experience the high levels of systemic drug-related violence experienced in larger urban cities in the United States until the early 1990S (Hagedorn, 2004; Kotolitz, 1991), the high levels of exposure to violence reported by Chicago youth is comparable to that of other large cities (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 2000; Gorman-Smith, Tolan, & Henry, 1998; Sheidow, Gorman-Smith, Tolan & Henry, 2001).

E.   **The Stigma of Modern Urban Communities**

After the great migration periods following World Wars I and II, in which African-Americans fled southern states to escape racial terrorism, a cauldron of massive social and economic change was beginning to take form. The 1960s were tumultuous with not only civil rights and black power movements, as previously described, but also anti-war campaigns, as well as economic shifts that would drastically change the look and feel of cities going forward. However, these massive social movements had unintended consequences. As described earlier, spatial confinements due to racist practices and the constraints of disappearing job opportunities (Wilson, 1996), combined with white residents following new housing and employment opportunities (Wilson & Taub, 2007) impacted the local community tax base in the communities where African-Americans continued to live (Wilson, 1987). Not only did the demographics of the urban communities' change, but the structural appearance of communities began to look drastically different as well. Local community businesses were destroyed after riots in response to violence such as police harassment, brutality, and the assassination of black political and

social leaders (Alexander, 2012; Diamond, 2017; Hagedorn, 2015). Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark, Washington D.C., and largely African-American communities such as Harlem in New York City, Watts in Los Angeles, and Chicago's North Lawndale and Woodlawn communities were greatly impacted.

Hagedorn (1998) explains that these massive changes diluted informal social controls in the community providing an opportunity for youth gangs to take the place of weakened neighborhood level controls. Gangs went from local community groups to "super-gangs" that had an impact in multiple neighborhoods (Hagedorn, 2015; Spergel, 1995). Street outreach, mainly through community-based organizations, has long been a practice to address street gangs (Spergel, 1995). In Chicago, community-based efforts such as grassroots and politically-oriented organizations were key to street outreach involved with engaging gang members. One notable example includes Richard J. Daley, the 38th mayor of Chicago. Daley was a member of the street gang, the Hamburg Boys, as a youth (Royko, 1974). Many street gangs, including Daley's, were utilized to help a mobilization process for voting and intimidate opposition parties (Hagedorn, 2008; Royko, 1974). Communities and local agencies understood the utility of engaging street gangs to meet local needs (Spergel, 1995). However, these sources of assimilation into political institutions were not readily available to African-Americans and Latinos as the oppressive forces of racism constrained these opportunities (Hagedorn, 2015; Spergel, 1995). Nevertheless, the civil rights movement provided a platform to successfully engage African-American gang members (Alexander, 2012; Spergel, 1995; Sharkey, 2018). Two large Chicago street gangs, the Vice Lords in North Lawndale and the Blackstone Rangers in Woodlawn, were actively involved in the civil rights and black power movement (Dawley, 1972; Moore & Williams, 2011). Community stakeholders and organizations used these organized gangs and rivals to engage

youth in a federally-funded workforce development program (Dawley, 1972; McPherson, 1969). "Gang members were viewed as legitimate citizen elements of local community and even as community leaders to be involved in programs of urban development and citizen control of riots" (Spergel, 1995 p. 173). However, over time this perspective would change.

By the mid-1970s, when the smoke cleared from the few remaining industrial chimneys and "bombed-out" local businesses (sacrificial structures targeted by frustrated protesters and rioters), cities, especially older northern cities, were stigmatized as places often composed largely of violent communities consisting mostly of unemployed people of color (Berman, 1982; Klinenberg, 2002). Beginning with the Nixon administration and its "War on Drugs," federal and local government divested in funding that benefited large urban northern cities (Sharkey, 2018). Gone from many cities were big businesses, the jobs, and many of the residents who had resided in urban communities for most of the early twentieth century. Berman (1982) coined the term "urbicide," defined as "the murder of a city" as a way to explain this phenomenon. This divestment included a lack of funding for social programs to strengthen housing, education, and crime prevention programs. Instead, resources were directed towards criminal justice as a means to maintain order (Sharkey, 2018; Spergel, 1995). "Gangs were seen as dangerous, evil, and beyond the reach of most community-based institutions or even national social policy…gang members were to be arrested, effectively prosecuted, and removed from society with long prison sentences." (Spergel, 1995 p 177). The next section will review another oppressive force that would drastically impact urban communities of color.

F. **Institutional Containment: The War on Crime and Drugs**

As previously described, the 1980s and 1990s were periods of an exploding underground market for inexpensive crack cocaine. This period sparked intense competition from gangs for

market share resulting in some of the highest rates of systemic community-level violence every seen (Fagan, 1999; Goldstein, 1985; Reiss & Roth, 1993). The crack-cocaine generation only intensified federal investment in suppression tactics with increasing criminal justice monitoring and stronger sentencing through RICO laws and the "War on Drugs" through the Reagan-Bush-Clinton administrations (Alexander, 2012; Sharkey, 2018). The criminal justice approach has created a sub-culture of "ever-growing punitiveness" (Clear, 2007 p. 6). Prison rates have increased each year despite the fluctuating nature of crime rates (Clear, 2007; Western, 2018). The "Wars on Crime and Drugs" created a culture where one out of three African-American males have been in jail or incarcerated at one point in their lives (Alexander, 2012), and poor women, especially black women were unfairly persecuted for being "Crack Moms" (Boyd, 2004).

Furthermore, in Chicago, locking up gang leaders through tougher sentencing has decentralized gangs with over 40 years of organizational structure, which led to the development of street cliques and chaos (Austen, 2013; Papachristos, 2013). This punitive approach has ignored how gang leadership has been used through different periods as an organizing source to prevent violence (Hagedorn, 2015; Moore & Williams, 2013; Spergel, 1995; Vargas, 2016). Mass supervision and incarceration have further deprived structurally constrained communities of social and human capital (Bocanegra, 2017). In some communities, there are no residents with "eyes on the street" (Jacobs, 1961). Instead, individuals have chosen to isolate themselves (Klinenberg, 2002), which inhibits two important protective factors of an organized community: cohesion and informal social control (Sampson, 2012). The new eyes of the street are "under a veil of suspicion" (Sharkey, 2018 p. 159) marked by increased policing, cameras, and gun spotters. Now, in low-income communities, one is hard-pressed not to know at least one family

member who has been processed through the criminal justice system (Clear, 2007). The systemic

violence from the illegal drug trade and high incarceration rates reflect an urban colloquialism

about future expectations: "You'll end up killed or in jail."

G.   Stigma: Community Exposure to Violence and Trauma

In the United States, nearly 60% of youth ages 14-17 have witnessed a violent event in

their community in their lifetime (Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, Hamby, & Kracke, 2015). As

cited in Fitzpatrick & Lagory's (2005 p. 7) review of exposure to violence revealed that "central

city residents are twice as likely to be victims of violence and three times more likely to be

murdered than those living in other parts of the metropolitan area" (Fingerhut & Kleinman,

1990; Reiss & Roth, 1993). Other reviews of urban children's levels of exposure to violence,

indicate that 50% to 96% of children have witnessed community violence in their lifetime (Bell

& Jenkins, 1991; Berman, Kurtines, & Silverman, 1996; Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Gladstein,

Rusonis, & Heald, 1992; Gorman-Smith et al., 2004; Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998; Hagan &

Foster, 2001; Horowitz, Weine, & Jekel, 1995; Miller, Wasserman, Neugebauer, Gorman-Smith,

Kamboukus, 1999; Richters & Martinez, 1993; Sams & Truscott, 2004; Schwab-Stone et al.,

1995). These alarmingly high rates provide descriptive evidence for Gorman-Smith & Tolan's

(1998) comment that "witnessing someone beaten up is a frequent occurrence among adolescents

[from inner-city communities] in general and could be considered a developmentally expected

event" (p. 109). Fitzpatrick & Lagory (2005) characterize life in the inner city as "islands of risk

and despair" (p.121).

Garbarino, Kostelny, & Dubrow (1991) were concerned with the impact that chronic

exposure to violence has on children, comparing inner-city community levels of exposure to

those experienced by children growing up in war zones around the world. This warzone- like

experience has a tremendous impact on externalizing behaviors, such as anti-social and delinquent behavior, and internalizing problem behaviors, such as depression, anxiety, and outlook on life. Exposure to community violence places adolescents at risk for future externalizing behavior problems. Ingoldsby & Shaw (2002) explain that, in addition to community economic disadvantage and experience with deviant neighborhood peers, exposure to community violence has a key effect on developmental pathways governing antisocial behavior. Sams & Truscott (2004, p.33) found that "low empathy coupled with high levels of exposure to community violence is a significant predictor of the use of violence." Bell & Jenkins (1991), who examined levels of exposure to violence through behavioral assessment reports by Chicago Public School teachers, explain that adolescents' externalizing behavior could include self-destructive behavior such as substance abuse, delinquent behavior, and promiscuity. Pynnos (1993) explains that many of these externalizing behaviors may be defensive and destructive coping strategies used to distract them from anxiety and painful memories.

Osofsky (2003), in her review of literature on children exposed to violence, cited a Shakoor & Chalmers's (1991) study of 10,036 elementary and high school children in inner-city Chicago, in which the investigators found that children and adolescents who witnessed and were victims of violence were more likely to become perpetrators of violence than those who were not exposed. Related to internalizing behaviors, Hagan & Foster (2001) examined early transitions from adolescence to adulthood, which they described as "adolescent exits." One key finding was that adolescent exposure to intimate partner violence could cause depression, which was a key indicator for a premature transition from being a teen to now taking on adult roles. Exposure to violence can contribute to having a shortened life stage in adolescence, where children no longer feel the protection of being a child. Fitzpatrick and Lagory (2005) explain that for youth who are

socially isolated from positive networks (Mitchell & LaGory, 2002; Wilson, 1987), the internalized effects of exposure to violence, such as unhappiness, depression, and suicidal ideation among youth may contribute to diminishing social capital (Putnam, 2000). Hill and Noblin (1991) report that a majority of male adolescents in their study on violence exposure did not expect to reach 25 to 30 years of age.

In addition to community exposure to violence, research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which measures traumatic experiences, has expanded an understanding of the prevalence and impact of exposure to violence on overall wellbeing (Felitti et al., 1998). Defined as anything that threatens life, safety, and wellbeing, traumatic experiences include a list of events and experiences that occur within the home including emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect, exposure to domestic violence, exposure to alcohol and drug abuse (Dube et al., 2001) experiencing the incarceration of a household member, and living with a family member with mental illness (Merrick et al., 2017). It is four times more likely that a previously incarcerated adults experienced an adverse childhood experience (Reavis, Looman, Franco, & Rojas, 2013). In a nationally representative survey of nine to 16-year-old youth, 25% self-reported experiencing at least one traumatic event (AOC Briefing, 2014). The prevalence of a traumatic event for youth in distressed Chicago communities is African-Americans is even higher. In a longitudinal study with approximately 1200 low-income, minority participants in Chicago, researchers found that nearly two-thirds of the sample experienced one or more ACEs by the age of 18 (Giovanelli, Reynolds, Mondi, & Ou, 2016). Mobilization of awareness campaigns on the long term health impact and prevalence of ACES are needed primarily because traumatic experiences are "marginalized as a result of bad behavior" (Burke-Harris, 2018 p. 41-2) instead of recognizing that ACEs impact everyone regardless of whether residents reside in

prosperous or distressed zip codes. The toll of trauma is costly. The cost of trauma on the healthcare system accounts for nearly 38% of every dollar spent (Dolezal, McCollum, & Callahan, 2009).

H.   Exposure to Violence in Chicago Communities

In their longitudinal study of the pro-social and anti-social trajectories of urban Chicago youth of color, Tolan & Gorman-Smith (1998) highlighted levels of violence exposure that included 80% of participants reporting some exposure during their lifetime, and 65% reporting being exposed within the last year. Tolan & Gorman-Smith (1998) illustrated the types of violence witnessed by explaining that 54% of study participants mentioned they have seen someone beat up in the past year and 15% had seen someone shot in the last year. These findings were consistently high over six waves of data collection between 1991 and 1999. Using the same data set, Sheidow et al. (2001) found even higher reports of exposure with 93.6% of the population being exposed to some violence in their lifetime and nearly 87% of the participants reporting some violence exposure in the past year. Sheidow et al. (2001) highlight that exposure includes witnessing family members as victims of violent acts. An estimated 77% of the male youth participants have seen a family member beaten up in their lifetime and 60% reported seeing this incident happen in the past year. Children become keenly aware of their risk for victimization when family members are subjected to high rates of violence. As Osofsky (2003) explains, "Parents, who are the main support for children in providing nurturance and protection may not be able to do so when they are exposed to, or are victims of, violence themselves" (p. 162). In addition, Osofsky's (2004) review of studies on children exposed to domestic violence cited two studies (Fick, Osofsky, & Lewis, 1997; Osofsky, 2003) whose findings suggest that

both parents and police perceive witnessing violence against a parent to have a much greater impact on a child than violence against a stranger.

Tolan & Gorman-Smith (1998) also explain that when attempting to examine predictors of exposure to violence, it is critical to look beyond family characteristics and parenting practices and consider how the community and schools influence the children because the family structure cannot entirely buffer children from exposure to violence. Patillo's (1999) ethnographic study of middle-class African-American families in Chicago supports this account of the frustrations experienced by African-American families who fare better economically but are not able to protect children from exposure to community violence due to the highly segregated nature of Chicago communities. Patillo (1999) vividly described how in African-American communities in Chicago, middle-class residences still share schools, police, parks, and businesses with lower income residences from neighboring communities. In other words, African-American city dwellers don't have the same buffers as white Chicagoans and suburbanites. Patillo describes how, despite their middle-class status, the children of African-Americans are not buffered from violence because they come in direct contact with children from poorer surrounding neighborhoods.

Overall the findings on exposure to violence suggest that family functioning is not directly related to exposure but that families cannot protect youth from being exposed to violence (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998; Sheidow et al., 2001). Even when comparing poor neighborhoods with and without strong social processes, youth in those with social processes are no less exposed to violence than those in environments without strong social processes (Sheidow et al., 2001). These findings are powerful because they demonstrate the magnitude of exposure to violence in low-income communities in Chicago; strong family function, parenting practices, and

social processes, such as collective efficacy, cannot protect youth from being exposed to community violence. These findings help debunk the stigma of families and residents from low-income communities not working hard to keep children safe. Gorman-Smith et al., 2004 findings demonstrated that families with strong functioning and parenting practices could protect their children from the risk of being a violent perpetrator (Gorman-Smith et al., 2004). Even for families with weak family functioning, if those families are connected with strong neighborhood social processes, such as social support and monitoring, those neighborhood processes can serve as a protective factor that buffers against the likelihood of becoming a violent perpetrator (Gorman-Smith et al., 2004). Findings suggest that social processes in struggling communities are more important than family functioning when it comes to the relationship with exposure to violence (Sheidow et al., 2001). These findings are powerful because they show that, despite exposure to violence, eyes on the street and community-level social support remains important, particularly as adolescents' primary influences shift from families to peer networks. Conversations with high-risk youth and street outreach workers who work with them can help provide some insight on these approaches. Also, a qualitative inquiry can provide additional insight into the key factors that outreach workers use to engage and change behaviors of high-risk youth that can be shared with the larger community including families.

I.   **A Return to Grassroots Mobilization**

The suppressive and deterrent approach to violence reduction that has been in vogue for almost 40 years has weakened communities. Alternative approaches to reducing violence should include using human resources that are the closest to the phenomenon (Simpson-Bey., 2017). Alexander (2012) calls for a return to grassroots mobilization, specifically to work with men and women who have been through the criminal justice system. Spergel (1995) reminds us that

during the social movements of the 1950s and 1960s, gang leaders were engaged as citizens to contribute their strengths towards social causes. However, Alexander (2012) cautions that hyper-criminalization of black men throughout the United States history will "make it difficult for the community to rally around" stigmatized criminals. Hagedorn (2015) suggests that using adults who have aged out of involvement in illegal street-level activity as peacemakers can be an important contribution. Sharkey (2018) points to the importance of the "guardians of the community" as a protective factor against a future rise in violent crime:

> "Engaging the group of people within a community who are at greatest risk of victimization has become one of the most effective methods of interrupting exchanges of violent activity that account for a large share of gun violence. This engagement can happen by training "interrupters" to reach out to young people in the aftermath of violence before they can take action to reciprocate. It can happen by delivering a clear message to leaders of gangs or crews by telling them that their entire network will be targeted if any member engages in gun violence". -Sharkey, 2018 p. 159

J.   ***Pedagogy of The Oppressed* and Empowerment**

In Patrick Sharkey's (2018) chapter, "The End of Warrior Policing" he suggested a shift away from investment in the criminal justice system and towards community-based agencies and agents. The previous quote in an earlier section spoke to the importance of engaging the highest risk residents who are often responsible for most of the violence in the community with trained outreach workers who can function as interrupters, case managers and mentors. However, Sharkey was not explicit about the importance of using trained interrupters who have experienced a similar life as the residents currently at the highest risk for community violence. Cure Violence uses this specific approach through its outreach workers and interrupters; this intervention has demonstrated strong effects on reducing shootings and homicides (Butts et al., 2015; Delgado et al., 2017; Milam et al., 2016; Webster et al., 2013). However, little is known

the processes involved in getting high-risk males to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to reconnect with their community positively.

The best theoretical framework to help describe how outreach workers can reduce shootings and homicide is empowerment theory. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is credited with conceptualizing the idea of empowerment (Freire, 1970; Turner and Maschi, 2015). Before understanding the concept of empowerment, it is important to explore some of the basic concepts of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* in which empowerment is a process toward liberation from oppression. Freire defines oppression as constituting an act of violence, in which one subject, the oppressor, dehumanizes another, the oppressed. The infamous legacy of spatial confinement, constraint, institutional containment, and stigmatization for African-Americans, especially low-income African-Americans are dehumanizing acts and a form of oppression (Freire, 1970; Wacquant, 2008). Therefore, using the Frierian theory, African-Americans in the United States context have been experiencing multiple generational violence as a product of dehumanization.

This process of dehumanization occurs through a what Freire describes as a banking concept of education where "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those who they consider knowing nothing" (Freire, 2005; p 53). Within the banking concept, roles are prescribed through a dichotomization of the world mythologizing those that have power through strength-based narratives and those that don't through deficit-based narratives. These mythical narratives are often used to reinforce these prescriptions applied to the oppressor and the oppressed. These prescriptions are used to maintain a power imbalance (Campbell, 2010). Although Freire's book was intended for the practice of education, the application of his text in the urban sociological context transfers seamlessly with mythical terms like, "hard-working vs. lazy, good parents vs. bad parents, organized communities vs.

disorganized communities." This banking concept assumes permanence; social science plays a role in transforming values, norms, and culture into facts instead of socially-prescribed constructs (Campbell, 2010). Ta Neshi Coates (2015), provides a profound example of race, itself being a socially-prescribed construct. Fields and Fields (2012), provide further elaboration of how race is a social construct created to maintain superiority for the oppressor class.

In the Chicago context, this mythology plays out by describing communities exposed to high levels of violence as "different worlds," instead of acknowledging that these communities have been structurally distressed over multiple generations. Large sections of the west and south side communities are stigmatized by the myth of the permanence of deficits. This myth is fortified for residents involved in criminal activity. The banking concept functions by actors "depositing" prescribed mythologies as facts as opposed to critically analyzing them (Freire, 1970). Freire describes this critical analysis of one's social-political environment as critical consciousness which the oppressed must struggle to gain as an important step to re-connecting to their humanity.

Freire warns that another danger is that the oppressed fall prey to these myths and self-depreciation becomes another characteristic. "So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing, and are incapable of learning anything-- that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive-that, in the end, they become convinced of their unfitness" (Freire, 2005 p. 45). The danger of believing in these prescribed myths is that the oppressed aim to empower themselves by aspiring to be the oppressors themselves. "The oppressed feel an irresistible attraction toward the oppressor and their way of life. Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration" (Freire, 2005 p. 44). The result of this aspiration is the development of a sub-oppressor (Campbell, 2010). The sub-oppressor uses aspirations for superiority as a way to

establish another level of oppression within an already oppressed group, creating multiple levels of oppression (Campbell, 2010). This dynamic of self-deprecation and sub-oppression creates a submersion in oppression. "The oppressor wants to propagate the state of submersion to prevent thoughts of emancipation, revolt, and justice… All we are thinking about is that we are oppressed and how we want to oppress others". (Campbell, 2010). Freire challenges the banking concept by describing an approach of empowerment and liberation. This approach is described as a problem-posing approach that focuses on critical reflection of oppression by "turning toward the subject's place in the world... and going through the transformative struggle to exclaim that my role will not be prescribed by the world" (Campbell, 2010).

Empowerment is the process in which one operationalizes becoming liberated from oppression. Freire describes this liberation process as the ability to recognize one's oppressive state, the transformative process of struggling through the oppressive forces to eventually gain freedom from oppression, and re-establishing one's humanity. Freire explains that oppressed groups must struggle to transform the situation of oppression. This transformation is described as going from the act of being submerged under oppressive forces to recognizing that one is submerged. However, Freire explains that this struggle cannot be accomplished through dehumanizing others or attempting to become the oppressor but by liberating both the oppressed and the oppressor (Campbell, 2010). The first step of liberation from oppressive forces is a recognition of oppression.

The concepts of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* have been operationalized as empowerment theory through feminist research that aims to "increase the personal, interpersonal, and political power of oppressed and marginalized populations for individual and collective transformation" (Lee, 2001). Empowerment theory acknowledges that many social problems

exist due to oppressive forces that contribute to the unequal distribution of and access to resources (Zimmerman, 2000). Carr (2003) conceptualizes a non-linear three-stage process of empowerment: increasing self-efficacy, developing critical consciousness which includes the development of skills and actions, and building social networks with individuals who share similar goals.

Empowerment theory fits as a suitable framework for the current study because of the emphasis on "considering both the structural context and social processes which operate to give residents the power and capability to make a positive change in their community" (Heinze et al., 2016, p. 168). A theoretical empowerment framework fits for highly marginalized men who come from communities that have been impacted by displaced housing, closed schools, and investment in crime control strategies. Zimmerman (2000) explains that there are multiple levels of analysis that need to be explored to understand the steps and outcomes of empowerment. The levels of analysis include an individual, community and organizational empowerment. Zimmerman (2000) describes the individual level of empowerment as psychological empowerment which includes feelings about one's self-control, efficacy, and competence to actively participate in decision making to make one's lives closer to the desired ideal. Organizational empowerment theory explains how organizations provide opportunities for involvement, decision making, leadership and support systems to make organizations closer to their ideal (Zimmerman, 2000, Zimmerman et al., 2017). Community empowerment focuses on community-based partnerships that are created with the aim of problem-solving and decision-making to achieve a community-based ideal. Empowerment is an iterative process that connects these different levels within the social ecology of a community.

This study aims to describe how Cure Violence outreach workers and high-risk males navigate the oppressive structural forces in their community. This study examines how Cure Violence outreach workers and high-risk males have played the role of sub-oppressors in their community at one point in their lives. This study describes the processes involved in desisting from a life of crime that facilitated them to become Cure Violence outreach workers and how outreach workers use this shared experience as sub-oppressors to connect with high-risk males. Finally, this study aims to describe the processes involved in the outreach workers' desistance and "struggle of transformation" (Freire, 1970) from their previous involvement in the community as a sub-oppressor. This study describes how the Cure Violence outreach workers used this shared identity as experienced "sub-oppressors" to empower high-risk males to transform towards a future "possible self" (Nurmi, 1991; Markus & Nurius, 1986). This study specifically examines how Cure Violence street outreach workers empower the highest-risk males in communities with high rates of community violence using the psychological dimensions of empowerment (Zimmerman et al., 2017): interpersonal (feeling self-control, efficacy, and competency), interactional (connecting to others and resources), and behavioral (strengthening the community). Highlighting an often-quoted statement by high-risk males, *"The things I do, they did,"* this study uses psychological empowerment theory to help provide clues to this study's intellectual puzzle. The quote "The things I do, they did", is essential to explaining how a shared identity is critical for the Cure Violence street outreach workers to establish their presence, connect high-risk males to pro-social resources, get these men to feel that responding non-violently to conflict is a viable option, as well as getting them to participate in the larger community through non-violent mobilization actively.

III. METHODS

This section describes this study's design. It begins with a description of the paradigm that guides this study's inquiry of the contextual factors that inform this dissertation's intellectual puzzle. This chapter then describes the study's setting, how the sample was accessed, the process of data collection and analysis, and the steps taken to ensure study rigor.

A.   Paradigmatic Approach

Lincoln and Guba (1994, p.116) suggest that "no inquirer should go about the business of inquiry without being clear which paradigm informs and guides their approach." Paradigms in the human and social sciences help us understand phenomena (Creswell, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1985) define a paradigm as a philosophical stance that provides a basic set of beliefs that guide action. Qualitative paradigms traditionally have been defined as constructionist – emphasizing that meaning is socially constructed by the informant (Lincoln and Guba, 1995) as well as interpretivist, interpreting meaning of a "social or human problem by building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a naturalistic setting" (Creswell, 1994, p.2). Charmaz (2014) highlights how "luminous" social science research relied heavily on constructivist and interpretivist paradigms between the World War I era through the early 1960s until quantitative methods established their dominance.

Quantitative methods are guided by a completely different paradigmatic approach than qualitative methods. Traditionally quantitative paradigms have been described as positivist, experimental, or rationalist which implies that to understand a phenomenon the research should maintain objectivity (Creswell, 1994). For example, the positivist paradigm operates on the assumptions that knowledge is free of interest or values, whereas interpretivism assumes that human intentions, beliefs, and observations cannot be pure without weaving in the researchers'

interest and values (Mason, 2002). Morgan (2007) argues for considering an alternative

paradigm that is flexible enough to understand that reality can have multiple interpretations.

Morgan defines this paradigmatic approach as pragmatism:

> I do not believe it is possible for research results to be either so unique that they have no implications whatsoever for other actors in other settings or so generalized that they apply in every possible historical and cultural setting. From a pragmatic approach, an important question is the extent to which we can take the things that we learn with one type of method in one specific setting and make the most appropriate use of that knowledge in other circumstances. (Morgan, 2007 p.72)

Charmaz (2004) validates this pragmatic approach by stating, "there are multiple ways to

go about understanding social reality" (p. 13). Although this study does not aim to use mixed-

methods, this study aims to illuminate findings of a quantitative study that demonstrated a

31.4% reduction in homicides and 18.6% decrease in shootings across two police districts

(Henry, Knoblauch, & Sigurvinsdottir 2014) after Cure Violence was implemented in the

Woodlawn and North Lawndale communities. Using a pragmatic approach, this current study

aims to take what we learned from the quantitative study to provide additional insight and

context into "how" the outreach workers and high-risk males may have helped contribute to

these reductions. This study specifically aims to provide further insight into how the Cure

Violence outreach workers and high-risk men construct the way they see the world around them,

and how men who are at high-risk for violence victimization and perpetration can be empowered

to respond to conflict in non-violent ways and connect to their community in constructive ways.

B.   **<u>Intellectual Puzzle</u>**

This study is driven by an intellectual puzzle seeking to understand how Cure Violence

outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to

positively re-connect to their community. This study incorporated the following four research

questions using qualitative methods to help inform the phenomenon of interest and to make small contributions to this complex puzzle possibly:

1. How do high-risk males describe the social context that causes conflict to become violent?

2. How connected are high-risk males to street outreach workers and the pro-social opportunities they provide?

3. How do high-risk males describe their feelings of control, competence, and efficacy to respond to conflict in non-violent ways?

4. How do the outreach workers get high-risk clients to behave in pro-social ways and actively participate in the community in non-violent ways?

C.   Setting

The subjects of the current study were accessed within two police beats for each community. There are 279 beats across 25 police districts in Chicago. On average there are approximately 10,000 residents in each police beat. The 3rd and 10th police districts designated high violent areas: 0312 and 0313 in Woodlawn, and 1011 and 1021 in North Lawndale.

Consequently, the Chicago Department of Public Health funded Cure Violence to deliver its program in these beats. Therefore, the interview subjects for this study (i.e., the high-risk male participants) lived either in police beats 0312 or 0313 in the 3rd police district within the south side Woodlawn community or within police beats 1011 or 1021 in the 10th police district in the west side North Lawndale neighborhood. Cure Violence outreach workers either currently work in the same communities or at one time did work in these communities.

D.   **Participants**

1.   **High-Risk Males**

Males had to be between 18-35 years of age, lived in the community for at least one year, and defined as high risk by meeting one of the following categories: high school dropout, working in the underground economy, been arrested for drug or gun possession, and connected with a street gang. There are two types of high-risk males interviewed: the client and the non-client.

a.   **Clients**

Butts et al., (2015) describes Cure Violence clients as participants recruited to participate in the Cure Violence program who meet at least four of the seven criteria described above.

b.   **Non-Clients**

Non-clients are simply men who meet the same criteria as clients but were not engaged to be on the Cure Violence caseload. For the current study, the age range for eligible non-clients was expanded from 18 to 35 years of age. Also, non-clients needed to live in the community for at least one year before the date of the interview.

2.   **Outreach Workers**

The street outreach workers' responsibility is to carry a caseload of 10-15 clients with the aim of transforming the lives of these individuals from street-involved youth to positive contributors to their communities. Street outreach works have three roles: case managers, conflict mediators, and client mentors. The street outreach workers accomplish their job duties through consistent street-level contact and one-on-one meetings. Outreach workers in this study must be at least 18 years old and either currently work as a Cure Violence Outreach worker or

spent time in the past employed as a Cure Violence Outreach Worker. Since the interviewer is an English only speaker, the participants' primary language must be English.

E.   Recruitment Procedures

1.   High-Risk Males

High-risk individuals were referred by Cure Violence outreach workers assigned to the designated police beats within the Woodlawn and North Lawndale community. To identify high-risk individuals who were not Cure Violence clients, we employed a combination of two recruitment methods. First, referrals were made from Cure Violence outreach workers. Because of their relationship with Cure Violence clients and presence in the neighborhood, outreach workers know many of the high-risk individuals they have not yet engaged. Second, we used a snowball sampling method in which potential participants were also solicited from high-risk Cure Violence clients.

2.   Outreach Workers

The interviewer used existing contacts (e.g., telephone numbers and emails) obtained to recruit street outreach workers from North Lawndale, Woodlawn, South Shore, and Englewood for participation. This study aims to widen the sample of outreach workers by recruiting a female outreach worker and a younger outreach worker. South Shore was selected because of the ease to contact a female outreach worker. The ages of the North Lawndale, Woodlawn, and South Shore outreach workers were in their mid-forties. The Englewood outreach worker was selected because he was younger (26 years old). Each outreach worker was contacted separately and asked to complete a one-time interview that would last approximately 90 minutes. Each outreach worker expressed interest and at the time of the interview, the interviewer obtained informed consent and conducted an interview.

F.   <u>**Data Collection**</u>

The interviewees consented to participate in a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is a good approach to take when one seeks to gain more depth from the participant (Bernard, 1994; Spradley, 1979). The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to probe more for clarity, meaning, and understanding while allowing the participant to speak freely without the constraints of a structured interview. Also, semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility of serendipitous and fortuitous findings that would not be gained from a structured format. Finally, the semi-structured interview has the flexibility of unstructured interviewing, while still enabling the researcher to guide conversation which is particularly helpful due to concerns about time and cost (Bernard, 1994). This study used semi-structured interviews to provide insight into this study's intellectual puzzle: how do Cure Violence outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violence responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their community? All interviews generally lasted between one hour and 90 minutes.

An interview guide served as the main data collection tool to assist the investigator. This guide provided general topics for discussion, along with specific questions and probes that were used to create a semi-structured conversation with the subject. The guide was useful in that it allowed the interviews to maintain focus on topics of interest that were similar across all interviews while also providing flexibility in question order and the use of probes that differed across interviews.

1.   <u>**High-Risk Males**</u>

One semi-structured interview (Appendix A) was conducted with each of the 40 high-risk youth participants. The interview began with questions about the positive and negative qualities of their neighborhood, neighborhood resources, safety, experiences with conflict in their

neighborhood, and a description of programs that exist to address neighborhood violence. For those interviewees that mentioned Cure Violence as a resource to address violence, additional probes were asked about the impact of Cure Violence on neighborhood violence as well as how Cure Violence has impacted their behaviors, attitudes, and social norms about violence. As compensation for the time required for participating in the interview, all subjects were provided with $40 for the completion of one interview. Each interview lasted about an hour.

2. Outreach Workers

One semi-structured interview (Appendix B) was conducted with each of the four selected outreach workers. The interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes and took place at a location convenient for the outreach worker. The interview began with questions exploring their motivation to be an outreach worker and to work in their target communities. The remainder of the interview focused on understanding the strategies outreach workers use to build relationships and trust with high-risk men and community residents, and descriptions of how they connected the men to additional resources. As compensation for the time required for participating in the interview, the outreach workers were provided with $100 for the completion of one interview.

G. Data Analysis Plan

"In organizing data for analysis, the idea is to turn the raw data into a beautiful data rainbow, with predetermined categories or emergent themes as distinct as the colors of the spectrum fitting into an overarching structure that makes sense given the research problem. Few projects fit this ideal, however, and categories more commonly resemble a game of pick-up sticks. Themes are identified like the colors of the sticks but need to be picked carefully from the pile during the analysis process" (Given and Hope, 2003, p.2).

A common criticism of qualitative data analysis is the lack of exemplars documenting the steps that led to the analyst findings and interpretations (Anfara, 2002, Carey, Morgan, & Oxtoby, 1996; Dillaway, 2006). Malterud (2001, p.486) warns that "declaring that qualitative analysis was done, or stating that categories emerged when one or more persons had read the

material, is not sufficient to explain how and why patterns were noticed". A recent shift towards a pragmatic paradigm suggests that freedom of creativity should not have to be sacrificed due to documenting steps that help inform readers how investigators came to their conclusions (Morgan, 2007). Qualitative data analysis essentially has two overarching aims: finding the story and telling the story (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Charmaz (2014) warns that often qualitative researchers "treat their analyses as accurate renderings of the subject's social world rather than as constructions of them" p.14.

The current study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach to inductively reduce large chunks of data to construct a conceptual framework based on organizing what was heard from the stories shared by outreach workers and high-risk males. Charmaz (2014) uses the term, "constructivist" to emphasize the researcher subjectivity involved in interpreting the data to come up with a "big picture of what is going on by reducing the data down to its essential features" (Richards, 2005, p. 132). This study aims to use analysis to take data from 44 interviews to create a conceptual framework that is grounded in stories shared about how Cure Violence engages and empower men from low-income settings who are at high-risk violent victimization and perpetration.

Charmaz (2014) explains that there are some distinctions in grounded theory analysis. The first distinction understands that "data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in an iterative process" (Charmaz, 2014 p. 15).   The current study collected interview data, transcribed interview data, and then analyzed individual interview data before each subsequent interview when possible. There were some instances when the availability of research subjects was prioritized over immediate analysis. However, standard practice was to attempt to schedule interviews with enough time to analyze interview data. This study used Atlas. Ti, a computer-

assisted qualitative data analysis software, as a platform to achieve the objectives of the data analysis plan. Atlas.ti does not analyze data; rather it is a storage and retrieval program that facilitates documenting the process of "noticing, collecting, and thinking" about the data (Friese, 2012). The analysis consisted of two levels: descriptive and conceptual level. The descriptive level began with listening and reading through the data. The conceptual level of analysis consisted of further steps in the analysis to generate meaningful patterns from the data to help build theory or a conceptual framework that helped provide insight into this study's intellectual puzzle and research questions.

1. **Descriptive Analysis**

The descriptive level began with the immersion in the conversations of the participants through listening and reading the interview data. Immersing oneself in the data allows the researcher to look for actions and processes captured in the data. The actions and processes are other tools used in constructive grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). Coding facilitated noticing and thinking about actions and processes in the data (Friese, 2012). Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs complied in the qualitative data (Seidel, 1998). MacQueen, McLellan, Kelly, & Milstein (1998, p.119) explain that "codes are the building blocks for theory or conceptual model building and the foundation on which the analyst's arguments rest". Coding involves "organizing data into categories related to the framework and research questions so that they can be used to support analysis and interpretation" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p.45). The current study aimed to construct a conceptual framework to help answer the intellectual puzzle, "How do Cure Violence outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their community?"

While constructing this framework, the current study utilized the interviewees' voice. In-vivo codes, a grounded theory tool, is the best approach to capture voice, action, and ideas at the beginning of coding (Friese, 2012). Through in-vivo coding, "the researchers create codes directly from the data in the language the subjects use themselves" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 343). Friese (2012, p.73) states that "it does not make much sense to collect a large list of in-vivo codes without developing them further." The next step in the analysis involved developing the list of in-vivo codes by creating an index code list which categorizes in-vivo codes into an operational list of codes. Charmaz (2014) describes this phase of coding as focused coding where the analyst organizes the in-vivo codes into a reduced list of codes. This stage of coding involved creating a code list, operational definitions for each code, and coding each interview using the existing code list until exhaustion. A priori codes were not used as a strategy to stay closely connected to the language the interview participants used. The next stage of coding involved validating the usefulness of the code list by checking the reliability of the codes. After generating a list of codes, a two-member data analysis team: the author (FCG), and a graduate student (SB) developed a codebook structure that included guidelines for when and when not to use the code (MacQueen et al., 1998). The data coding procedure for the descriptive analysis plan was based on structural coding defined as segmenting rules for when to apply codes (MacQueen et al., 1998). The segmenting rules for coding were to begin coding with the interviewer's question through the end of the participants' response. The start of the next segment of coding began when the interviewer asked another question. This process is also known as an inductive approach to coding.

To evaluate the reliability of the codes, coder agreement statistics were calculated by reviewing the interview data using two coders. This procedure involved a coder A, the author

(FCG), and coder B, a graduate student (SB) using the same codebook and segmenting structure. As a team, the two coders reviewed a random selection of four high-risk males' interviews and a purposive sample of two outreach worker interviews. Inter-coder reliability was established by using Carey et al. (1996) reliability techniques as a guide. Carey et al. (1996) method involved using a 2 x 2 table that consists of cells that highlight the presence or absence of the code. This table consists of two agreement cells and two disagreement cells. The upper left cell consists of space for the coder to indicate the number of times coder A and coder B tagged the code and the lower right cell provides space to indicate where the coders did not assign the code to a response. The two disagreement cells indicated the number of times a code was not tagged by either coder A or coder B. The use of the kappa statistic was used to correct for the chance occurrence. A Kappa statistic of .8 was used to focus attention on the codes with the poorest agreement (Carey et al., 1996). Once this level of agreement was reached for the key codes, the data analysis team also went through the entire first interview to discuss any discrepancy. As a result, code definitions were refined for codes with a high level of disagreement. The process of going through the entire interview transcript helped increase the understanding of how codes should be applied to the text.

After the laborious process of checking the reliability of the codebook for each type of interview (high-risk male and outreach worker), the data analysis team coded the remaining three high-risk male interviews and additional street-outreach worker interviews. While coding the remaining interviews as a team, all comments about the codes were documented by creating a data-coding memo, titled Code memo. The process was particularly helpful when new ideas for codes emerged. Writing memos is a useful tool to use comment on the data without coding the data. This strategy helps strengthen the validity by using a team-based approach to determine the

eligibility of new codes and how the codes were defined. During multiple meetings, the data

analysis team met to review each code memo to decide if suggested codes would be added into

the existing codebook. The current study also utilized writing memos in varied ways. Strauss

(1988) defines writing memos as annotating distinctions and comparisons related to the data

which may be tied to the intellectual puzzle, hypothesis, concepts and the linkages that exist

between discovered concepts which served as a tool to generate theory. Peacock and Paul-Ward

(2006) refer to analytic memos, which reflect notes that could be used later for interpretation. In

addition to code memos, the current study created specific type of memos: data collection

memos that address comments or concerns I had that dealt specifically with the process of

collecting data; data analysis memos which are thoughts about data patterns and relationships as

well as comments regarding query searches in the data that served as a tool for creating a

conceptual framework; and, personal memos, comments that capture my reflections about

anything related to the data collection, data analysis, or extant literature.

2.   <u>Conceptual Analysis</u>

Friese (2012) explains that although coding is a necessary step for noticing what

is in the data, the process of thinking about the data requires some further steps in the analysis to

generate patterns from the data. Therefore, the next step, after coding, involved a conceptual

level which primarily involves looking for patterns in the data. One strategy to discover patterns

was to examine code frequency. This study used Atlas.ti's Grounded function to determine code

frequency. Each time a code was applied to a piece of the interview text, this code was

considered grounded. Miles and Hubberman (1994) recommend that counting helps when

making a judgment on the quality of what is being said in the data as well whether a theme or

pattern is developing. However, Dillaway, Lysack, & Luborsky (2006) warn that qualitative

researchers easily could reduce participants' words to numbers; ultimately they must preserve the data in its original context so that the readers can see or experience for themselves as much of the participants' world as possible.

The next step in the conceptual level of analysis involved Glaser and Strauss' (1969) constant comparison method in grounded theory. The rule for the "constant comparative method" is that, while coding an incident, the researcher should compare it with all previous incidents so coded, a process that soon starts to generate theoretical properties of the category (Glaser and Strass, 1969 p. 106). This process is iterative and occurs throughout analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Strauss and Corbin (1998) in a development of this approach, referred to the first step in the process as "open coding," through which the researcher constantly compares codes with one another to decide which belong together. The analysis plan for the current study focused on the most frequently "grounded" codes and used a query tool function in Atlas.ti to explore how often these most frequent codes co-occurred with other codes.

The next step is to group the codes according to conceptual categories that reflect commonalities among codes. Strauss and Corbin refer to this as "axial coding," reflecting the idea of clustering the open codes around common themes or points of intersection. In Atlas. Ti axial coding is done by creating code and memo families. This step allowed the analyst to filter through the data examining themes related to the following aspects of empowerment: connecting, feeling, and doing. This process of examining common themes began the process of constructing an understanding of how Cure Violence outreach workers empower men at the highest risk for violence. This process could also help with building new codes or abstract analytic categories (Charmaz, 2014).

This study also used another step within the conceptual level of analysis described as selective coding by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Selective coding examines how codes relate to each other. In other words, through an inductive data reduction process, examining how the codes and the relationships they have with each other help provide a story on what is going on with the data. To put it simply, "What stories do the codes tell?" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.145) describe "the analyst constructs a set of relational statements that can be used to explain, in a general sense, what is going on." It is through this relationship that the researcher begins to build theory or a conceptual framework that provides, as Strauss and Corbin state an "overarching theoretical scheme" or "central category" (p. 156). The current study used two tools in Atlas.ti to help facilitate this process: Networks and Relations. A network is a way to map the data visually. Through the Network Editor, the analyst can import codes, code families, and memos to visually enhance an understanding of how Cure Violence outreach workers help empower the high-risk men.

The next question this analysis explored was how the codes relate to each other by using the relations feature in Atlas.ti. This was the final stage of data analysis used to provide insight into the study's intellectual puzzle.

H. **On interpretation: Telling the Story**

Glesne & Pershkin (1992, p.153) argue that "qualitative researchers are interpreters who draw on their own experiences, knowledge, theoretical dispositions, and collected data to present their understanding of the other's world." Dillaway et al. (2006) caution to make distinctions between, qualitative results and qualitative interpretation. Dillaway et al. explain that results are simply outputs from the data processing, but they have no inherent meaning or value.

Dillaway et al. provide the following suggestions that guided the current study when attempting to interpret results: "How credible are the data? How do the results add new knowledge by contradicting, confirming, or contributing to knowledge or new knowledge? Can the results be weaved into contemporary theories related to the research topic? Can you connect the analysis to a substantive or controversial issue?" Malterud (2001, p.486) reminds readers that "the findings from a qualitative study are not thought of as facts that apply to the population at large, but rather as descriptions, notions, or theories applicable within a specified setting." Miles and Hubberman (1992) caution that these descriptions and theories must be deemed plausible by others, and must be verifiable by others. The next section will highlight some additional steps that were taken to establish rigor in the qualitative data analysis process.

I.   Establishing Rigor

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that issues related to reliability and validity should be addressed in areas of confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility. Peacock and Paul-Ward (2006) explain that reliability in qualitative research can be established through mapping out of an audit trail, which is comparable to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notion of confirmability. Peacock and Paul-Ward also suggest that the rigor of qualitative research can be bolstered by the use of an audit trail especially because of the iterative style of qualitative data collection. Some internal methods to establish rigor included writing memos to guide code development, operationalizing code definitions with exclusion and inclusion criteria as well as segmenting rules on tagging codes, pretesting codes and using multiple coders to achieve a moderate level of inter-rater reliability.

The findings from this study are constructed to reflect the stories shared just for the individuals interviewed. This section explains the steps involved to establish that the story

constructed was plausible and credible (Dillaway et al., 2006). The first step to establish rigor

was through inter-rater coding. This process involved using a trained graduate student to co-code

a random sample of a quarter of the interviews: 10 high-risk males and two outreach worker

interviews. The coding process used the words of the interviewees, defined as in-vivo codes, to

establish the initial code list. The use of in-vivo codes helped operationalize the codes because

the meanings of the codes left little room for interpretation because they were based on the

interviewee's terminology. The coding process also utilized segmenting rules to establish how

codes would be applied throughout the interviews. Finally, to evaluate the reliability of the

codes, coder agreement statistics were calculated by reviewing a random selection of four high-

risk male interviews, and two outreach worker interviews. Kappa statistics were used to focus on

the codes with the poorest agreement. The codes were kappas below .8 were discussed as a team

and re-coded. The next step would be to review the axial coding process in which code relations

and networks were created to determine if the relations were plausible (see Figures 2-5).

Plausibility was established by providing multiple quotes from different interviewees to justify

the use of a code-code relation. The final step for establishing rigor involved member checking.

Member checking involved sharing the findings with outreach workers and former outreach

workers to establish if the construction of the findings using Psychological Empowerment theory

was plausible to them.

      An external way to establish rigor of the study findings is through member checking,

defined by contacting participants to share the researcher's construction of their interpretations to

get feedback from the research participants. Duneier's *Sidewalk* (1999), an ethnography about

his observations and participant observation with street vendors, provides an exemplar of

member checking. Duneier gave his manuscript to Hakim Hasan (his key informant and agent of

entrée into his research setting), to read for credibility. Hakim provided his interpretations in the Afterword of Duneier's published book. Using this strategy, Duneier (1999) allowed the research subject an opportunity to notify the researcher whether his interpretation was credible and plausible. The current study conducted member checking sessions with the outreach workers by obtaining consent to re-contact them for a brief session to share findings and investigator interpretations of the data. To protect the high-risk sample's rights as research subjects, no further contact information was collected once the interview was completed.

The final step taken to establish rigor was to consider the limitations of the study. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) warn that interpretive portrayal is often only several snapshots of a place and time and its people. Glesne and Peshkin further explain that researchers should also understand that subjects often only provide what they believe researchers want to hear. Therefore, it is important to discuss the limitations of the study. These limitations can come from the researcher as well as the subject. As Glesne & Peshkin (1986) explain, it is important to be sensitive to one's biases and subjectivity when interpreting the data. Some strategies that Glesne & Peshkin suggest include asking the following questions: Whom do I not see? Whom have I seen less often? Where do I not go? Where have I gone less often? With whom do I have special relationships, and in what light would they interpret phenomena? What data collection means have I not used that could provide additional insight?" Glesne & Peshkin (1992). The current study provided some responses to these questions when documenting the study's limitations.

J.   Research Ethics

Through two research protocols, the current study received approval to research while protecting the research subject's rights and confidentiality. Written consent was obtained immediately before beginning the interviews. To assure that the potential participants fully

understood the consenting process, the interviewer gave a copy of the consent form to the respondent to read while the interviewer read a second copy of the consent form out loud. The interviewer paused between each section of the consent to ask if the subjects had any questions. Once the questions were answered, the interviewer verified the subject's understanding by reviewing the purpose of the interview, re-stating that the interview would be audio-taped, their right to withdraw, stating that the data will be maintained confidentially, and re-stating that participants have the option to refuse participation before or during the interview.

Before conducting the interviews with high-risk males, the interviewer/investigator, assigned each interviewee a pseudonym. During the interview, the respondent was reminded not to provide any identifying names. Also, all names used during the interview were assigned pseudonyms and the results of this study were reported using pseudonyms.

The role of outreach worker presented a special level of sensitivity because the individuals represent a small sample of a specialized group that can be easier to identify even with pseudonyms. This phenomenon is known as deductive disclosure (Kaiser, 2009). To minimize this risk, the consenting process for the outreach workers instituted additional steps to engage the outreach worker concerning how their data will be used. This consenting process included a post-interview section that gave the outreach worker an opportunity to provide additional information on how their data can be shared. The interviewer verified the outreach workers understanding that it is possible that they could be identified even with pseudonyms. The interviewer provided the following options for the outreach worker to choose during the post-interview consent:

1. Sharing the information just as provided with the understanding of the risk of being identified even though no identifiers such as names will be used. All the interviewees chose this option.

2. Sharing the information provided but changing specific details that might make the outreach worker identifiable to others. With this option, the interviewer asked them to mention parts of the interview they would like changed. The interviewees did not choose this option.

3. Sharing that the outreach worker understands that regardless of their preference, the content from their interviews may not appear in the results or discussion section of this dissertation.

IV. RESULTS

This chapter describes the process of "finding the story" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) to help solve the intellectual puzzle: how Cure Violence outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their community. This study highlights the stories from 40 high-risk participants and four outreach workers on how Cure Violence was able to engage and empower high-risk youth to make behavioral changes in how they respond to conflict, using qualitative data analyses. This section seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do high-risk males describe the social context that causes conflict to become violent?

2. How connected are high-risk males to street outreach workers and the pro-social opportunities they provide?

3. How do high-risk males describe their feelings of control, competence, and efficacy to respond to conflict in non-violent ways?

4. How do the outreach workers get high-risk clients to behave in pro-social ways and actively participate in the community in non-violent ways?

In addressing the research questions, this chapter highlights findings on the neighborhood context, which included what aspects of the neighborhood high-risk males find to be positive and negative. The findings described what events cause conflict to turn violent, how outreach workers connect with the men at the highest risk for violence to consider non-violent responses to conflict, and how these men connect with outreach workers' violence prevention efforts.

This study provided a network of codes and quotes across multiple interviewees that describe the origins of conflict and the factors that precipitate a violent event, the contexts in

which street outreach workers were able to build connections, and how high-risk males were able to feel self-control, competence, and efficacy to respond to conflict in non-violent ways.

Next, the findings will describe the outreach workers past histories in which they were primarily responsible for crime, violence, and trauma in their communities. Although the outreach workers used the criminal personas related to their previous criminal activity to engage high-risk youth, their personas weren't remembered as solely negative. The outreach workers also possessed positive qualities that make their roles more complex than simply being an ex-gang member or a previous offender in the community. It is the mix of these experiences of outreach workers that enable them to connect with high-risk youth and get them to take small steps toward pro-social behavior change. The results generated from the qualitative data analysis helped uncover patterns which can be used to inform how Cure Violence outreach workers can empower high-risk men to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to reconnect to their community positively.

A.   The Context behind the Conflict

This section highlights findings that help answer the following research question, "*How do high-risk males describe the social context that causes conflict to become violent*?" The interviews for both the street outreach workers, as well as the high-risk males, began with an inquiry into their experiences growing up in their neighborhoods. The opening questions of the interview probed about the positive and negative qualities of their neighborhoods (see Appendices A and B for the high-risk and outreach worker's respective interview guides). The most frequent reference to positive qualities about the neighborhood was related to positive bonds, especially when they were elementary-aged children. These social connections within the neighborhood included close ties with family and friends in the neighborhood. Many of the high-

risk males shared stories about how much fun they had in the neighborhood when they were younger. Creating codes using the interviewee's language ("in-vivo codes") captured the close social connections. Overall 26 different interviewees described these close social connections they had with other community residents when they were younger. The following quotes from five different high-risk youth were used as in-vivo codes reflecting a connection to the community:

1. *"We have known each other since birth."*
2. *"We were all homies."*
3. *"We grew up together as buddies."*
4. *"We went to school together; we were friends."*
5. *"We hung out as kids."*

The common theme for in-vivo codes listed above was the positive social connections that existed for many of the interviewees. These in-vivo codes were developed into an operational code called "*Early Social Connections_positive*" about the relationships they explained when describing positive aspects of their community. However, as they aged many of the interviewees explained that friends could become enemies simply because of where they lived. Nearly 50% of the 40 high-risk participants described scenarios of how their social connections could easily erode based on where someone lives. Young men familiar with each other could easily find themselves, enemies, as they age. Two Woodlawn Cure Violence clients provided quotes that best capture this phenomenon:

> *"We all grew up together, I have been knowing you since we were little, but once I got older and I move, you might live over here were the Moes (a gang) at, and I might live over here where the GDs (a gang) be at. I start hangin' with the GDs, and you start hangin' with the Moes, and when we finally bump heads, I'm gonna be like, "Man you an op" (an opposition). –*Woodlawn client # 4.

> *Just 'cuz we went to the same grammar school, that don't protect me from getting shot by you. I've known you since the third grade…but once we turned 14, 15, and we start picking up guns, and you started picking your sides you want to be with, it was just that. You had to pick your side once you grew up. Once you pick, there's no turning back.*

Once you enter that battlefield, it's no turning back, especially if you went and did something (shoot at or shot somebody) and somebody know you do something, so really there ain't no turning back after that unless you're moving out of town – Woodlawn client #7

The above quote provides an example of the understanding high-risk youth have about how the positive aspects of their community turn negative as they get older. Although many of the youth described violent incidents in their community, few could describe the source of conflict that led to the incident. In many cases, high-risk males expressed frustration that their neighborhood peers were often unclear on the source of the conflict. However, that knowledge did not reduce their involvement in destructive and violent behavior. Some examples were described by the following phrases captured as in-vivo codes:

1. *People don't know what they in to for*
2. *Folks dying and don't even know for what*
3. *Community warring and don't know why*
4. *They hurtin cause they loss*
5. *People beefin and don't know why*
6. *Folks dying everywhere but can't tell you why folks are into it*

One street outreach workers echoed this perspective: many high-risk youths were unaware of the source of conflict, but due to pride allowed the conflict to persist:

"You gotta look at people who just start shit, and when it's on for real, who's really there? This shit's going on cuz of you. Where the fuck you at? The guy who started it, he probably out of town now, out of town enjoying his life. This shit's still going on here, and a lot of people, they don't be tryin' to look like a bitch-ass nigga or a coward, so they let the shit still go on". - Englewood Outreach Worker

The following quote from a Woodlawn client #6 also highlights this perspective *"you got some people that be just dying out here in the streets but don't know what they are dying for. They basically just givin' up they life, but they don't even notice it."* The following code, Conflict source unknown, was also tagged as one of the most frequent operational codes related to one of the interview guide transition questions probing about the source of conflict. Although

the source of conflict was often unknown, nearly half of the participants used the phrase, "death

or jail" to describe the eventual outcome from not only conflict but also spending time in the

streets of their communities. The following quote best describes this experience:

> "A lot of people gettin' killed. A lot of people—or somebody locked up. That's nine times out of ten. That's the way things are goin' now. Dead or jailed". - North Lawndale Nonclient #2.

All of the outreach workers and eighty-percent of the high-risk youth interviewed

mentioned losing family members, close friends, and mentors to violent death., Half of the

interviewees mentioned losing multiple friends and in some cases, losing these friends in

incidents that happened fairly close in time and geographical space. This theme is highlighted

below by a non-client in the Woodlawn community who was personally victimized, and also

experienced several instances of loss in a four-block area within a year and a half:

> "I had bad times. When I was 17 years old, I got shot right here on 62nd and Rhodes; then my friend got killed, down here on 62nd and Langley. A friend got shot on 62nd and St. Lawrence. My cousin just got killed right down the street on 62ND and Eberhart. My little brother got shot, right on the next block that I was shot on 62nd and Vernon, he was like 13 or 14 at the time. Then got shot again on 63rd and King Drive. There's just been a lot of bad times". – Woodlawn Nonclient #9

The outreach workers made many references to a conflict persisting because of feeling

hurt or experiencing the emotional pain related to the death or victimization of a close friend. In

addition to examining frequency to determine how often feeling hurt or emotional pain was

referenced, the current study examined how often the code emotional pain co-occurred with

conflict. Using a query function in Atlas.ti to search for the co-occurrence of the codes

emotional pain and conflict, 17 statements from different high-risk males as well as two outreach

workers were found that describe how conflict persists because of emotional pain. The quotes

below not only highlight the co-occurrence of emotional pain with conflict, but they also provide

some insight into how emotional pain contributes to the persistence of conflict and violence in

the community:

> *"People still hurt off their peoples dying, trying to get back and don't never want to let up, they don't got nothing to live for"*- Woodlawn client #7

> *"I feel like when somebody get killed it's so hard to end it now because everybody is in their feelings now. You feel me? There's some, like a lot of people looking back at shit, like, man that shit could've been avoided, but shit, it's ten years later now. I done lost eight, nine of my guys. Folks I know locked up for murders, 55 years, 70 years. They're never coming home. Was it worth it?"*- Englewood Outreach Worker**.**

> *"I know they don't even understand why, but they—a lot of 'em they just angry. Then, anger fueled by drugs and alcohol. That's disastrous".*- North Lawndale Non Client #3

> *"People have so much built up anger and frustration of not havin' and losin' family members and loved ones. They begin to walk around just not caring about anything, mainly themselves. That affects their decision makin'...They turn to alcohol and drugs and all these things to cope and deal with all the pain and the pressures of life."*- Woodlawn nonclient #2

The pain associated with violence victimization is part of the story behind the

development of street-level cliques. The victimization and loss typically transfer into the spread

of street-level cliques, which leads to the persistence of conflict as a way to deal with the trauma

of loss. Fourteen high-risk males, as well as all the interviewed outreach workers, described

creating cliques as one way to honor dead members of their intimate social network. These

interviewees provided descriptions of how these cliques are developed and how they contributed

to the ongoing conflict. Below is one of an example of this phenomenon:

> *"A clique is like, all right, like if my friend, Victor who was killed by the gas station on 63rd. He died, so you call Victorville on that. That's a clique. Then you got somebody else died from another set that you got like say, Tommy. That's somebody dead that gets a name as Tommyville. Yeah, like that. That's a clique."* – Woodlawn Client #1.

> *Interviewee: "Cliques. It's about a clique now, a block. 'Cuz everybody want to be somebody. They don't care about the GD or the Stones or the BD no more. They don't care about that or you no more...so you gotta lose your life to be somebody."*- Woodlawn Client # 4

Interviewer: Right. Do you get a clique named after you after you die or something like that?

Interviewee: "*That's it. That's all you get. A couple of shirts and somebody to keep sending, they put it on you all day long. You ain't even resting in peace. I'm just saying. If somebody keep—I put it on you all day long. All day long though? All for what? That man dead, so I'm gonna keep puttin' him in that. He ain't resting in peace.*"- Woodlawn Client #4

As previously explained, location plays a role in how divisions are created in the community as youth get older. Conflict plays a role in solidifying these divisions through social connections based on where you live. Individuals within their social network are typically drawn into a conflict because of them living on the same block. Below is an example of how conflict over a dating partner led to the creation of cliques and a result of conflict; eventually someone is victimized, in the case below, killed. A minor conflict over a dating partner between two friends has now contributed to the sustained violent rivalry:

> "*...okay, if I'm from down the street and you from down the street, me and you could be cool today, but then it could be one female that if you hitting on that, and I'm hitting on em too, that's gonna draw that tension between me and you. Now we into it and that just started me in your block...I got my main fuel who I'm homies with, and you got your main fuel. Boom there goes two cliques...now why you all into it in the process there go a body. Boom. Now there goes Tag World (Clique) and Jail World (clique). Now there go a lifetime of rivalry that started from best friends. Matter of fact, that's how all the beefs been started lately...something petty, women, you stole my gun, you stole my drugs, you stole my shoes. Before they started shooting at each other, they was friend before.*" – Woodlawn client #4

The above quote provides some insight that some high-risk males have a sense of the source of new conflicts and their relationships to cliques. However, the development of cliques from victimization of a member from their social network, as well as tensions related to the interpersonal conflict, is only one part of the story related to the development of cliques. The other component involves structural changes that have impacted the structure of street gangs. All of the cure violence outreach workers and 25 of the high-risk males referenced the

decentralization of gangs as contributing to the development of block-level cliques. The

operational code, gang decentralization, was a code created based on the following in-vivo

codes:

1. *There's no structure anymore*
2. *The streets aren't organized like they used to be*
3. *There ain't no order in the street*
4. *Everybody wanna be the boss*

This code, among the most frequently coded items, was created to operationalize how

gang leadership and structure was disrupted and how this disruption has contributed to the

difficulty of the "streets" or members of the community to enforce previous gang norms through

a hierarchical structure. The following quotes can best capture this perspective:

> *"The gang structure has been broken down. The federal government has infiltrated the gangs and broke 'em down through conspiracies and RICO laws, and RICO acts and tore down the gang structures, so there were no gang leaders. Blocks had to fend for themselves …Once one of their little homies got killed, now 21st is "Danny Mob". These are blocks, fractions, of the residue of gangs. Until somebody die that's when they get that title. Little Ray Ray is the one who died, so now it's Little Ray-Ray Boys. They title and all. Once was a whole fraction of the Vice Lords, not it's the residue of Vice Lords. The residue is what they "was." They broke down. It's their culture, because this how they live, this is how they come up, and they don't know nothin' else."* – North Lawndale Outreach worker

> *"Now it's like that era is gone. Those guys—a lot of them dead, but a lot of them are locked up. It's like now ain't no order on the streets. What they used to—what—it was like it would be a controlled environment. Some kind of structure was out on the streets involved in this nonsense. What we—a sane mind would say nonsense, but it was controlled. Now it's just like it's the lack of, and so it's like almost——it's like the Western days now…cuz it's a lot of little cliques out here. —nobody gonna answer to nobody. A lot of violence. A lot of shootin.' A lot of fightin.' A lot of just BS. It's more of it—it's way more of it than it ever were. There's a lot of little small cliques out here now runnin' around. more disagreements…with nobody to answer to, so now it's—you subject to a fight or a war or a fight or a disagreement, so that could turn out to be somethin' bigger now—easy. Nobody—no level head—no, not a lot of level heads around, or nobody around to say, That's it. Leave it alone, or whatever".* **-** North Lawndale Non Client #4

The quote below provides some description on how cliques do not follow the traditional organizational structure of different gangs by mixing individuals who previously were involved in rival gangs together, and as a result of their size, challenging traditional street gangs.

> *"Like me, I'm not gonna lie. My name not mentioned none of this. Me, I'm a Black Disciple. It could be shorty and them over here like in Parkway, they Black Disciples. I'm a Black Disciple from over here. They could have Gangster Disciples, Black Stones, Vice Lords, everything in their little clique. We could be all BDs (Black Disciples) over here. Because we don't rock with them or they feel like they bigger than everybody else they wanna take on the BDs over here. Then take over the—they wanna take on the GDs over here. They could take on the Vice Lords over there. They could take over the Stones over there because they feel like they clique is the shit." -Woodlawn nonclient #1*

Descriptions of cliques were described in nearly all of the interviews; many of the interviewees expressed disappointment in the lack of structure and codes with the street-level cliques. However, there was one outlier. A non-client from the North Lawndale community found the development of street cliques empowering because individuals were no longer subject to follow the codes of organized street gangs, which, in turn, provided individuals with more choice without the threat of violations. This interviewee described these newly formed street cliques as "Against the Grain." Below he describes the strength of street cliques:

> *"Because everybody call their self ATG, which stand for Against the Grain. They, I don't know, they renegade, like they, not a solid (original gangstas)… It's whoever you cool with. That's what ATG mean like they get down on one their own brothers. The ATG started from the jail, and it leaked out into the streets. Then, it just overruled. There's more of them than people like solids. People that are strictly what they is. I mean, they (solids) don't like it though, but it's not enough of 'em change it. Not enough of 'em everywhere. There ain't enough of 'em. They feel like it be individual like here, here that they feel like me. There was too many rules, codes, policies… ATG though, now people you're not forced to do nothin' that you don't really wanna do, so that's why ATG is a little better. It's still a gang in a way though, but the only thing that makes that better is that you're not forced to do nothin'. Cuz if you solid, and they send you out on a mission to go do somethin' if you don't do it, they gonna do it to you, so you really forced to do somethin'. If you run, they're gonna come to your family and all, so that makes it a little better though, so now you ain't forced to do nothin'. You know, you can still be out here. You ain't even forced to do nothin' like it's every man for themself now."* **-** North Lawndale Non-client #5

The dynamic on the streets now is that individuals are looking for autonomy from the previous gang structure, as captured by the following quote:

> *"Everybody wanna be the boss...It ain't about GD, Larry Hoover, it ain't about them. I'm a BD (Black Disciple) I hang with Vice Lords. It's about a clique. On the streets everybody…everybody wanna be somebody. People wanna be somebody so people get killed trying to be somebody."* **-**Woodlawn client #4

Below, a Woodlawn non-client posits that the current state of gun violence is related to the lack of being able to govern gang members, because no one receives consequences when an aspect of the gang code is not followed. This phenomenon is particularly referenced about youth involved in the street-level activity:

> *"...remember the grownups, like them, say, the big heads, used have the streets. Now it's the little ones that got the streets now. The young ones started gettin' they hands on guns, they like, "Why should we be listenin' to them? If this gun, this little—just a piece of metal could change a whole person mind, so why not? Ain't no more gangs goin' on. It's all about who you wit' and who you ride wit,' who you down wit' or whatever. Like I say, they wasn't takin' it, they wasn't havin' it. They wasn't acceptin' no violation."*-Woodlawn non client #3

An Englewood outreach worker explains that this decentralization of gangs, combined with access to guns, led to more increased involvement in violent behavior without the consequences of gang violations if traditional gang leadership was in place. He explains that without the gang structure, there is a generation of street cliques that he describes as "lackers." He defines lackers as fake gangsters who promote violence but rarely engage in violent activities.

> *"They're just mouth, Internet gangsters. (Using social media) They're like, "Man, yeah, come over here, we did that shit with them niggas (shooting rivals) … it made it where a nigga got that gun, and he on them drugs, and then he probably won't even be shooting to kill you. He's shooting from the corner, and beyond…if you don't get caught now you feel like you could do anything now…that's the worst criminal…a person who justify their actions for doing fucked-up shit, like you done shot up a whole block and killed a kid and they are like they shouldn't be out there…this person is usually a coward, they are not on the frontline, but they started the shit."*- Englewood outreach worker.

According to him, "lackers" represent a difference between the organized ways of life the outreach workers had when they were involved with violence. Although none of the other interviewees, used the term "lackers" to describe cliques, this term was used as an in-vivo code to capture how the majority of the interviewees, except one interviewee (the North Lawndale interviewee non-client #5), described cliques in a negative way. The code, "lackers" seems to co-occur with statements about drilling. The code, "drilling" is defined as aimlessly shooting up the block. Although only ten interviewees spoke about drilling, when they discussed drilling, they echoed the North Lawndale outreach worker's sentiment, that many individuals who aimlessly shot down blocks were "pretend" gangsters who had no intention to kill. This phenomenon of drilling might lead to a cycle of violence because some cliques will respond to shooting on their turf with lethal violence. The Woodlawn non-client elaborates on how there is a dichotomy of shooters: drillers and killers.

> *"A drill is you just goin' on a nigger block, lettin' off a couple shots, lettin' 'em know, "Nigger, it's that. It's war time." A hit is when you go over there and hit a motherfucka. You fuck around and kill a motherfucker. That's the difference between—a lot of niggers out here cuz you got some hoods that's just all may be, "Look on 'em drillin'. They gonna shoot shit." Then you got some hoods that, "Nigger you ain't nobody 'til you kill somebody on this block." That's the hoods I fuck with. I'm sayin' like that cuz you got all these niggers out here doin' all this drillin', and he gonna fuck around and hit the wrong motherfucker. Hit a little girl, like the little girl Janida."* **-** Woodlawn non-client # 8

The above non-client from Woodlawn and the previous quote from the Englewood outreach worker express their frustrations with drillers because they are essentially cowards who shoot with no intention to victimize. However, these shootings cause conflict to sustain itself, which over time, leads to individuals warring and often leads to uninvolved youth and adult residents being victimized by the random shooting. Also, in many cases, the person drilling is

never really known. Negative interactions further sustain this "lackers" phenomenon through

social media.

The code, *Social media posts* was applied to 35% of the high-risk males as a precipitant

of community violence. For the high-risk males, the frustration and emotional pain of trauma

tend to be posted on social media. Social media has become a platform where individuals

continue to engage in conflict as a way to protect pride and the most important cultural capital:

respect. The posts include statements about territory, street-level cliques, and posts related to

women. As the quote below explains:

> *"Because it's (social media) completely negative…we have women degradin' themselves. Men are doin' the same thing. It's not teachin'—it's not show—it's not showing a good example for the youth. All they have is ignorance and negativity… You have fights. You can go on there and see—Post fights daily. Yeah. For the females, twerkin' videos. That's degradin' women. These are young mothers, and some of them are middle-aged. It's only spirilin' down, and it's like the next generation will be even worse. There's no positivity in that."*- Woodlawn Non-Client #2

> *"Facebook. Everybody get on Facebook. Oh what you doing? I could see you. You're on a set…everybody get to fighting. You have cliques posting, dissin' each other. They got certain names for certain groups for who they be. They got a lot of groups like TYB (Take your bitch) and FYB (Fuck Your Block)."*- North Lawndale Non-Client #10

The Woodlawn non-client #2 continues to discuss the violent outcomes as a result of

social media posts, but he also describes the lack of black leaders to intervene.

> *"Through Twitter, like I was sayin', it's been a lot of cases to where it's escalated past just physical altercations and fighting and arguments. People have actually died behind it. It's just there aren't any, I would say, real leaders out here. I think that's one of the biggest problems to where—I think one of the biggest things that black communities need is not just a leader. They need a black face. You know what I mean? They actually need a leader that's pointin' out just as much positive thoughts and actions as the people that's pointin' out the negativity."*- Woodlawn Non-Client #2

Figure 2 features a visual network, Atlas.ti, a diagrammatic representation of selective

coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1998) which highlights how the salient codes relate to each other.

This visual network provides a summary of the key features that help explain the story of the context of conflict from the perspectives of the interviewees.

Based on the stories from the outreach workers and high-risk males, as males age, they are forced to choose sides. These sides are no longer organized gangs, but cliques that are created not only from the decentralization of gangs but also formed as a way to honor close friends and family members who were victimized by community violence. Negative social media posts further sustain conflict and violence. Ninety-seven percent of the interviewees did not speak about cliques positively. Instead, most of the conversation about cliques focused on how the community has become more disorganized. Sixty-two percent of the high-risk males expressed regret that no organization or rules exist with street organizations like they once did before gang leaders were incarcerated or killed. This theme of a lack of organization for street-level activity suggests that some members of these communities would welcome an opportunity for an organized entity, as the Woodlawn non-client #2 stated above, *"a leader who is pointing out the positive thoughts and actions."*

The next few sections of this chapter will provide some findings to strengthen an argument that Cure Violence outreach workers represent a return to this street organization that many of the high-risk males believe that the community needs. The next section will highlight how the outreach workers use their previous personas as gang leaders to draw in high-risk males as a way to engage the highest risk population, as well as connect this group to resources away from high-risk community-level activities.

B.   **The Context of Connection: Perspectives of High-Risk Males**

The current study approached first research question, *"How do Cure Violence outreach workers and high-risk males describe outreach workers' ability to connect with high-risk youth*

and connect them to pro-social resources?" by examining the perspectives of the high-risk

males and outreach workers separately.

This section explores how some of these most frequently coded items from the outreach

workers and high-risk interviewers helped explain how Cure Violence outreach workers were

able to connect with high-risk youth and connect them to pro-social resources. The findings

highlight the specific characteristics of the outreach workers that give them credibility: the

positive social connections established because they grew up in the community, their previous
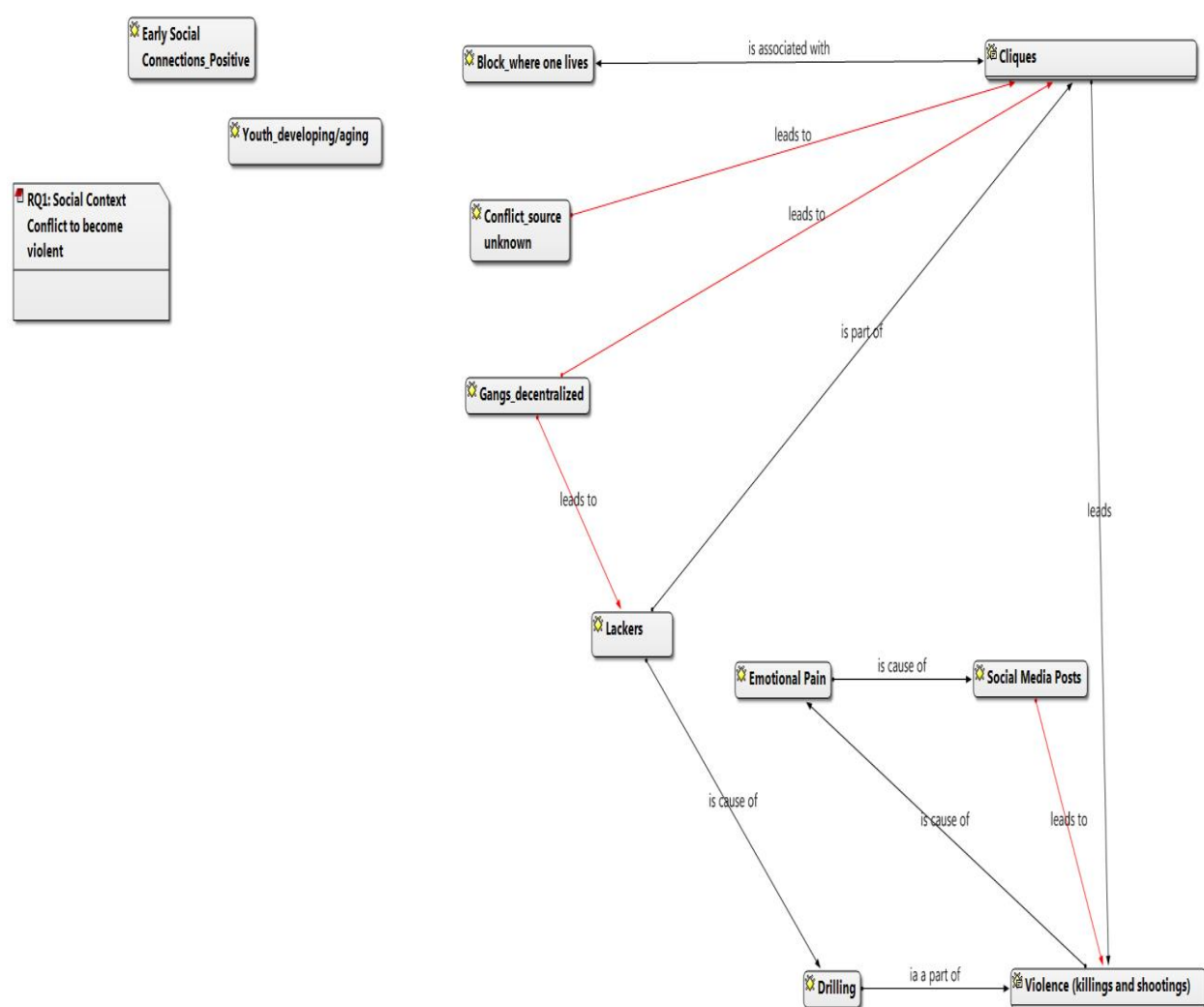

Figure 2: The code network of the interactional component of P.E. Theory: context of conflict.

involvement in risky and criminal behavior life, and how they were considered hard workers who were fair. These specific qualities helped the outreach workers not only establish trust with high-risk males, but also with the wider community.

To understand the story behind how Cure Violence outreach workers were able to connect with high-risk males, the analysis initially focused on how familiar the non-clients were with Cure Violence outreach workers because of their assumed lack of consistent contact, compared to the clients. While conducting the interviews, it was clear that all the non-clients at least knew about Cure Violence. Additionally, all the non-clients also were at least aware of Cure Violence's "Stop Shooting" community mobilization and social marketing campaign. An unexpected finding was the extent of social connections that the outreach workers had with non-clients. Half of the non-clients (n=10) knew the outreach workers by their first name and five of the non-client interviewees had close friends or family members that also knew the outreach workers on a first name basis. The knowledge about Cure Violence and the outreach staff was strengthened because the outreach worker was from the community in which they served. Being from the community bolstered the interviewee's ability to trust the outreach workers, as described below by a client and a non-client from the North Lawndale community:

> *"If they in their community, then the community knows them…they know Granny, Auntie, your cousin, your sisters, daughters. I think it's very easy to—if you in your community, then you know your community. But if you outside the community, you don't really know these people. These people don't know you. Then it's hard for people to communicate."*
> **-** North Lawndale Client # 10

Trust was another key component that was developed through social ties with individuals from the community:

> *"They—to my knowledge—they get out and stop the violence. I mean, they try to help prevent violence. For one, it'd be a trust. It'd be a trust that they can gain from the streets—from the community, from the neighborhood—that the police—they wouldn't be able to. They got history. They got relatives still. They got peers, friends. Like I said,*

they got history in the neighborhoods. I would—me, personally—I would trust talkin' to one of them before I would a stranger. I would rather them be the go-between… probably wouldn't pick the phone up and dial 911. I probably wouldn't speak on—but I could— there are certain guys that maybe just in their group that I would trust that I can talk to them and they'll make sure that."— North Lawndale Non-Client # 3

The mobilization in the community also enhanced non-clients understanding of Cure Violence. Below highlights how Cure Violence's mobilization campaign provided a non-client with exposure through a relative, who felt limited in her ability to intervene with her grandson who was involved in risky activity:

> **Interviewee:** *"Heard about it a few years ago. It was 2011? Yeah. I know it was 2011. I heard about it, my grandmother was speaking about it. She was watching the news. She was like, "Grandson"—I was on the internet, then somebody she went to college with, they were talking about Cure Violence."*- Woodlawn Non Client #5

> *Interviewer: Why did your grandmother, why did she feel like she needs to tell you about Cure Violence?*

> *Interviewee: "Because I got—my older brother that I was telling you about? He's and out of jail. She told me that because me and him. My brother started hanging with some old friends, and—my grandmother saw it, and she ain't like it…She used to cry at times…she was worried that her grandsons out here and it's rough. Rough. Our generation is doing a lot of shooting, a lot of gun shooting. A lot of fighting over dumb shit, really. Shit they can't change. Yes, I think she was really worried with him. She was trying to reach out. She was reaching out at an early age, because she saw us drifting off."* —Woodlawn Non Client #5

In addition to the knowledge that the larger community had as a result of the Cure Violence "Stop Shooting" campaign, many of the residents who were at the highest risk for violence victimization and perpetration also were familiar with the outreach workers from the persona created as a result of their previous involvement as gang members. The in-vivo code, *"They lived the life."* captured this phenomenon. Twenty-five percent of the high-risk males' interviews explained how seeing the outreach workers intervene in conflict helped strengthen their credibility in the community. The quote below is an example of this opinion from a

Woodlawn non-client. Seeing outreach workers, who were in the past rivals, now work together, further strengthens their credibility in their ability to get high-risk individuals to listen to them:

> *"Because those guys from Parkway and my little shorties (youth) over here—I actually feel safe when Cure Violence is out there because—I'm not gonna say no names. I'm not gonna say who it is. There are people from both sides (rival gangs) on the Cure Violence team, and they're stopping a lotta the bullshit that's happenin' around here… because they (youth) see the older people not on that bullshit and they see them interactin'. The people that they look up to, and the people that they look up to are interactin' and they're cohabitatin'. They're not on the bullshit. They're seein' 'em like, "Oh, they're cool." Then seein' like, "Oh, they're cool together." It's not gonna happen in this general area, so Cure Violence in this general area is actually workin'. I can't speak on any other area because I don't live in any other area, but over here it's actually kept it down to a minimum. It may be like one death maybe once every three, four months or somethin' because you remember how it was."*- Woodlawn nonclient #1

In addition to the campaigns, non-clients observed how the outreach workers were providing opportunities for youth to be engaged in pro-social activities, as opposed to simply hanging out in the streets. Providing social opportunities were among the frequent code items that help explain Cure Violence's ability to connect with not only high-risk males but also with the larger community. The North Lawndale non-client provides a quote that describes how Cure Violence activities inspire hope in the community:

> *"You see the parents with the kids coming out, and they support it. It's like when you see just the unity going on, and wow. That's when you see other kids, trying to, "What's goin' on? What they got goin' on over there?" It's just an opportunity, just to do something different and see what you can become in your neighborhood if you do it the right way. It's just all about having a chance and when you know that your neighborhood has a fighting chance."*- North Lawndale Nonclient #2.

A Woodlawn non-client also explains those long-standing relationships that were established because the outreach workers lived in the community was also helpful in engaging high-risk males to participate in activities aimed to get them off the streets:

> *"I wanna say I was 16, maybe 17…so about seven years ago. This was just when it was startin' small. It wasn't really everybody knew about Cure Violence. It was only a community thing. Now you can go through the city and ask. People have heard about Cure Violence…I met him with the whole rappin'. Just the Battle on Wax for Peace.*

That made it more—cuz it was around rappin'. It wasn't no more about shootin'. It was around rappin' cuz they figured it was, "Okay. Y'all like to rap. Let's do this together." It was calm. It was a little peace then. When that started, they made a little more peace. It was, like, "We can do this music, and we ain't gotta do all that."It felt good to have another outlet to where you don't have to play basketball to do this. You can go to the studio. Whether you rappin' or you just there, you doin' somethin' positive." –
Woodlawn nonclient #6

Providing opportunities to get youth off the street through social activities came up as one of the major factors that influenced how Cure Violence was able to connect with residents, including those at high-risk. *Providing job opportunities* was another code that came up as one the primary connectors. In addition to seeing social activities in the community, high-risk males observing males with criminal backgrounds secure employment through connections Cure Violence provided, gave high-risk males hope.

"They talk about that they had jobs or somethin' …the majority of the young people like me been to jail before thinking that there ain't no hope. They say, "Man, Cure Violence hiring man". They hirin' felons. People who do all that stuff, man. They hirin'. Go look. Go holla at them." That make 'em feel like there's just a little hope. That's good. That's very important. Seeing them walking around made me feel some type of way. Like there is somebody out here that's still got hope. It made me feel some type of way for a group of black people that do that."- North Lawndale Nonclient #5.

A North Lawndale client explained that it took witnessing not only how the outreach workers could handle conflict, but how they could also provide employment to peers with a similar background. Once he had this evidence, it changed his mindset to feel that gaining employment was possible for him as well:

"Cuz, my friend, he ain't never had a job. He was locked up and stuff, and he got out. He got a messed up background, and he got a job. Once he got a job, I knew that it was possible that I can get a job. My record ain't as bad as his. He was happy to see me do something with my life."- North Lawndale client #6.

As previously described, providing opportunities to get off of the street was one of the key facilitators which enabled the outreach workers to connect with the high-risk youth. Eighty percent of the clients described these opportunities as gaining legal employment. In some cases,

the opportunities happened on the spot as outreach workers were canvassing the street. This

client describes how the Woodlawn outreach worker's social connections and consistent

presence helped facilitate providing employment, school, and housing opportunities:

> *"I was on 63rd right by the gas station, to be exact, when I first seen Mr. Whately. He live in the neighborhood, so he know all of us. He's like, "Now I'm finna give y'all a job , man, to keep y'all off this BS out here. He'll get us a job, and it'll really help thought. Cuz the seven hours, five hours we working, man, them five hours we could be out here risking getting locked up. Them hours count man. You getting money without looking behind your back basically. You ain't out gang banging. You ain't got not gun—you working man! You trying to do something positive. They help you do a lot of things positive. They talk to you. help you try to get in alternative schools. If you homeless, they'll put you in a shelter, all type of stuff, man. They help a lot, give yo' family free food, free shirts. They say, come march with us. We'll give y'all a couple of dollars, anything to stay outta trouble. That's what they be trying to do. Help us, anything to stay outta trouble*." – Woodlawn Client #3

In summary, the high-risk males described the Cure Violence outreach workers ability to

build connections primarily through the positive social connections they maintained as a result of

growing up in the community that they serve. The unexpected finding was how socially

connected non-clients were to outreach workers, despite not being on their caseload. The high-

risk males believed that the outreach workers were able to solidify their social connections

because they gave back to the community through social and job opportunities. These

opportunities went beyond just clients on Cure Violence's caseload, which many non-clients

expressed as providing a sense of hope for the future of the community. Based on the high-risk

interviewees, a key role to Cure Violence outreach workers' ability to make connections was

because they had "*lived the life*" -- they also had been involved in high-risk behavior such as

gang involvement, drug dealing, and violent offending. As this non-client states, it allows space

for their target audience -- the small percentage of individuals at the highest risk for violence

perpetration and victimization -- but also other community residents to listen to the Cure

Violence message:

"If you had a group of men out here that's come from the same background—the same upbringing—and they out here. It's gotta be some help in it. It's gotta be. It's gotta be if they out here in the streets marchin' and preachin.' You know what I'm sayin'? These guys are relatives. These guys are ex-cheese or whatever. A lot of those guys are still respected by these young guys out here or the guys that these young guys are respecting. If they too young and they don't know some of these older guys that might be workin' for Cure Violence, it's somebody that they are respectin' like me that respect those guys that work for Cure Violence. The people—they aren't gonna open up to the police. They gonna slam their door on the police face. They don't trust the police. These guys right here—they feel like these are one of them. You know what I'm sayin'?" – North Lawndale Nonclient #3

However, this is the perspective of the high-risk men; the next section will explore more in depth to find the story behind how the outreach workers believe can make connections with high-risk men in high-risk communities.

C.   The Context of Connection: Outreach Workers Perspective

As described in the previous section, many of the client and non-client interviewees described that many of the high-risk youth were engaged because the outreach workers had *"lived the life"* that they were currently living. They not only possessed the social connections and worked in the community to attempt to shift norms about handling conflict in the community, but they also experienced and represented many negative aspects of the communities they came from. Based on numerous statements from clients and non-clients, it was this perspective that potentially enhances Cure Violence ability to connect. However, when examining the ability to connect with high-risk male participants, the outreach workers provided a perspective that was more detailed than simply because *"they lived the life."* When examining how outreach workers were able to connect, some of the outreach workers' stories suggest that they represent a mindset of returning to community social organization. This organization is currently challenged in their community due to the dominance of street-level cliques. The following were the most frequently coded items from the outreach worker interviews:

1.   *Drawn to the Negative*
2.   *Organized*
3.   *Enforcer*
4.   *Fair*

When examining the outreach interview data to understand their perspectives on how they connected with high-risk youth, the statement "they are drawn to the negative" was a consistent statement across four of the interviews. This Woodlawn outreach worker describes how he was able to connect with the small number of youth responsible for most of the violent crime in Woodlawn:

> *"They heard the stories…I was a massive. The negative life, you know, that's the stuff they glorify, so you remember all the negative things they've heard I've done or allegedly had done. That…still made my name relevant in the streets. It was easy for me to approach them…I used it as leverage, really. I used it as an opportunity to reach then guys. I was able to use that to connect with them. Instead of coming home, glorifying it, you know. 'Cause I seen a lot of guys come home, they see a lot of shorties praising them for some negativity. I kind of flipped it. I used it as a tool to see if we could restore, and establish rapport."*- Woodlawn Outreach Worker #1.

> *"The primary motivation is bad. Bad is good…evil is good…evil is to be looked upon…I was a bully, so a lot of people were afraid of me. To be afraid of somebody, and for somebody not to pick with'em, is to hang with them…a child is searchin' for attention from anywhere, as long as he get that praise. "He just beat the shit out of that little buddy". Buckshot! The name Buckshot flared them up…quite naturally, they wanna be like me. I come from where he come from. They wanna be associated with who they parents talked about. "That's him" They wanna be associated with that name."*- North Lawndale Outreach Worker #1

One nuanced exception was a female outreach worker from South Shore. As a former gang member, she possessed the "lived the life" credibility that other outreach workers used to engage high-risk youth, but her additional point of connection was through the traumatic death of her daughter who was struck by a car on east 75th street after running from gunfire.

> *"I had so much credibility in the streets, not just from me being in a gang, people knowing about my situation with my daughter (who was killed) and when I started to heal, I was able to help others heal that were now losing kids and loved ones to gunfire, to violence…I mean at this point we losing mamas, grandmas, a lot of people."*- South Shore Outreach worker.

Although the code, *Drawn to the Negative*, helped explain how outreach workers initially connect with high-risk youth, this was only part of the story. The Cure Violence outreach workers were more than just former gang members or violent offenders; they were highly organized and hard working. They possessed characteristics that many high-risk males aspired to possess. The next section will aim to describe how these qualities specifically allowed the outreach workers to connect with the high-risk males in the target communities.

The outreach workers would describe themselves as having been serious and about the underground business of street life including drug dealing and gang banging. When discussing the outreach worker's previous involvement in gangs and drug dealing, one consistent theme came out: They had a lot of respect. Respect was frequent code that came up not only from the outreach workers but also from the high-risk males. Respect co-occurred with the following codes:

1. *Serious*
2. *Enforced rules*
3. *Hard working*

These codes represented a business approach to what they were doing which included the following in-vivo codes: *driven* and *passionate* for how they went about the work, *never taking time off,* and strategizing about how to be more *powerful*. It was not simply the business-like approach to the work, but it was also the influence that the outreach workers possessed that made them credible among other high-risk residents. Below are a few quotes that capture the level of seriousness about their work:

> "It's, like, this was 24 hours for us. It was, like, no peace. There's no peace. Death or jail, that's how we ended our wars. That's what all of the crew thought so we prepared ourselves just for that. We did this, like, every day, though. This is what—we did this every day. This wasn't no, "I'm chillin today". We just want to know . We get up in the mornin', we put on our clothes, you know, our gear. We'd meet at a certain place, and

that's what we do, every day. You know what I'm sayin'? Even our women was involved in it, because this was the lifestyle. Because of that, we was able to get a lot of recognition, a lot of respect. A lot of fear came by. These guys, they'd never stop. You know what I'm sayin'? They don't stop. People—you know, you better think twice before you dealin' with these guys, or they don't stop, you know what I'm sayin'? That's why I made my mastery in. I was just, like that we were livin' for." - Woodlawn Outreach worker

Although the South Shore outreach worker did not describe threats of violence as in the quote above, her persona still represented a hard work ethic as she describes her ability to hustle and sell.

"I don't know if it sounds professional or whatever to somebody else, but I feel that I'm a professional in street credibility."- South Shore Outreach worker.

Interviewer: Right. Let me ask, is there anything that you did before you got involved in Cease Fire that you still use now? Like your ability to do certain things that transfers well what you do.

Interviewee:"Yeah, my ability to hustle. I don't break the law no more. I sell myself. I sell my ability to do dreads. I do different interviews. Just like I'm doing this interview right now. Once or twice a month I do interviews with different people. They might give me a token or two. I'm going to school to try to start my own foundation so that I can help other people. I'm still selling myself. That's what everybody knew me for. Oh, she a baller. She hustling, woo-woo-woo.I'm just using—I got a different hustle now. It's legal. I don't gotta worry about the haters, the police or nobody." –South Shore Outreach worker.

The North Lawndale outreach worker describes how he possessed a hard work ethic and was fiscally responsible while aiming to be the best in the illicit drug business. It was these qualities that helped him rise within the gang ranks:

"I also knew that I had to be biggest drug dealer still because that's the only—my source of income. Them the only resources that was handed down to me that was understandable, which so many young black men share, through that system. So I moved up in the ranks and the gangs. I'm runnin' the block. I could work on creatin' havoc. My name's Shotgun. Shotgun is feared. He was also somebody who knew how to save money. The difference for me was I wasn't flamboyant, and I didn't splurge. I didn't wear gold chains. I fitted in with the dope fiends and everybody, so that what made me the people's champ…cause I can go the block and fit in with everybody." –North Lawndale Outreach worker

Other codes, like *enforcers* and *respect*, were frequent during the outreach workers'

description of their lives before Cure Violence. The hard-working qualities that they possessed

were a part of the outreach workers' identity, but with three outreach workers, it was also the

enforcer within them that helped them gain respect. The Englewood outreach worker's quote

vividly describes the importance of having enforcers:

> *"People don't like cats, but hey keep cats around to get rid of rats. That just says it all right there. I don't even like a cat, but if I've got rats. I'm gonna bring that cat around. I was the cat. I could fight, and people want to be around me, and people want to be cool with me."*- Englewood Outreach worker.

The outreach workers explained that the high-risk youth connected with these qualities

and further solidified their outreach workers' credibility. However, the respect that outreach

workers garnered was not limited to their "business" ability but also because they were violent

enforcers of the work. In other words, if a conflict arose, they would not shy from ending the

conflict. For two of the outreach workers, the description of their past lives began by

highlighting their ability to fight. For three of the outreach workers, all men, a recurring code

was that they would "*whoop ass.*" As highlighted earlier, the North Lawndale outreach worker

described himself as a bully, and he took pride at being relentless about being a bully by

providing some graphic examples of how he used threats and violence to strike fear and respect

in rivals. The high-risk males provided examples using words *"like, serious, didn't play, was on

it."* During an interview with the Englewood outreach worker, the bully phenomenon was

described as a Debo, based on a character from the urban cult film, *Friday*:

> *"Back in the '90s, there were Debos...Used to be one person that ruled that block, and he could say this or say that, and that shit was over with cuz it was structure. Now there ain't no structure. There's no consequences. The consequences you get is you go to jail, so just think, like if you don't get caught...Yeah, if you don't get caught with some shit, you're like, shit, I ain't get caught for that, so now you feel like you could do anything now."*- Englewood Outreach worker.

Unlike the other three outreach workers who are all in their forties, the Englewood outreach worker was in his mid-twenties and explained that these "bullies" were relics of organized, structured gangs that have decentralized. Despite previously being self-described as a protector, he was clear to distinguish himself from a bully and instead consistently avoided conflict and only used force as a final option:

> *"I wasn't no bully-ass nigga. I was always fair. If it was anything that was brought to me, I handled it however it needed to be handled, but I never started shit, and a lot of guys knew it. We even went to grammar school, high school, all type of shit together. I've always been a likable guy, and I was real. I did what I did, but I wasn't starting shit with nobody. If it was something that could've been avoided, then it could've been avoided I was always avoiding shit. I'm a player. Look, that's shit's small...Even when I know that a muthafucka deserved to get fucked up, I could overlook it because I know when they go over here, you ain't really gonna be on same shit I'm gonna be on, and I have more to lose."*- Englewood Outreach Worker

Seriousness and the ability to enforce were not the only characteristics that made the outreach workers credible. Frequently used codes included *protection* and *giving back*. The outreach workers described that the fact they looked after the younger kids in the community when they were gang members, made it easier for them to connect with them later in life. Below are examples:

> *"Those little guys—we used to look out for him, you know what I'm sayin'? We wasn't the type that would send a young guy off. The young guys couldn't go with us. No. You finna stay on the block. You have to go to school. That's one thing about, I think, a lot of those young guys kind of navigated towards me when I came home, because I never sent them off. I never abused them. A lot of guys could even come to their communities when they come home, because those obvious reasons. They abuse the shorties, —they sent them off. They left them in jail. Wouldn't reach for 'em or send them a commissary, or things like that. Yeah. None of these little guys that came up under me could never ever say I did any of those things. The thing was the opposite."*-Woodlawn Outreach worker

The above quote highlights a need to protect youth from older high-risk men who would often take advantage of youth by putting them in bad situations. Below provides an example of how this often happened to high-risk males:

"The youngers, they just wild. They look up to us. They want to drill. The big homies (older high-risk young adults) hand 'em the gun. Like, "Yeah, little folks, you gonna be with this shit. You gonna be out here drillin" –Woodlawn nonclient #7

The North Lawndale outreach worker explains his frustration with his gang because the older men would take advantage of youth within the gang structure:

"I hated the Unknowns because they was abusive. They was all dope fiends... The Unknowns would take advantage of us children. First of all, I stayed on 19th and Harding. Every week I had to go to Monticello and Augusta. If we don't make it to they meetin's it's a violation for not makin' the meetin'...They beat the crap out of ya just for not comin' to the meetin'. "Where you was at? Well, you're getting your ass whooped." We had to—we were so scared of getting beat up, we had to try to get to the meetin's, stealing cars, we'll make the meetin's.. It was abusive, man. Just taking advantage of kids, and it was dope fiends and grown men." **-** North Lawndale Outreach worker

Despite the outreach workers' previous descriptions of being violent enforcers, *fairness* and *giving back* were common themes raised in the interviews. In some ways, the outreach workers demonstrated qualities that could be viewed as restorative because in some cases giving back or fairness could jeopardize their safety. Below the Woodlawn outreach worker provides an example of how he would look out for young members in the gang to prevent them from getting violations:

"Actually, I was a protector for a lot of those guys, because we had structure. So when they get caught you know violating one of those, you know, laws or policies. You know, they had to get that with it. I was always the one that was an advocate for the younger guys to avoid them getting violated. You know what I'm sayin', I always, even if I put myself in danger with my people, you know what I'm sayin'?" **-**Woodlawn Outreach worker

The North Lawndale outreach worker described how he had a constant presence in the community and also distributed funds received from selling drugs to other indirect organizations:

"I would hit licks (robbing drug dealers) and I was a fair, I was a fair dude too, to the team, 'cause I was robbin' peoples and I hit them all. "Here you go." That was a good characteristic. "Man, this dude he alright. Well, not, okay, I'm going and turn, and I hit them all, so I go rob somebody and took five pounds. I go to the Mob (the gang, the Conservative Vice Lords), "Here go a pound, ya all. Ya all do what you want.". Even though I was Unknown, I was still a Vice Lord, and a Conservative Vice Lord is acceptin'

me just as if I was one of their own. Then, they'll take the weight. If somebody wanna come back, they'll stand up. It's nothin' (no conflict no issue) It was the right move." - North Lawndale Outreach worker

It was this practice of *giving back* that strengthened the outreach workers' connections within their communities and garnered further respect. The North Lawndale outreach worker also shared how he socialized with people and was friends with others from different organizations. It was certainly his level of respect that probably helped allow him to navigate different groups in the community. The South Shore outreach worker also described how she made sure other people in the community were paid. A lot of this giving back was done within the context of the "structured" gang. However, the Englewood outreach worker, 27 years old, was not a part of this structure. Nevertheless, he also described his ability to navigate opposing gang and clique territories, which made him a likable guy in his community.

> *"I was able to get up with both of them (the cliques). I'm like, "I don't know who y'all thinks you is." ...Then I go to the other side, like, "Man, y'all don't want any of this shit. Look, we ain't got no beef with them... and they ain't even these type of people... they are lackers, meaning you ain't on point nowhere. You feel me? You live this life, you really ain't lackin'. You got your pipe. You keep a gun on you. They ain't those type of people. They ain't keeping no gun on 'em."- Englewood Outreach Worker.*

Another frequent finding that seems to provide insight into what characteristics made the Cure Violence outreach workers credible was their ability to work well across gang and clique barriers, not only as outreach workers, but also before they worked for Cure Violence. Below are a few quotes that highlight this ability:

> *"They was able to reach out to the guys, and help them out on both sides of the fence. See, they didn't just cater to one particular group. Even though it was hard, because you got rivals in the same place. They was willing. Yeah, and we did...cause if I can get group A and group B both playin' defense, then there should be no shooting. Should be no cross section shooting."- Woodlawn Outreach worker*

The findings above highlight the characteristics of the interviewees that existed before they became Cure Violence outreach workers. The interviewees possessed common qualities, in

that they were known as hard workers, enforcers of the street code--yet fair, protectors of the

community-- especially the youth, and their abilities to interact and be respected by the rival

street-level organizations. These characteristics seem to serve the outreach workers well with

respect to connecting with high-risk youth to accomplish the Cure Violence goals of interrupting

shootings and promoting pro-social responses to conflict. It was clear that the interviewees'

strengths served them well as outreach workers. Three of the outreach workers expressed that

their passion drove their motivation to continue to do the work of an outreach worker:

> *"It's all because I'm for real that what I do. I really care. There's no hidden agenda like frontin' to get a paycheck, 'cause I don't do it for a paycheck. For my boxin' program, I got boxin' uniforms, I got—all my students has uniforms, and guess who paid for it? Me. I just bought a bus because every car that I get, my youth tear 'em up, but now we have— I invested in a bus. All of this is out of my pocket. I don't work for money. I do what I do for energy. I deal with people from the energy that they give me, 'cause it's a feed. I feed the energy from them children, and they help me be who I am."- North Lawndale Outreach worker*

> *"You got to have that drivin' passion for it, you know what I'm sayin'? It's a drivin' passion with me, you know what I'm sayin'? Because once you started the work, you want to see it through. Not only that, and you just tired of the young guys being killed, lost in the system, seein' their mothers cry, you know what I'm sayin'? That stuff. Then it should, like, just tear me apart, so I stopped going to funerals. I would go, but I wouldn't go up there to see the bodies and the families. That used to hurt me more, to see the young guy layin' in the casket, seein' his mother, you know what I'm sayin'? I gotta do everything in my power, whatever I can do to prevent another mother from goin' through this."-- Woodlawn Outreach worker*

> *"You ain't gotta look around your shoulder all the time, think somebody gonna try to harm you or hurt you. Just it made it feel so much better. Yeah, I'm so passionate about this because I say like I really fuck with them. I really fuck with them. I was really like, these people I grew up with, and they are into it, like a lot of people are into it with each other, like these people that you really grew up with. Every time one of them get killed, I feel the same way probably one of them feel. I'm hurtin' just like the next muthafucka, so I started coming up with little strategies where I could end this."* - Englewood Outreach Worker

The final part of the story of how outreach workers are able to connect with high-risk

youth is that the outreach workers saw "themselves" in the high-risk young men in the

community. As previously highlighted from the high-risk males' findings, the outreach workers, "lived the life, they live." The interview guide focused on the first third of the conversation on their lives before working as an outreach worker (see Appendix B). A major theme underlying how the outreach workers' interviewees were able to desist was the role that mentors played in their lives. The mentors recognized some of the credible characteristics of the individuals described earlier such as being hard workers, being fair, and giving back to the community. The code, *mentor*, was used to capture this phenomenon but also action words used by the interviewees such as "*winging me in or cuffed me*" which represented the role a mentor-mentee relationship played to help the interviewees desist from their previous involvement. Below are a few quotes that highlight the importance of mentoring:

> *"The guy who was runnin' it cuffed me. He took me up on his wing and he altered my mind from what I was doin', from bein' real evil... The guy who was runnin' area, cuffed me because he seen my potential. He seen that I was wild. Either I was gonna be dead, or I was gonna get a million years, but he seen the greatness in me, and I started bein' on the side of him. He saw the influence that I had. No fear, but most of all, I cared for people."* - North Lawndale Outreach worker

Two outreach workers also describe that their mentors saw characteristics in them that they believed others in the community would see as leadership qualities. As described earlier, the South Shore outreach worker's qualities were not only her previous experience as a successful drug-dealer but her resilience through the death of her child. Below highlights how one of her mentors recognized these qualities, but also pushed her away from her previous criminal involvement:

> *"They kept nagging me and nagging me and nagging me, telling me that I had a testimony, that I would be perfect to work for Cure Violence. They just kept telling me, one of them, his name was Wrayln Wesley. He used to work here. He was just always telling me, "I'm telling you, you need to come to my job. You need to come to my job. You will be the only female, and you got a real testimony. I'm telling you would be a real good because you know about the streets and that I had a story to tell, about my life, about all the stuff that I've endured and really made it through without going crazy or*

killing myself. I mean I know people who have lost kids who are really strung out on drugs. It's something. I made it through….I believe that what drives me to do the work I do are people like Mr. Wesley who stayed on my ass. Oh my god, when I first came here, he just was checking on me all the time. "You better not be out there. You touch them drugs, I'm telling you. Just like I got you a job, I'm gonna make them—put you back out". It took him so long to—after maybe about two years, I believe, is when he really started trusting me. Cuz at first, he was like, "If you fail me," you know what I'm saying. I wanted to win his trust so bad and my mom's trust."- South Shore outreach worker.

The Englewood outreach worker also described that his mentor saw leadership characteristics that other high-risk males would find engaging. This mentor, like the previous mentor described by the South Shore outreach worker, possessed a seriousness that was respected. The Englewood outreach worker describes how the recognition of his social capital combined with his mentor's seriousness motivated him to change his ways:

"His name is Warren Lamont. He was my mentor. He passed away though. He was like my father. I think he served 30 years, so he got out in 2004. Basically, his experience really got to me because we was together every day, and he was so much older than me… He was genuine, and you could feel it. You could really feel that, and I think he really played a big part about me changing my life around cuz he always chillin'. He was like 5'5", big head, but he was a serious muthafucka...everybody else would kiss his ass. Me, I was the type of muthafucka, I say what the fuck I feel, and he loved me for that. He loved that. He was like, "The only reason I like your young crazy ass cuz you real, and you're like me." I just had so much respect for him, so anything that he used to say, I'd take heed. He'd always tell me, "I done 30 years straight. Right? You think you could do 30 years? You think 30 years?" I'm like, "No." "Well, you need to change yourself. Right? You need to take of—you need to take care of your kids, right? You need to get back in school. You need to do this." Everything that he said to me, I'm doing now, and I know he could see it and be proud. I don't know. I think that probably made a big difference, me being around him, letting me see somebody who had the same experience that I did. The shit was I doin', they was doin".- Englewood Outreach Worker

In summary, the street outreach workers past positive social connections in the community, as well as their previous involvement in criminal activity, helped them to establish connections with high-risk males in the target communities. The high-risk males described that "living the life" is an important component of their ability to connect to the outreach workers. However, examining the stories from the outreach workers, it is clear they had leadership

qualities before their time with Cure Violence that earned them respect. These qualities included being a serious enforcer, being fair, able to navigate different personalities in the community, and giving back. Figure 3 shows how the outreach workers were able to build connections.
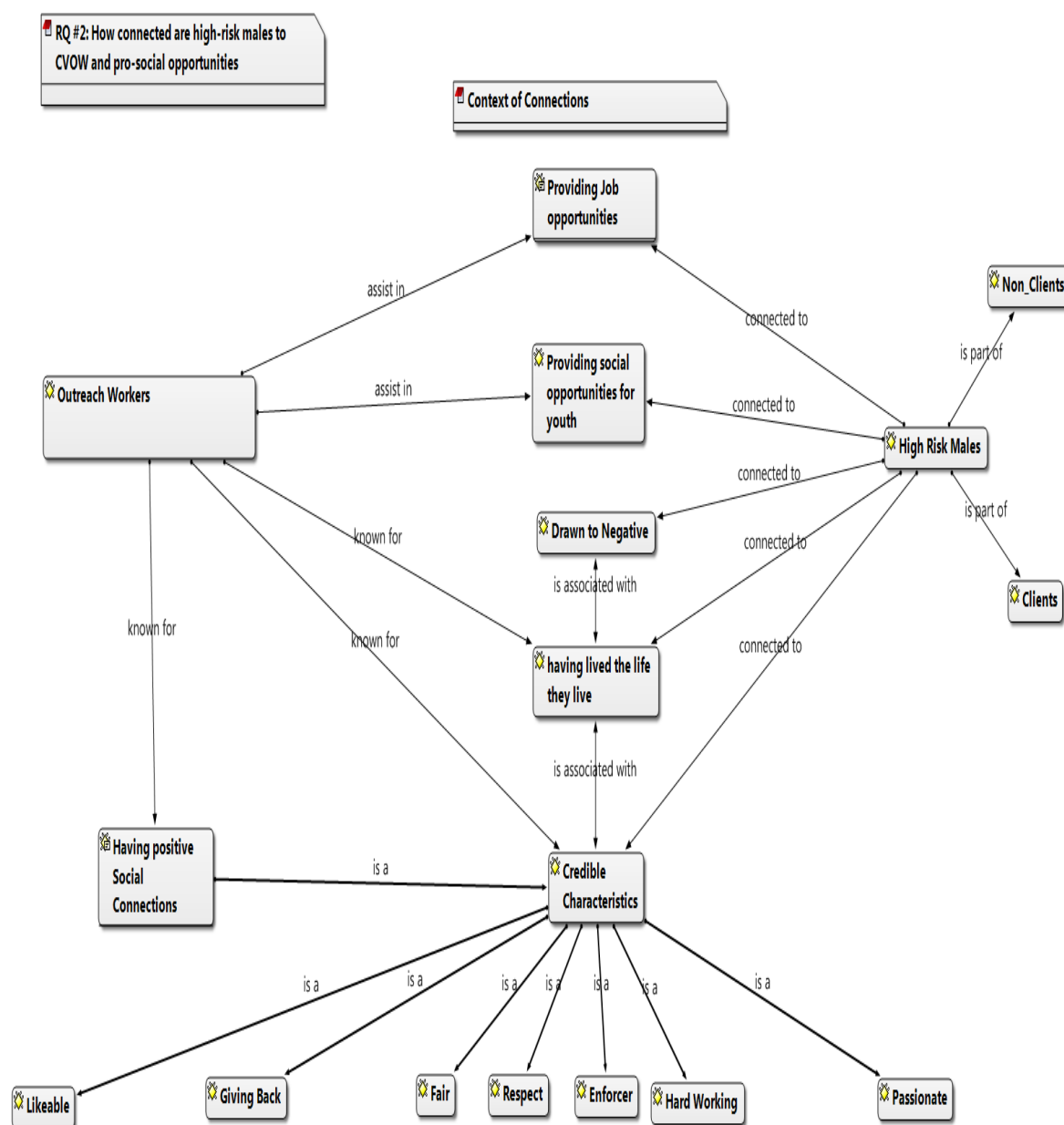

Figure 3: Code network of the interactional component of P.E. Theory: context of connections.

The outreach workers served as mentors who provided social and economic opportunities to assist high-risk males in moving away from criminal and violent activity in the community. The next section will describe some specific processes that help explain how high-risk males were able to make progress towards strengthening their self-control, confidence, and competence to not engage in destructive behavior, through primarily changing their mindset about themselves and their social environment.

D. <u>Changing Mindset: "I Can Be Bigger Than the Block."</u>

The analytical approach used to answer the third research question, "*How does street outreach make high-risk males feel control, confidence, and competence to respond to conflict in non-violent ways?"* began with exploring the impact exposure to high levels of violence had on the interviewees. The most frequent code was *isolation*. This code was defined as any reference to someone staying in their house or on their block as a strategy to stay safe. To help answer this question, the analysis began with exploring how outreach workers were able to help high-risk youth overcome how they isolate themselves as a means of protection. A Woodlawn non-client explains that his ability to safely navigate throughout the community is limited based on where he lives:

> *"I don't feel very safe. I pretty much have to know what areas I can walk through at a certain time and wheres I can't. Let's say King Drive, that's an area to wheres if you from this side, you can't go on that side at certain times. People might recognize you and might know who you are. Something is bound to happen."– Woodlawn nonclient #3*

The Woodlawn outreach worker explains that extreme isolation takes place primarily due to fear of victimization from various street-level cliques. As a result, the isolation has led to youth socializing in alleys:

> *"Man, territory. Cliques. Clique here, clique there, clique there. People's locked up within their own community. It's like a sub-community. They don't see nothin' wrong with it. Because look, some of these areas, people hang out in alleys. I never thought in my*

lifetime I'd see them hanging out in the alley. They back there barbecuin', all of the women back there.Any given time in the summer, there's 50 to 150 people in this alley, just partyin', and you know what I'm sayin'? Then I went to another party on Kimbark, they was doin' the same thing. I said, wow. They even forced us to party in alleys. Police don't do nothin'. 'Cause you not on the street. You know, on the main street. They got us confined to an alley. They used to that. They used to it. They get everybody out there, all the women. Women just, like, "You all party in the alley. You got to stay and party in the alley." - Woodlawn Outreach Worker

This Woodlawn client describes a set of behaviors that related to the mindset of the "block" that

Cure Violence has helped reframe:

"Hey look at it like, "this has been goin' on for so long, it's all I know. I used to wakin' up, smokin' my blunt, goin on the block, chillin with him...once you try to do something else, it's gonna feel different and awkward cuz your mind is not focused on doin' this. It's not used to things. It's not trained on this...you gang bang, it ain't good for you, but you used to doin it. You gotta change, but its gonna be hard cuz that's something you're used to doin. You grew up. You see your brothers do it, you see your daddies do it, you see your uncles do it and you're thinking, "Now it's my turn. You used to it. It's all you seen your whole life, so that's all you know… "When I'm with Cease Fire, they'll be thinking, "I shouldn't be out here"...take them out of their mindset of being where they at...just get 'em out there." **-**Woodlawn client #6

To engage high-risk males in feeling that they can respond to conflict in pro-social ways, outreach workers must first interrupt their social isolation. The following codes helped explain the ways Cure Violence helped change the mindset of the young men:

1. Vicarious experience: defined as situations when men observed the outreach workers handling conflict or providing opportunities for other high-risk males in the neighborhood.

2. Imaginal experience: defined by the in-vivo code: "If they can do it, I can do it" This code captures statements that describe how the outreach workers transformation inspire feelings of confidence in the young males ability to transform their lives.

3. Direct experience: situations in which the outreach workers helped the interviewee directly handle conflict

1. **Vicarious Experience: Building Confidence**

Seeing outreach workers in action was a common theme from both the high-risk males and the outreach workers that helped describe how the outreach workers were able to change the mindset about what is possible when it comes to handling conflict. Observing outreach workers working together, despite their previous gang affiliations, successfully intervening in conflict, and providing employment opportunities, were frequently coded items that helped describe how outreach workers helped build confidence with members of the community. The Englewood outreach worker described this process below:

> *"Now it's up to us to put this love back in our community. We've gotta show everybody, like, "Look, I can do it, man. You can, too." Then that's how Cure Violence is. It's a bunch of people who never would've been together, ever, and they're working together right now. They've got history...In gangs, in the streets, they were different organizations. Now you see these guys, like BDs, GDs, Stones, they're working together trying to end this shit altogether. Now you've got a different outlook. You've got a different perception. I think that's what really play a part. They gotta see shit like that. They gotta see real shit. When you start seeing real shit, like real guys coming together, real women coming together, that shit give you a different vision and another outlook on shit. Like, man, this nigga shot him. I know he shot him cuz we all remember, and they're together. They're trying to stop this shit. It must be something different. It's something better. We gotta do better. We need to end what we got goin' on. They could do that shit on the weekend. They should be with us anyway. When you get them to start thinking like that, that's their conscious mind coming in."*- Englewood Outreach Worker

Below is an example of how witnessing outreach workers ability to get conflicting parties to respond non-violently increases confidence that community residents can change how they respond to conflict.

> *"Man, just like I done seen a couple of guys walk up to a crowd. I'm like, "Man, I wonder what they on. I hope they don't get jumped." They walk up, "Hey, man, look, this what we on." When you see people let their guards down, like, "Okay, yeah, you right. I like that, child." It's like they are showing that they're not scared for a change. We need a change, and we can't be scared to change. You gotta step-up and then start in the heart of the city. You know it's a message. That's, I think, it's just like Jehovah Witnesses, like, you know a message is coming. Either you ready or you're not ready for it, but you know it's a message that's coming there to benefit you. Yeah, I'll drop my guard for that, anytime. I could meet a person like that, like, "Okay, well, what's going*

on? What you got to say? What's happening?" When they got somethin' good for you, it's like it uplifts you a little bit. Me, personally, it does."- North Lawndale Non-client #2

Another North Lawndale client explained that he never had an outreach worker intervene in any past conflicts but described how observing outreach workers intervene with a friend made a positive impression on him:

> *"My friend, the one who got shot he was trying to go back and get revenge...Cure Violence, they talked to him…they were like, " Man this ain't your life. You need to stop. You already got shot". He thought about it. He sat down and thought about it. Like man, he right. I need to do that." He ending up staying in the house for a year. He got a job at White Castle. That summer he had a job at Cure Violence."* - North Lawndale client #8

Another non-client from Woodlawn explains that observing the mobilization by the outreach workers helps shift his mindset and feeling of what could be possible in the community:

> *"They try to influence and try to guide and motivate. By putting up flyers and posters, and just letting people know how neighborhood friendly they are. We got it hard, and we out here, too. We wanna see the kids grow up, too. We wanna see them do good things, too. It gives me an okay state of mind."*- Woodlawn Nonclient #5

The nonclients and outreach workers explained how the outreach workers were able to inspire confidence in handling conflict non-violently through observing the outreach workers in action. Another way outreach workers inspired confidence was by imagining a future life like the outreach workers.

2.   **Imaginal Experience: Building Confidence**

Another frequent code item was the in-vivo code, *"if he can do it, I can do it."* This code captured the references from clients and nonclients about how the outreach workers have transformed themselves from a life of crime in the community to preventing violence. These codes represented another major theme that helped explain how the outreach workers inspired confidence the young males can make a similar change. Below represents quotes from both clients and nonclients from the sample communities:

"When you got a guy that based his whole life on gangbangin', hurtin people, sellin' drugs in the community, and he can do a full 360 in one day and give his life to Go and take out-- all his time is put in for children now. He gets no time to himself. He in the office 24 hours a day...you don't see too many people 'round here do a full 360 and say, "Oh, man, I ain't smokin that no more. I ain't drinking that no more. I ain't hangin out with them no more. I'm not standin' out there with them guys. Matter of fact, I don't know the last time I seen them guys".. Man, if you could take a guy like that and he can turn his whole life around, imagine if everybody can do it. I don't think it'd be a problem in the world, man." –North Lawndale Client #5

"Cuz I looked up to him, and saw how much he educated, too. Once I saw him doin' a different path, I wanted to do a different path. I don't know how to explain it. I ain't a man of many words. Once I saw that one of my brothers could change from who he has, I knew I was able to change from who I was. Even though I was educated, I still—you're never too old to learn. I started soakin' up the knowledge. It's just like I said, bein' in the streets, you take everything from the street. I saw one of my brothers able to change, and he helped me change."-North Lawdale Client #10

"They see that cuz they a changed man. He used to be out here and he changed his whole life for him. That's what people respect about 'em. Cuz he ain't out here no more. He a changed man, he grown. He ain't out here."-- Woodlawn Nonclient #8

"Cuz we know they used to be gangbangers. They changed their life over, so they name known on the street already. They changed their life over for the better. That make it look so good cuz now I know I can do it cuz you did."- North Lawndale Client #2

These themes related to imaginal experiences was also described in the earlier quote by the Englewood outreach worker when he described the importance of residents witnessing outreach workers managing conflict and providing social and employment opportunities. In his description he used words like, *"Look, I can do it, man. You can, too." …It must be something different. It's something better. We gotta do better."* His quote captures two important processes for building confidence: observing the positive action and seeing a future possible-self. The other component required is directly experiencing pro-social opportunities, as well as the managing of conflict in non-violent ways.

3.   <u>**Direct Experience: Building Self Control and Competence**</u>

     The clients provided numerous examples of how the outreach workers not only

interrupted their hyper-isolation but also in many cases brought them to settings with other

young men who would be considered rivals. It was experiences like the one that a North

Lawndale client describes that increased high-risk males' ability to let go of long-standing

conflicts and to develop the competence to interact and socialize with a former "enemy", as well

as the young males' confidence that the outreach worker would not allow a rival to victimize

him:

> *"They give you they outlook on everything. It's easier for you to learn 'about- you knowin' what's goin' on in your community.Then you get to look at- broaden your horizons, like, "Man, I coulda been doin' this instead of goin and getting locked up." I'm fighting him. I'm shootin at him, but in here, I'm eatin. I'm havin' fun. I'm interactin'. The same people that we don't like outside of here, we like inside of here. It could be some of your fellow people you don't get along with in the same youth center as you, but when you in there, the whole outlook, it changes. You can interact with this person you just had a fight with yesterday…it feel good. It's a feeling that you feel, but you don't wanna let anyboday know that you feeling it. You keep a little toughness with you, but then after so long of doin' it, it breaks. You think, half the stuff you doin' in the street not gonna last forever. I was thinking like that until I had a person to put that thought process in my head. I never had a thought process. If I think about going to hit this person, I was just gonna walk up and just hit 'em. You never think about the consequences or repercussions."* **-**North Lawndale client 5

     This Woodlawn client describes how he was able to establish a bond with the Cure

Violence outreach workers and how these experiences helped him with regulating his emotions

when dealing with conflict:

> *"They take us places, they do stuff with you...they make you feel like family. You ain't gotta spend your money even though they know you got some money. You might got a little money, but they'll help you out. I didn't ask you to come out your pocket. I just asked you to come. Just present yo' self and I got you. That's the type of bond that I got from them. As long as I put my faith in you, I put my life in yo hands, you saying you got me, and then you got me. I earn trust and I can trust you. Now everything you say to me, I can believe..Boy, you get into it with somebody, you be like, Wally I got this problem, man I got into it with woo, woo, woo,. He'll tell you, "Man, it ain't even worth it." It would calm you down, and you'll be like okay, cool and you go on about your day. I ain't*

gon lie, to me if they wasn't around, I woulda made a lotta bad choices. It be the type of choices that sometimes you just--people go with they mind. You so angry, you so mad, you just forget what anybody sayin. I wanna get this person. They (CV) around you and they just let you know it ain't worth it." – Woodlawn client #9

The direct experience with handling conflict is vividly captured by a Woodlawn client who was heading to get a gun to settle an ongoing conflict. Below he describes how the outreach worker was able to calm him down and later help him to feel confident that his non-violent resolution will remain:

> *"This guy in the corner store used to constantly pick with me. At first, I used to walk to the corner store with my baby's mama. He used to be looking at her, "Oh damn, shorty woo, woo, woo. You know what I'm saying? I look at him, "Okay, so now you think I'm a whore." I leave, come back, and they tell me they don't want me at the store no more...now everybody standing on the corner like, "Dang, you let him lie to you." I'm gonna get the move (the gun) cause he finna die". He (Cure Violence outreach worker) comes it like, "What is it you gonna get You arguing with him, you playing with him. Where it gonna get Y'all?" By the time he get through, he just breaking it down like, "Now one Y'all ready to lose your life over nothing right? " We both sitting there thinking, then you like, "You right." Now homie ready to shake my hand. Now you feel me? I'm still feeling some type of way like, "Boy don't touch me." You feel me? He (the outreach worker) looking at me like, "You ain't gonna shake the man hand...shake his hand because you a man". He's like shake the man's hand. I shake the man hand, after that me and homie, we like "What's up? What's up Big Dawg? You good? Yeah, I'm good. You know what I'm saying."*- Woodlawn client #4

Another Woodlawn client described a scenario where he was going to get a gun, and the outreach worker stopped him while in progress. The quote below describes how the client was able to control his emotions in the heat of the moment, but also to feel confident enough to let down his defenses and vent to the outreach worker:

> *"I was walking back to get my guns and I seen Scooter and Damien...they were like, Yo' what's wrong". When they be around you so long, they know something is wrong with you. Now I'm mean-walking right past them. They are like, "Come here.". I don't wanna talk right now...and focused, but hey come a grab me. They are like , "slow down. As a matter of fact, get in the car. Ride around, chill. You ain't gotta do it. Hey they make me like like I matter--I about even cried to one of them before because I can open up to them. They'll listen to you, and they ain't gon' front-- if they feel you were in the wrong they will let you know. You break the story down. And they were like, oh you was wrong. You*

did the wrong thing. You shoulda went about it a whole nother way. Now you lookin at it like. Okay, I might was wrong"-Woodlawn client # 9

Cure Violence outreach workers providing jobs is another way that high-risk clients described they made them feel confident about leaving their local environment. These legal opportunities for work helped high-risk males feel confident about Cure Violence's "stop-shooting" message. The Woodlawn client # 9 continues to explain how employment helped him:

> *"It was really that once I got that construction job. Basically after I was seen them present something for me, after they helped me and got it for me, it made me open my eyes up, like they really trying to help me. They really trying to do the best they can do. It was really them, just taking them up on a chance to help me.*" **-** Woodlawn client #9

A North Lawndale client described how employment helped him shift his focus from negative to positive. He briefly explains that his motivation is to demonstrate that he has the self-control and the skill set to keep his job, not only for himself, but also for his family:

> *"Me bein' back on track is gettin my head back together, like, stop thinking about all the wrong things, stop think about, like, I think about death a lot. I got this job. I mean, it's like even my auntie tell me now, like, "don't lose that job. Like, keep that job." That's like keeping you on the right track right there. I wanna keep that up.*"- North Lawndale Client # 3

The combination of observing, imagining, and direct experience with Cure Violence outreach workers intervening in conflict, and providing employment opportunities, all contributed to interrupting the hyper-isolation experienced by many of the high-risk males. These experiences provided opportunities for them to witness or participate in activities that had them positively interacting with other high-risk men who were considered long-standing rivals. Through these experiences, many of the impacted men described expanded their mindset about what is possible. Below is a quote from a North Lawndale client to highlight this phenomenon:

> *"Lil' Charlie, they helped me realize that I'm more than a block. I'm more than a block. I can be more than a block. I ain't gotta do what everybody else doing. I can be my own man. That's really helping me out that they took the time to really form me into this young man. Cuz at first, my mindset was a boy. I was still a boy, 18-year-old boy. Still*

messing around, woo, woo, doing little stupid stuff. I came to Cease Fire, they turned me into a young man by the end of the summer, for real, for real." – North Lawndale Client #7

Without Cure Violence, this Woodlawn client believes that not only would he still be isolated, but also that his mindset would be the same responding based off of his emotions. The quote below captures how outreach workers help reframe how retaliation will only lead a young males' loved ones to be impacted:

> *"Before Cure Violence I probably woulda been one of the ones sitting in your chair like "I ain't gonna over there. That's they set." You know what I'm saying?I ain't gon lie. To me, if they wasn't around, I woulda made a lotta bad choices. It be the type of choices that sometimes you just- people go with they mind. You so angry, you so mad, you just forget what anybody sayin'. I wanna get this person. They around you, they just let you know it ain't worth it. You do something to this person, what's gon' happen to you? Who it gon' effect? It's gon affect the people in your family. I got a daughter. It's gon effect other people. It ain't gon affect you or the person that you did it to.*" – Woodlawn client #4

Figure 4 presents a visual network of the codes which describe how the outreach workers can make the youth feel control, confident, and competent to respond to conflict in non-violent ways.

D.   <u>Doing: Small Steps Toward Change</u>

The final section in this chapter provides insight into the final research question: *How do the outreach workers get high-risk clients to actively participate in the community in prosocial ways actively?* As described in the previous section, for the high-risk males to feel self-control, efficacy, and competence to respond to conflict in non-violent ways, it took some combination of witnessing, imagining, or experiencing the outreach workers interrupting conflict and social isolation. This section will review how the outreach workers explained their ability to get high-risk clients to behave in pro-social ways in their community, as well as provide some insight into

how the high-risk clients describe their behavior change. Since the outreach workers play a

critical role in getting clients to consider behavior change, this analysis began by reviewing the
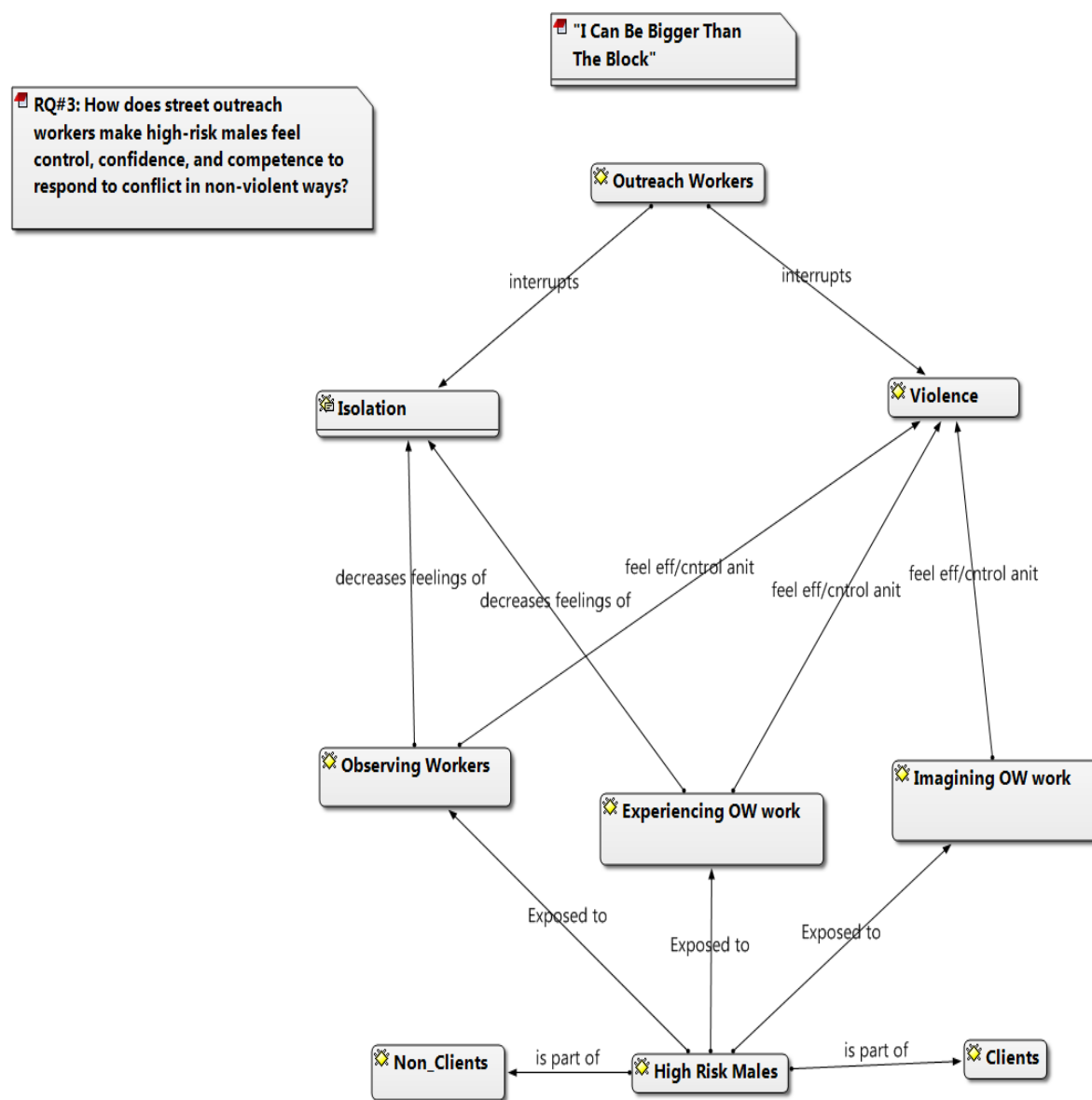

Figure 4: Code network for the interpersonal component of P.E.

outreach workers interviews to uncover some of the steps involved that helped support high-risk

clients. When reviewing the outreach workers' interviews, the following codes were among the

most frequent:

1. Outreach worker approach
   a. *Patience*
   b. *Listening to them*
   c. *Using small actionable steps*

2. Holding clients accountable
   a. *Consistent contact*

How outreach workers approached clients was important. Some common themes from the

outreach workers' engagement strategies included patience and listening to the clients instead of

pushing a behavior change plan for them. Also, mindfulness from the outreach workers that they

have "lived the life" the high-risk clients currently live was important because it helped keep the

outreach workers humble throughout the engagement process. Below a Woodlawn outreach

worker describes his approach:

> *"One of the key things you need, time. With those guys. With that time, you got to have a listenin' ear. Not a judgmental conversation. Because believe me, when I was doin' dirt, I didn't want nobody tellin' me what I'm doin' wrong.... Once you listenin' to 'em, you listenin' for a way to intervene. They gonna say somethin' that's gonna open up the door for you to intervene. I mean, they maybe talk to you for 30, 40 minutes, sayin' a whole buncha nothin'. They might have one minute, "Man, I'm tired of this shit." I have a baby comin'. I'm tired man. Bam. Say, "Well, you all can make the time, so what would you like to do, then? What would you like to do? Then from that, they tell you what they like to do. They gonna say some things, trust me, they'll say some things. If you too busy talkin' or aren't really prepared to answer something they said 20 minutes ago, you gonna miss it. You gonna miss it. You gotta know their language. You gonna understand that from bein' around, spendin' time,.. There's no other way around it. You can't do it from the office. It's impossible. They don't want to sit in a office."- Woodlawn Outreach worker*

The South Shore outreach worker provides another example of how important it is not to push an intervention plan for her clients, but to be patient and mindful of the trauma they experienced:

> *"My approach is not militant…You need to stop doing this. Uh-uh, you wrong. Uh-uh, go to school. Do this. Do that and the other. If you haven't been through what that person is going through, whether it's just hanging on the streets, smoking weed, selling drugs, whatever they doing that they not supposed to be doing, then I don't really feel like you have the—it's not your place to have a militant approach with somebody like that. You need to realize that these people are traumatized…. Everybody is traumatized. Everybody either seen a shooting, been a part of a shooting, lost a child, lost a brother, lost a sister. That's real-life trauma. If you don't get help for that, if you don't talk to professionals or—like we have people that come here every other week to help us deal with our stress level on this job. We do yoga, we do breathing exercises. We just talk about what's going on. If you don't have that, then you really walking around like a time bomb. You traumatized, you angry...you gotta humble yourself before you can walk up to somebody and tell them about what's going on in their life, or if they want help, if they need help. What areas do you need help in? Are you okay, brother? Are you okay, sister? Versus who shot? Who got shot? Who did this? Oh, for real? Oh, we gathering information out here. We from Cease Fire. You gotta go up to these people with a different approach."* - South Shore outreach work

Once the outreach worker has established an understanding of the change the client would like to see in their lives, the outreach workers use small strategies to assist them with pro-social behavior change. Below the Englewood outreach worker describes an example of how he creates a strategy for change and accountability with his clients:

> *A lot of times, they come to me, they're already willing to change their mindset. They start doing different. They start seeing different. I'm already around you. You've gotta think like this. A lot of people don't got nothin'. You feel me? I was just like them, so they see come around in my nice Continental, they're like, "Damn," right? "Man, I'm trying to get on what on, bro, cuz you serious, man." …Okay, so I'm gonna give you a chance. I'm gonna meet you exactly where you're at. Whatever you tell me you want to do, that's where I'm gonna meet you at. Then after I'm meeting you where you're at, I'm pushing you now. I'm giving little goals to do. I see you do this, and then I see you do that.*
>
> *Interviewer: Okay. Give me some examples.*
>
> *Interviewee:"You probably just need your license, "Man, take me to get my driver's license." All right, you've got your driver's license now. Now you gotta get you a job. "All right, you ready to work?" "Hell, yeah, I'm ready to work, man." "All right, but you*

gotta stop smokin'." Now I might throw some other, like, "All right, look, man, you've gotta stop smoking, and stop smoking for 30 days, and we're gonna see. "Yeah, all right. Man, that is gonna be hard." You want a job, you trying to work, you trying to get this—I just throw shit out there. "You trying to ride slick, man, you trying to—" I'll buy little drug tests and make 'em take it right in front of me.

"It's like I'm a real big brother man, period. I hold you accountable. If you say this, I'm holding you to it, and, eventually, you're gonna be—once they post a grievance—there's actually a guy here I got hired. He was one of my little mentees and shit. He was always following me around. His brother was like my best friend and shit, but his brother always got locked up and shit. He was brother was the money man. Feel me? This is my nigga, so when his brother got booked, I just can't have shorty doing that...shorty had always been around me watching what I've been doing and seeing all this shit, so I gave him a shot. He's actually been doing decent. He's working now. He a VI (Violence Interrupter)."- Englewood Outreach worker.

The Englewood outreach worker provides some confirmation that a changed mindset, as described in the previous section, is a step towards behavior change. Once the clients indicate that they are ready for change, the outreach workers provide small steps to accomplish these goals.

Another theme is consistent contact by outreach workers to continue to support the young me to achieve their goals. An in-vivo code: *Winging/Cuffing/Hooking* helps describe how the outreach workers maintain contact with their clients to monitor their behavior change. Interestingly, *winging/cuffing/hooking* was a frequently coded item that described how the outreach workers own mentors helped them with desisting from criminal behavior before they were outreach workers. Below the South Shore client describes their *"wingin/cuffing/hooking process:"*

"They know that I'm real. They know that I really been through all this. It's not like somebody that you don't even know coming up to you and telling you what you should and shouldn't be doing. That's how I hustle with the kids, with my credibility. Then I wing them in. Just like I would wing in a person that use drugs. I put them under my wing and support them."- South Shore outreach worker.

Interviewer: Tell me what that looks like, winging them in.

Interviewee: "I support them, resources. I ask them what's your plan five years from now? Which is one of the questions Wrayln asked me. Where do you see yourself five years from now? It's always like, "Uh, uh." No, for real. I need a five-year plan. Where do you see yourself five years from now? If they can't tell me, then I get him back in school. That's the first thing. Then I work on resources, jobs...I find out if they've graduated from grammar school or not. The age group is 16 to 25. Most of them did at least graduate from grammar school. The alternative school will accept them as long as they graduating from grammar school. Then the age is like maybe 19 that they can go to the alternative school and graduate. Eighty percent of my caseload is on probation, so I have to meet they probation officers. I have to take them to and from they probation visits once a month. That's how I wing them in. Providing resources to better they life, to try to turn it around for what they doing. Job readiness skills. A lot of them got dreads. Give them a free haircut—get they hair together. Take them to the thrift store or wherever. I get them vouchers to get the clothes and stuff they need for the job interviews. I'm successful. I got 15 participants on my caseload right now. Eighty percent of them do have part-time jobs."- South Shore outreach worker.

The Woodlawn Outreach worker describes how his role as a male creates a unique opportunity for a father-like relationship. It is through this dynamic that he can keep consistent contact, which he describes as "hooking." Once he has them hooked, he creates small actionable steps for his clients to begin to demonstrate behavior change:

"I hook them, none of these guys probably had no hook from a man. You know what I'm sayin'? ... it's different for them. Somethin' they might need, you know what I'm sayin'? I be lookin' at all those type of aspects, you know? These young guys are missing at home. He's definitely the perfect, like, father figure. He won't be talkin' crazy to them. He do, in a way. You know what I'm sayin'? The father, in a good uncle way, you know what I'm sayin'?"- Woodlawn Outreach worker.

The Woodlawn outreach worker later continues to describe how he creates small actionable steps for his clients:

"I just told Shorty and them, this is what they need to do. Stand there in front of me. I got you. Give 'em responsibilities. They get some responsibilities, like, bam! Then they're feelin' good about theirself. I just wanna see, hey, I just told Shorty now. They will—I just told them. I saw shorties You guys getting windows busted on 61st and Ellis some years ago, one of the property owners know Joe Strickland, Joe called me so I go over there and I see the little guys in the area and I say, "Come here" This you? Who over here? "Who's block is this?" Somebody is bustin this man's block for no apparent reason. This yo block, y'all gotta keep this block safe. Somebody on the block bustin' windows. Who is out here keepin' it safe? This would be years ago. Come back, we talked to shorties and them we talked to them and they don't do it no more. I call Joe Strickland and I tell him

they took care of it. I told him to tell the property owner to buy them some lunch next time you see them. If they wanna be the man, hold them responsible for that. I do it all the time."- Woodlawn Outreach worker

The Woodlawn outreach worker further describes these small actionable steps as "putting them to the test." In this quote, he describes how the high-risk clients can provide social support to residents in the community. However, he recognizes that residents might be afraid to interact with them, so he challenges them to come up with a strategy. The youth decide a small goal can be to communicate with other youth to cease breaking into resident's homes. This description highlights high-risk males positively participating in prosocial informal social control, and as a result, the outreach worker aims to introduce youth and their efforts to residents to attempt to build cohesion in the community:

> *"I just put 'em to the test, man. You lettin' them do something good—and you feel good when you doin' somethin' good, though. You feel good about it. Especially when you see the old people in the community, you know what I'm sayin'? I say you see an old lady struggling with her groceries, go and see if she needs help. Don't wait 'til you get the last bag and then she if she need some help." Now she say, "No". Then maybe she's scared of yall." How you goin' fix that? Ask them a question like that; then I walk off. I ain't gonna fix this. You say no. She got about ten bags. She's gotta go. How you gonna fix it? "They come back to me like, "Man, I thought of somethin'." I'm like, "What?" They say to me"I just told them shorties to stop breakin into people houses." As a matter of fact, next time I see you I'm gonna introduce you to her. You okay with that? Can she call you if she have a problem? Yeah, yeah...now they have a responsibility." --Woodlawn Outreach worker*

Holding the clients accountable to recently set goals was another common strategy discussed by the outreach workers. The in-vivo code, "pull-up on them" describes a strategy used by outreach workers to check-in on clients through random visits in the community. As the Woodlawn outreach worker explains, these "pull-ups" occur primarily with the known shooters in the community than a secondary focus on those individuals who are influenced by the shooters:

*Now they think about the conversation that they had with you (*about the client's desire to change behavior*), instead of this conversation you had with them, 'cause they did all the talkin'. They call you. "Hey man, I got this goin' on." "Where you at?" Then I will just pull up on you. That's my thing. That's what I'm good at. I'm gonna pull up on you. It's gonna be where they are- you can't be just saying shit if you pull-up on them. Instead of tryin' to get to them over the phone, "I need you"— the body language mean a lot. You know what I'm sayin'? If they see my body language, I'm seein' theirs, I can kind of assess what's goin' on a little. You have to spend time…. That was one of my main things that, you know, it's back there with those guys, especially those what they call this stuff now, especially the known shooters. Those are the ones I spend most of my time with...just really tryin' to, you know, just kickin' with them. I know what they capable of doin'. Then those guys is followin' them. It's easier. You know what I'm sayin?"*-Woodlawn Outreach worker

The South Shore outreach worker explains that she uses a similar accountability approach

primarily because it worked for her when she was going through her transformation toward

desisting from criminal involvement:

"I believe that what drives me to do the work I do. Stayin on top of folks. There were people like Wrayln who stayed on my ass." --South Shore outreach worker.

The Englewood outreach worker also consistently checks on clients through random

visits. Below he describes how he has also used the threat of force and corporal punishment to

make sure clients are not relapsing to criminal involvement:

"I've been doing this work for five years. I've got a lot of respect. When people see coming, they're like, "Oh, shit, there go he go and it's a good feeling.You feel me? They know I'm coming. They see I've got a job for you, or I've got something for you. I'm coming with something. I've got some resources. Especially if they know I done saw them do some bogus shit on Facebook, I might be coming to beat your ass."

*Interviewer: Okay, so you <u>do</u> got some Debo (*bully*) in you?*

Interviewee: "Yeah...Hey, look, I don't play with no shit like that...Disrespecting deads and all that shit. If you really came from where I'm from, I won't be playing that shit at all. It's a difference. I'm like a big brother, so I ain't comin' to you trying to put you down or put you out there, but if I see you do some foul shit where I feel like you're incriminating yourself, I'm beating your ass. I'm beating your ass, and by me saying I'm gonna beat your ass, I'm like beat their body cuz I don't like it. If you're already a felon, or you're already a known weapon carrier, why are you on Facebook with a gun? See, I just don't like certain shit like that, that it don't play well to my mind cuz if I feel like I've

got this much love for you, why you ain't got the same love for yourself?" –Englewood Outreach Worker.

The South Shore outreach worker also explains that sometimes she experiences relapses from her clients. However, as stated previously, she does not use a militant-type approach or the threat of force. Instead, she uses a consistent presence in the client's lives. She explains that she was able to transfer the characteristic that gained her credibility in the community, which was her ability to hustle and sell. However, now instead of selling drugs, she is selling positive norms, beliefs, and behavior changes when responding to conflict. It is important for her to be flexible and patient by demonstrating that she will not give up on her clients transforming their lives. This patience is important to her because she believes she was afforded the same patience during her transformation:

> *"Consistency. Consistency. When you selling something, you gotta be consistent. I'm selling myself to help somebody else. I'm being consistent. Just like I was consistent—when you sell drugs, you gotta get up at a certain hour. You gotta be out there. If you not, you not gonna get no money. It's gonna be a waste of time. When you say how did I transfer my skills, that's how I transferred my skills. I'm using my energy positively now, instead of negatively. It's the same get up and go…. I'm just to let them know that I'm not gonna let them give up on them. Because nobody really ever gave up on me. I kind of had gave up on myself for a hot second. Nobody else gave up on me. You just gotta be understanding and open-minded. Like hello, you used to do the same kind of stuff. It took me a long time to get it. Some of them, it takes some of them longer than others. I got people that did a 360 degree turn, with this year-and-a-half they give us to be in this program. Then I got some of the—they have to basically almost get kicked out the program, because y'all exceeded the program, and y'all still not doing [fading voice 00:47:21]. It gets frustrating. The fact that nobody gave up on me, I believe it's what drives me not to give up on them."* –South Shore outreach worker

The outreach workers are able to support high-risk client's efforts towards behavioral change by recognizing that building a solid rapport requires strengthening relationships with the clients, while also understanding that this process takes time. Some strategies used to assist high-risk clients included spending time with them either through working in the streets or purchasing food. The key aspect of this engagement is to take time to listen to their story before

recommending small steps towards change. Once the high-risk clients have opened up about aspects of their lives they wish to change, the outreach workers provide small action steps toward their goals. The outreach workers stress consistent contact to keep clients accountable for their goals. Below the South Shore outreach worker describes what success as an outreach worker means to her:

> *"Success, for me, is for them to exceed or at least meet the requirements of this program. Which is, to get a job if you're not working, to get back in school. To physically complete a substance abuse program. Because all of them really come in with substance abuse issues. To make themselves self-sufficient and not need nobody."*

> *Interviewer: What does self-sufficient mean to you?*

> *Interviewee: "Getting your own job, getting in school, getting your own job, getting off probation. In some cases, even getting they own place. To me, that's success, to the point where you at least—you walking. First you was crawling, now you walking. Not blaming they problems on nobody else. That whining and stuff, I don't play that. Get up and go get it. Get up and go get it. You mama not gonna keep taking care of you—you know what I'm saying? Get up and go get it. That's one of my rules. Don't keep telling me oh, well why you ain't go to your class today. Why you ain't go to work today. Oh, my mama had the car—no, I don't wanna hear that. Get up and go get it. No excuses. That's how Jalon was on me he was real tough on me."* - South Shore outreach worker.

Although the high-risk males were not as descriptive as the outreach workers about their behavior change, the most dominant code that co-occurred with client behavior changes was related to *job opportunities* that outreach workers were providing. The high-risk males described small actions like abstaining from drugs to pass a drug test, changing their style of dress, cutting their hair, learning how to interview for a job, and managing emotions to not only keep a job, but also to avoid escalating conflict. Below a North Lawndale client describes how outreach workers helped him with managing his emotions by changing how he communicates (e.g., by controlling his cursing), which could impact him with getting and maintain a job:

> *"Lot of stuff. They helped me with a lot of stuff. On a personal level, they helped me with my mouth. Cuz me, when I get mad, it's no stopping my mouth. Charlie helped me,*

you feel me, control my mouth. Everything ain't gotta be a curse word coming out my mouth. Cuz really, curse words is words of ignorance, and only ignorant people use it. I'm not an ignorant person, so I don't really wanna be using curse words, cuz of Charlie told me that's a word, them ignorance. When somebody hear you cursing, that mean they looking at you like you ignorant, like you don't know no sense, like you ain't got no sense, like you ain't been nowhere. That really taught me man, let me, you feel me, cuz anybody can be looking at you at any time. You don't know who around you. Cuz it could be somebody important. You woo, woo, woo, going off at the mouth, cursing. They looking at you like. Then that be messing around you trying to get a job interview, that's the person interviewing, the person that heard you cursing all that time and stuff like that. Now, they ain't hiring you, cuz you got a potty mouth. Really, I really learned how to control my tongue over the summer and calm my temper down. Don't let little stuff get to me. Yeah, Lil' Charlie helped me with a lot. Lil' Charlie and Derrick, for real, for real." – North Lawndale client #7

Another North Lawndale client describes that his behavior change is occurring slowly but

he makes sure that he keeps himself busy with pro-social activities including abstaining from

dealing and using drugs. He explains further that the outreach workers

has motivated him to reflect on his cognitive-behavioral processes:

Interviewee: "*I don't even hustle. I ain't even smoke weed. I went back, but my mind clicked. When I say I'm doin' good, I'm doin' more—I'm doin' better than before. I'm taking baby steps, but I'm doin' way better than before. I ain't gotta watch my back and all that. I'm not out there as I used to. I don't have no more idle time. If Marty don't have nothin' for me, Derek has somethin' for me. By that, that made me want to do somethin' for myself, you know what I'm saying? Even if they don't have nothin' for me, I'm gonna go ahead and occupy myself. I'm gonna occupy my time within myself. Okay, I'm gonna read a book, or not even that. I'm gonna just take my girl out downtown. We're just gonna have a good time*".

Interviewer: You said coming in contact with these brothers had you start to thinking. In what ways were you thinking different after coming into contact with them?

Interviewee: "*I'll be like, "Man, stop, think, and choose." Before that it was, Go. Stop, think, and choose. Okay, let me analyze this situation real fast. Okay, if I go do the done, I run from the cop, and somethin' happen, and I get caught, man, I gotta sit in this county and eat this bogus-ass food. I don't want to be in no cell, you feel me? I could go ahead and just fall back. I ain't no bitch, even though I'm gonna fall back. I'm gonna let you think that, though. "I'm gonna stop, think, and choose. I'm gonna analyze the situation, and I'm gonna do what's best for me. That's how I feel."* - North Lawndale Client #4.

The high-risk males explained how having jobs was the primary way of keeping them safe by interrupting the pattern of hanging out in the neighborhood which would place them at higher risk. Also, many times employment opportunities would place them in situations where they would be in the same space with rivals. Below, a quote from a North Lawndale client #10 provides some insight on how his behavior changed through the job opportunities; he also describes how he wishes these opportunities would be broadly offered throughout his community:

> *Interviewer:*   Okay. All right. Do you think that your behavior changed in any way after coming in contact with Cure Violence or your point of view changed?

> *Interviewee:*   "*Yeah. It changed like, man, all of this stuff happening. Only thing if we just come together we can just stop everything if everybody just come together. Everybody like to meet. If we got something to say about somebody. We gonna all come down and we're gonna sit down with each other. We gonna talk about it. If he got something you gotta say against him, let him know*".

> *Interviewer:*   Do you think Cure Violence had something to do with that approach? Like to help you understand, "All right, we can roll like this"?

> *"To me you can, we can, when we see each other we don't like each other, but before we got the job, oh, it was—well, we had them, they had us. Now we got this job it was… I was like, "They know what they talking about." Like, I feel like they will treat us like if we was their kids or something like. The Cure Violence, like Chinelo Washington. Every time he get up on the, like a job or something, he'll let us know about it. He'll let us know about it. That's showing he care about us. He don't want us to be out here like nobody else, out here selling drugs, and then locked up, or nothing like that. He care about us. You wanna do something positive with ourselves."* – North Lawndale client #10

The other behavior change described by the high-risk men was how their connections to outreach workers motivated them to positively interact and mentor younger members in their community including family members. As the North Lawndale client below explains, the outreach workers taught them how to be leaders:

> *"Really, they just taught us how to lead correctly, lead correctly to make sure—at first, I really wasn't really on my little brother about his school work. Cuz we ain't got the same*

mama, you feel me. His mama was telling me, "Yeah, he messing up in school." That's when I really get, "Man, what you doing? Go to school, man, you tweaking. Get your grades right so you can get up outta there. It's easy. You tweaking. Really, I'm putting my little brother on the right track to lead him out of, you feel me, staying outta trouble, stuff like that. Jared and Lil' Chinelo helped me though. Cuz at first, I wasn't even really caring about him, you feel me, going to school like that, you feel me. Now, knowing the stuff I know now and what they told me now, he gotta go to school, got to. That's a zero brainer. He got to. That's dead. I tell my little brother just like that, "You going to college, period. Ain't no ifs, ands or buts about it, you going. If I don't go, you going, for real. He got to." – North Lawndale client #7

Another North Lawndale client describes how outreach workers not only provide

opportunities to get off the street through social and employment opportunities but they help

develop clients as future mentors:

> *Interviewee: "They help kids get off the street. They give them jobs. They learn how to work with their hands, and some people just—Cure Violence is good.*
> *They help you with getting in school. They help you—they mentor a lot of*
> *kids, and they help you to become mentors really."*- North Lawndale client
> #1
>
> *Interviewer:* They help you become mentors? Explain how they help you become mentors.
>
> *Interviewee:* "*Cause you—if you pay attention to how they teach you and work with you to help you do better, you could take that practice and teach your brother or your sister or your friend something just like that, to do something positive in life. That's how I view it. It just teaches you how to be more open to life, more open to opportunities that come your way.*
> *'Cause at first I was the shy type. [Laughter] I wasn't open. I'm not the talkative person. I'm quiet. I'm always quiet. Now I'm in the—I'm talkative. I tell people how I feel. I show people. I teach my kids, and I just learned to be a better person."*- North Lawndale client #1
>
> *Interviewer:* What do you think your life would be like if you didn't come in contact with them?
>
> *Interviewee:* "*I think it would have been—I would have had a little difficulty getting to where I am at in life right now, which they helped a lot. Right now I'm gonna get my REN license for medical assistant, and I'm doing just good."* - North Lawndale client #1

Changing behavior is one component that explains how high-risk males can participate in

the community in pro-social ways; changing individuals in their social network is another

strategy. When examining the data to understand behavior change, the code, *changing people,*

helped explain how high-risk males were able to engage in the community in pro-social ways.

Below the North Lawndale client describes how his pro-social involvement in the community

made him reflect on the company he keeps:

> *"It made me feel good, and it made me step back and look, like, "Damn. Okay, maybe if I hang around more positive brothers like that, you feel me, God will open up a door for me. When I get up there, okay, I'll do the same to another brother, help him out, just like they helped me out. You see what I'm saying? It's a cycle that I'm trying to keep going on."* - North Lawndale Client #4

A Woodlawn client further explains how he began to assess his friends. In his

description, he shares how many of his peers are looking for guidance but they are often socially

connected with a person or a group who is involved in anti-social behavior. He describes that his

connection with outreach workers has given him real guidance and as a result, he needs to get rid

of friends who don't support responding to conflict in pro-social ways.

> *"Once you ain't got no guidance, you feel like you your own man. Now everybody else looking at you like, "Okay, you the man to us...people just go wit it off what the next person -off somebody vibe. If my vibe feelin' okay, I wanna do this, then you be with me every day. You gotta be the bigger and say, "Naw, I ain't wit this today. I have situations like, friends that ganna go- I wanna do do something but it'll be something telling me, Nah, don't do it. And you friends, you real friends, they ain't gon' get mad at you if you don't want to do it."* ---Woodlawn client #9

A North Lawndale client continues by explaining how his connection with his outreach

worker changed his outlook, his behavior, and made him aware of the people within his social

circle:

> *"Chinelo educated me...he helped me wake up. I saw brothers being unified against the violence and unnecessary killings, the killings of kids, old people. I started respecting myself, I started respecting older people. Once I had this last bid, education was already up there. I started paying attention to the people that was around me. Look around the room (with people I know), I'm like, Damn, this is a damn waste. It's a waste of a man."* - North Lawndale client #7

Finally, this North Lawndale client describes his transformation as becoming educated and aware that individuals within his social circle were not aligned with his future goals. He describes knowledge as empowerment.

"Once I realized that people were just using me for violence, I decided to educate myself. Now I know better. I'm young. I'm still young. I'm able to change. But I realize now if you don't know nothin', you can't do nothin'. If you don't have no empowerment, you can't do nothin."- North Lawndale client # 10

The code network shown in Figure 5 helps describe the processes involved with getting high-risk clients to participate in the community in pro-social ways. The outreach workers use their previous involvement in criminal activity as a reflective tool to help them be patient with clients and listen to clients' primary concerns. As described in the previous section, observing, imagining, and experiencing outreach workers engagement with high-risk males influences their thoughts about desisting from criminal behavior. High-risk males often described this process as a changed mindset. Once the clients have expressed to outreach workers that they have changed their mindset on involvement in criminal behavior, the outreach workers use this opportunity to mentor the clients by providing them small steps to make changes in their lives, especially behavior changes that facilitate clients gaining employment. These behavior changes include strategies to manage their emotions as well as abstaining from risky behavior such as fighting, instigating conflict through social media, and shooting, selling and using drugs. The outreach workers use consistent contact to reinforce clients' efforts toward behavior change. In some cases, outreach workers describe being tough and using force to make sure clients do not relapse back into risky behavior. Finally, pro-social involvement in the community has changed the way clients interact with their social networks. The clients describe how this changing process has them reflect on disassociating with high-risk individuals in their network and mentoring those who are open to change.
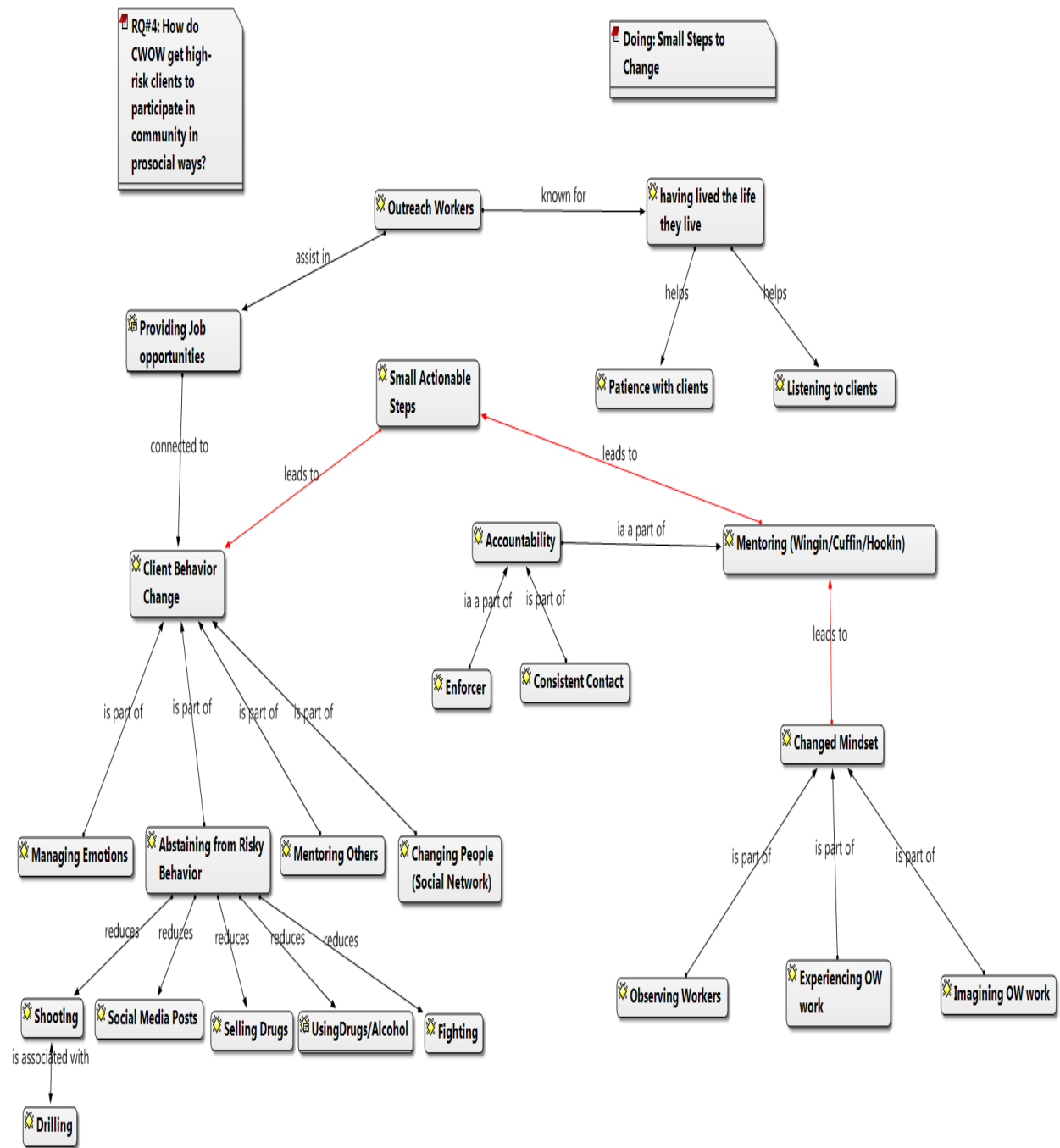
Figure 5: Code network for the behavioral component of P.E.

E. **Summary**

This chapter aimed to answer four research questions to help solve the intellectual puzzle of how Cure Violence outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their community. This analysis used a grounded theory concept, described as theoretical saturation, which indicates that there are no new themes or new concepts from the respondent. This saturation is reflected in the multiple quotes representing from the majority of the interviewees including clients, non-clients, and outreach workers related to each research question. The results section included quotes from 72% of the 40 participants interviewed as well as all of the outreach workers interviewed (n=4). Figure 6 features distribution of quotes used for each research question. The figure highlights the quotes used in the results were distributed by each research question. Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of quotes used by 33 of 44 interviewees. The exclusion of quotes from 11 participants was a subjective choice influenced by an analytical decision to use the most descriptive quotes to help answer each research question. Although quotes from 11 participants were not used in this chapter, all their data were analyzed, and coding patterns were consistent with the interviewees whose quotes were included throughout this chapter.

The findings indicate how emotional pain related to violence has created environments that are hyper-isolated and fractionalized and where social organization is severely constrained. Acting as a credible agent, the outreach workers provide an opportunity to interrupt social isolation and the violent responses to conflict, as well as change/alter the mindset of many of the high-risk men. The outreach workers are able to interrupt these processes because of their personal histories living high-risk lifestyles similar to the clients and non-clients.
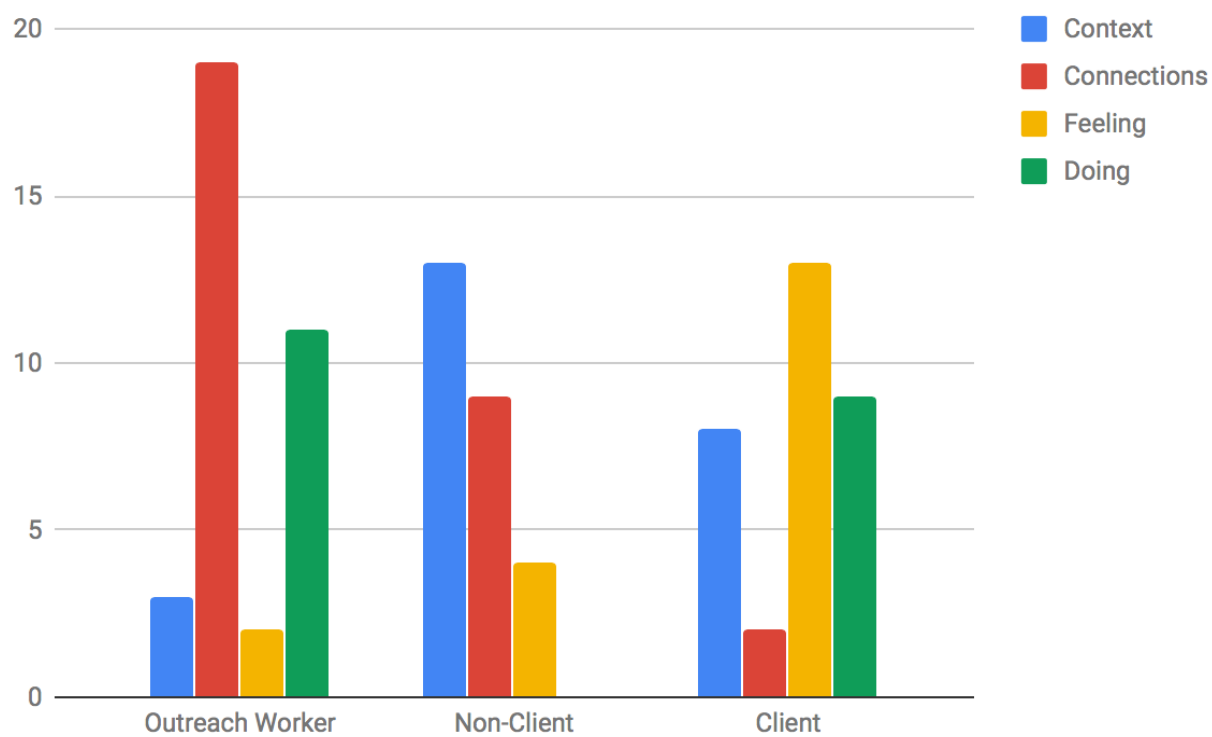
Figure 6. Distribution of Quotes by Research Question
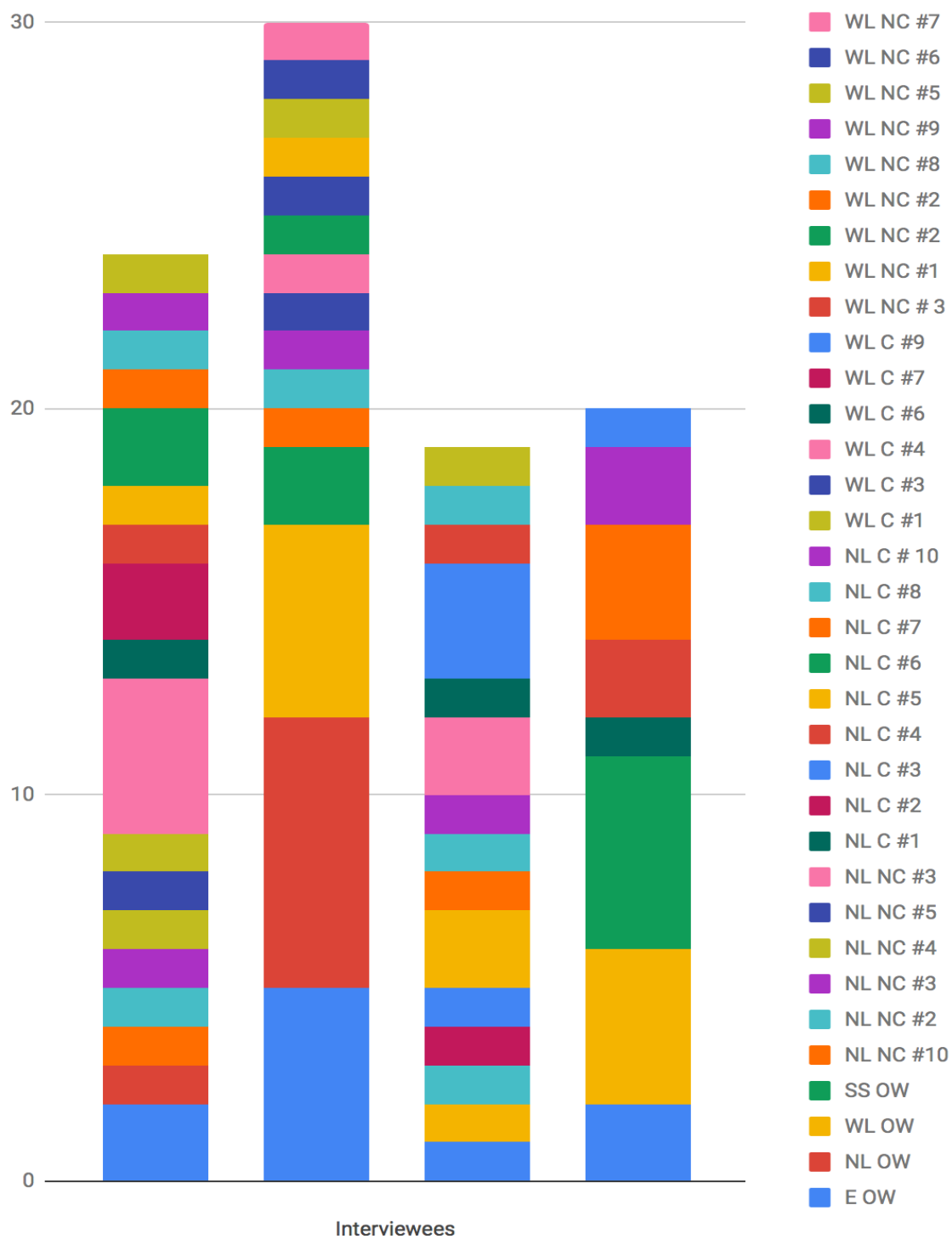
Context, Connections , Feeling and Doing

Figure 7. Distribution of Quotes by Interviewee

The outreach workers used their past identities to establish trust and connect with the high-risk males initially by providing opportunities to get high-risk males off the streets through social and work opportunities. However, the outreach worker interview findings indicate that their credibility extends beyond just their past criminal involvement. The outreach workers described personal characteristics like being hard-working, serious, and giving back to the community that endeared them to the high-risk males, as well as other residents in the community. These personal qualities combined with the high-risk males' descriptions of witnessing, imagining, and experiencing the action of the outreach workers are factors that help some males believe that they can feel control, confidence, and competence to respond non-violently to conflict and to positively re-connect to their community. High-risk males described this phenomenon as "changing their mindset." The changed mindset gave outreach workers a signal that the clients were ready for consistent mentoring from the outreach workers. The main goal of the mentoring was to provide the clients with small tasks and strategies to help clients make small steps toward behavior change.

This chapter organized the findings under a grounded theory framework described by Glesne & Peshkin (1992) as "finding the story." The next chapter will continue to use Glesne & Peshkin's analytical tools to "tell the story by organizing what was heard" in the interviews and describing the value added from the data with existing literature on social disorganization literature and empowerment theory. The next chapter will also discuss how the shared worldview of outreach workers and high-risk males was used to empower younger males to overcome oppressive forces to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their community.

V. DISCUSSION

A.   <u>Introduction</u>

This study aimed to explore how Cure Violence outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their communities. This study uses psychological empowerment (PE) theory as a framework to help subjectively construct how street outreach workers were able to empower high-risk males. This chapter provides descriptions of each of the components of PE: interactional, interpersonal, and behavioral to explain the processes involved with helping empower high-risk males toward pro-social involvement in their community. This chapter will visually highlight these processes through a conceptual model (see Figure 6) and will then discuss the strategies used to establish rigor including summarizing the data analysis steps, member checking with outreach workers and experts in the field, and describing the study's limitations. Finally, this chapter will end with a discussion of the future implications of this work.

B.   <u>Context Behind the Conflict</u>

When seeking to understand the context behind the conflict in the communities where the high-risk interviewees lived, the major topics heard were about emotional pain, traumatic loss, and suffering related to the exposure to violence in the community. A sobering finding was that 80% of the interviewees mentioned losing someone to violence and 50% mentioned losing multiple individuals within their interpersonal networks. When exploring the interviewees understanding of the source of conflict, the majority of the participants could not point to the root of the conflict. However, they understood that direct victimization or victimization of someone within their interpersonal network sustained the conflict in the community.
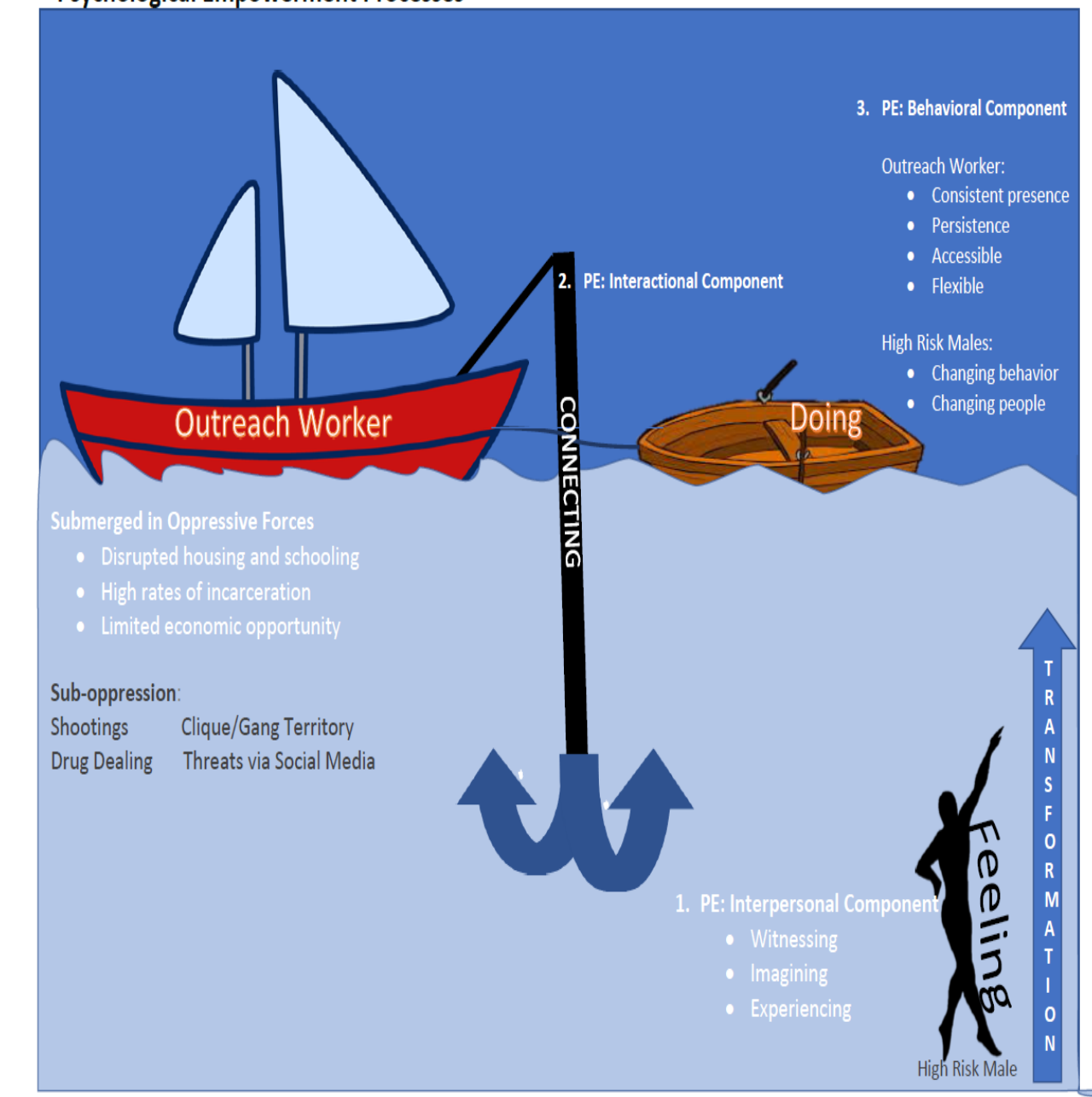
Psychological Empowerment Processes

Figure 8: Psychological Empowerment Processes

Examples of this persistent violence were vividly described by Parson (1994, p.157) as "urban firefights that spread and result in an urban traumatic stress response syndrome". This investigation uncovered two major ways high-risk males describe their response to their emotional pain and trauma: 1) isolating themselves within their small interpersonal networks; and, 2) exacting revenge on those that are believed to be at fault for causing them pain. Based on the stories from many of the participants, this isolation and the need for vigilante justice contributed to the development of street-level cliques who often perpetuated violent actions in the community.

Another way that emotional pain was expressed was through threatening violence with social media posts. These posts were frequently described as a precipitant to a violent event. Many of the high-risk interviewees described an erosion of positive social relationships due to the development of cliques. Youth often had to make difficult choices about who could participate within their social network based on where they lived due to cliques that are strongly related to residential blocks. All but one of the forty high-risk males interviewed described cliques as a major reason why it was difficult for conflict to end peacefully.

The phenomenon of revenge shootings, vigilante justice, and threatening posts reflects what Campbell (2010) describes as sub-oppression: when oppressed individuals or groups attempt to liberate themselves by oppressing others. The social context described by the high-risk males is what Freire (1970) calls a submersion in oppression. Campbell (2010) vividly provides a useful metaphor describing this phenomenon as submersion in a sea of oppressive forces that constrain the worldview of those submerged. This study posits that the interviewees live in this sub-oppressive sea; they are impacted by societal level oppressive forces that have constrained

the ability of low-income communities such as Woodlawn and North Lawndale to buffer youth from the individual, relational and community-wide risks (see Figure 1).

The impact the criminal justice system has had on the organizational structure for gang-involved residents was one of the most discussed structural constraints. Although many of the interviewees explained that the development of cliques was related to the emotional pain and loss due to victimization, participants also explained that cliques and the related conflict with street-level cliques were able to persist because of the decentralization of traditional gangs. High-risk male respondents consistently discussed that the lack of an organized gang structure made it difficult to regulate emotional responses to conflict. These emotional responses were described as random shootings often referred to as "drilling." Drilling, through shooting in rival gang territories, was used as a way to express frustration related to emotional pain. When discussions arose about interventions to resolve conflict, a dominant theme is represented by the following quote, "*we need some people that can step in squash the beef.*" This perspective confirms findings in the recent literature suggesting that incarcerating gang leaders doesn't necessarily lead to safer streets; it can lead to more violence.

Robert Vargas' (2016) study in the South Lawndale community of Chicago, locally known as Little Village, provides a descriptive account of how locking up gang leaders removed informal social controls that prevented violence. Vargas describes how the absence of established gang leaders led to less organized gangs attempting to seize control of turf; not only are gang leaders gone but so are the existing informal organizations and rules that in many ways protect communities. This perspective was shared by all of the outreach workers and 25 of the 40 high-risk males interviewed. These findings are further explored in the research explaining how

high incarceration rates weaken informal social controls and thus make communities less safe (Clear, 2009).

Although not richly described by the interviewees, there were consistent mentions of the macro-level impact of oppressive structural forces on the community throughout the interviews. Discussion points included the impact of massive public housing destruction on the south and west sides of Chicago which disrupted social networks as well as informal economies; Chicago public school closings which one outreach worker opined contributed to school-dropouts due to fear of crossing gang/clique territories; and the difficulty of securing legal work opportunities. Although not widely discussed, these descriptions provide evidence that some interviewees had a deeper understanding of the social-political environment beyond just individual-level factors affecting their lives and communities.

High-risk male interviewees provided tremendous insights into the impact of conflicts in their communities. As with other urban ethnographies focused on marginalized African-American men, the high-risk males are *"social thinkers who can interpret the world around them and actively compare their situations to those of others"* (Young, 2006, p 11). The analysis of the conversations about conflict provided insights into many of the high-risk interviewees' beliefs that if traditional gang leadership were still in place, there would be more adherence to traditional codes of the street (Anderson, 2003) including not shooting at women, children, and elderly, as well as listening to leadership when they decide to end certain conflicts. As many participants shared, the impact of trauma as a result of emotional pain and grief contributes to the endemic of violence in North Lawndale and Woodlawn.

Healing from the loss experienced in these communities is difficult. It is well documented that chronic trauma impacts brain development, emotion regulation, cognitive functioning, and

behavioral functioning (Dube, 2001; Felitti et al., 1998; Merrick et al., 2017; Reavis et al., 2013).

It is this pain that some respondents felt would be too much to overcome, and as a result, that

violence would never cease, regardless of the presence of outreach workers. However, many

interviewees also felt it unlikely that police were the answer as they often don't have social ties

to the community and instead further disrupt social capital that has been constrained over

multiple generations due to oppressive forces. Mobilization efforts focused on normalized

traumatic childhood, and adult experiences are an important cause for policy-makers to rally

around (Burke-Harris; 2018).

A more difficult, yet important, education campaign to rally individuals, communities and

institutions around is the intergeneration transmission of trauma as a result of the dehumanizing

process of slavery. DeGruy (2005) provides a multi-generational view of trauma and explains

that the traumatic impact of slavery has led to the disruption of family, economic, religious, and

social systems by dehumanizing people of African descent. DeGruy argues that vacant esteem is

an outcome of this intergenerational trauma and is also a risk factor for violent behavior. Vacant

esteem emerges and is transmitted inter-generationally primarily because the truth about global

institutional complicity not recognizing the humanity of people of African descent remains

hidden.

Criminalization of behavior, even ordinary behavior is the new face of oppression for urban

communities of color (Alexander, 2014). It is a lot to overcome, and one of the limitations of this

study is that the interviews did not explore the impact of trauma in more depth. However, the

participants did suggest that a key aspect of social organization has been removed which makes

it more difficult to overcome the challenges in the community: informal social control. This

study argues that liberation from the stigma of being a criminal is an important first step on the

long path of healing. Empowerment through connection, feeling, and doing, is a mechanism toward regaining one's humanity (see Figure 6). Burke-Harris (2018) explains that for most of society, the traumatic scars can be hidden. However, for the subjects of this study, their history of criminalization has made many of their scars public. Friere (1970) explains that oppressive systems act in such a way that those scars act as a "scarlet letter." Oppressive systems prescribe static roles of criminality and perpetuate a national narrative, through societal level processes such as media and political elections, that re-establishing one's role in the community as a pro-social agent is impossible. The next section will briefly explain that outreach workers have re-established themselves in their communities as pro-social agents. Furthermore, this section will descriptively inform how outreach workers used their public scars as cultural capital to connect with high-risk residents. The central element of their cultural capital was based on the fact that the outreach workers shared a "similar painful path" (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) as high-risk males, which enabled them to connect high-risk males to opportunities to re-engage in their community and re-establish their humanity.

C.　　**Context of Connections**

"Show me your scars, and I will show you mine" (DeGruy, 2017).　Joy DeGruy made this comment during a community presentation on healing from the effects of intergenerational slavery-related trauma. The main point DeGruy made was about how hidden the traumatic experience has been for many individuals. Although mental health is stigmatized in the United States, it is further stigmatized in most African-American communities partially due to the lack of faith in major institutions as a result of systematic racism. Burt et al. (2017) examine the link between racism and crime by providing longitudinal data to describe how past histories of racial discrimination predict criminality. Furthermore, it has been well documented that due to limited

resources of low-income populations, the most illegal behavior occurs in public spaces, which increase the risk for this behavior to be criminalized (Drake & Cayton, 1945; Dubois, 1973; Patillo, 2008).

The high-risk males and outreach workers in this study have experienced multiple instances of victimization, and they share an experience of criminalization that separates them from most residents in the African-American community. The experiences of the high-risk males can best be described as submersion in oppressive forces (Campbell, 2010; Friere, 1970). As described in the previous section, this submersion caused these participants to be exposed to failing structures such as failing schools, disrupted housing, limited legal, economic opportunity as well as being targeted and victimized by shooting, clique and gang violence, and harassment by the police (see Figure 1). The outreach workers have a comparable experience of being submerged under these oppressive forces. The outreach workers at one point in their lives were able to liberate themselves from their role as sub-oppressors. Key to the outreach workers' ascent was through what Freire describes as "recognizing one's humanity." The outreach workers had mentors who were able to recognize their human capital, true leadership qualities, and skills that could be transferred assets useful to the mainstream society. The outreach workers now have dedicated their career path toward helping empower other high-risk males to truly liberate themselves.

The outreach workers were able to use two connectors: cultural and human capital. Young (2006), defines capital as "a conceptual device that evens the playing field for assessing individual and collective experiences, reactions and behaviors...focusing on capital lends some insight into why people behave in different ways and why they develop different understandings about those around them". (p. 101-102). Cultural capital, defined as "the knowledge of how to

function or operate in a specific social setting to mobilize, generate a response from, or affect others" served as the initial connector (see Figure 6).

Duncan-Andrade (2009) has a useful description that helps explain how outreach workers were able to use their cultural capital as a connector with high-risk men to begin the pathway to empowerment. Duncan-Andrade explains that true hope for change is when the messenger "shares the same painful path and has made the same self-sacrifices in her/his own life that s/he is asking young adults to make." As highlighted in Figure 1, this painful path is shaped by oppressive forces, a history of sub-oppression, victimization, trauma, pain, and suffering. These experiences have shaped the way the interviewees view their social ecology. Swindler (1986) describes this as a cultural worldview. The cultural worldview is not a homogenous construct but a diverse set of toolkits and strategies that are utilized in response to macro-level structural and individual level constraints. The outreach workers and high-risk males have a shared understanding of why the latter make choices that may seem risky to individuals that have never walked their "same painful path" (Andrade, 2008).

Cultural capital serves as an important tool because it helps debunk the stigma often placed on the residents of low-income urban communities as having a different value system or norms or aspirations than middle or upper-class societies. Over the past 40 years, many ethnographies have explained that low-income residents share the same values, norms, and aspirations as a mainstream society but structural constraints force some low-income residents to behave differently than what would be expected (Duneier, 2001, Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Hannerz, 1969; Liebow, 1967; Patillo, 2008).

A common phrase used by the high-risk males was that the outreach workers, *"Lived the life that I live."* This phrase captures the essence of Duncan-Andrade's (2009) "shared painful

path." This shared lived experience allowed the outreach workers to connect with the high-risk

men. Through the analysis of the high-risk interviews, a dominant theme from the conversations

was that it was the outreach workers' previous lives as gangsters and their history as sub-

oppressors, highlighted in the interviews by phrases such as "*serious*" or "*enforcers*," that gave

the outreach workers respect. Ethnographic accounts of urban men involved in illegal street

activity have highlighted that respect is valuable cultural capital that helps manage relationships

(Anderson, 1999; Bourgois, 1995; Duneier, 2001; Horowitz, 1983; Liebow, 1967). As explained

in the previous section, a dominant finding was that the high-risk males felt that the

decentralization of gang leadership through sweeping incarcerations had resulted in weakened

informal social controls. The lack of controls made it difficult to end many conflicts and

constrain the expansion of street-level cliques. Some of the street outreach workers represent a

return to leadership that has the skill set, experience, and respect to end conflicts. The outreach

workers use this dynamic, as well as the urban legends of their past lives as sub-oppressors as a

tactic to connect some of the high-risk men.

The interviews with the outreach workers provided more insight into the processes

involved in connecting high-risk males with opportunities to engage in the community in pro-

social ways. A common theme from outreach worker interviews was that they believed the high-

risk males were not simply connected to outreach workers because of their cultural capital but

also their human capital. Human capital is defined as "the skills or abilities needed to perform

specific tasks" (Young, 2006 p 48). The outreach workers described aspects of human capital

such as being hardworking, passionate, fair, likable and giving back to the community. These

characteristics help to break down the stigmatization which often accompanies individuals with a

history of violent offending. When the outreach workers commit to desist from criminal

behavior, individuals in the community can see the outreach workers through a non-criminalized lens.

As described earlier, the preponderance of street-level cliques makes navigating through the community extremely difficult for many of the high-risk males interviewed. As a result, connecting to high-risk males is difficult work. Successfully connecting must take someone who possesses cultural capital -- that is, someone who has gone through similar experiences to interrupt the isolation and the violence. However, based on the interviews with outreach workers, that "shared painful path" is not enough. Strong human capital serves as a credible characteristic important for outreach to be successful. This human capital includes socially desirable traits like being hard working, passionate, fair and having the reputation of as a serious enforcer who can get high-risk individuals to listen. The outreach worker represents a community agent who recognizes humanity with these men who are responsible for most of the community-level violent crime.

When describing the context of the conflict in their communities, the high-risk interviewees described their frustration with the lack of organization and structure. They felt that a solution was a return to leaders who were left to encourage individuals involved in the conflict to listen. The high-risk men described a need to re-establish social capital that has been systematically removed through suppressive actions of the state. Parson (1994) describes the urban community violence as "urban firefights" using cultural and human capital; the Cure Violence outreach workers serve as urban firefighters. The empowering "hooks" are the connections to a shared pathway which is based on relationships, and it is also the opportunities to reduce risk by getting involved in social activities, non-violence mobilization, and most importantly for the high-risk men, job opportunities. However, the liberation must also occur

through the person who is submerged. As Freire (1970) explains, true liberation comes through

by attempting to be like an oppressor but through the personal struggle to empower oneself

towards liberation. To achieve liberation, one must believe they can use their interpersonal skills

to change the way they typically respond to conflict. Campbell (2010) explains that submersion

clouds the beliefs about what is possible.

Although the psychological empowerment process is not intended to be a stepwise

sequential process, the stories suggest that empowering high-risk males to respond to conflict in

non-violent ways and re-engage in their community in prosocial ways does indeed follow steps.

The first step involves the high-risk men connecting with the strengths and opportunities of their

social context. The next step is connecting with a social agent with multiple forms of capital to

consider alternatives to violence. To engage a highly marginalized population of young men, it is

important that the agent promoting alternatives has walked a similar path. The connections with

outreach workers exist because they have shared this path and they connect with high-risk males

on a human level. The third step of the psychological empowerment process is the need to feel

self-control, self-efficacy, and competence that alternatives will work. Simply put, the high-risk

males need to see some of the examples of alternatives before they feel pro-social responses and

actions will work for them. The next section captures how the outreach workers were able to

influence high-risk males to feel that they have the skills and the confidence to respond to

conflict in non-violent ways.

D. **Changing Mindset: I Can Be Bigger Than the Block**

The high-risk interviewees explain that many individuals isolate themselves in their

community as a strategy to stay safe. In some cases, the isolation is so extreme that some

community members socialize in alleys. A recurring term used when the interviewees described

their isolation was the mindset. The mindset was defined as thoughts and feelings about one's

place in life especially as related to aspirations for social mobility. One Woodlawn client

described the mindset of the community as stuck in place not only with his peers but also with

the previous generation, *"You seen it for your whole life…from your friends, your uncles,*

peoples' fathers, that is all you know".

Several urban ethnographies have explored how access to social networks can impact the

mindset of marginalized men. Young (2006) described how the outlook of high-risk young men

from Chicago's west side was shaped by the degree in which they were socially isolated. His

findings indicated that those that were isolated were unable to feel that they could achieve an

upwardly mobile future beyond relying "solely on individual skills and abilities" (Young, 2006,

p. 14). Whereas those that did have social connections were able to not only imagine a possible

positive self but also were able to leverage those social connections to strengthen their social

capital to attain desired goals. Macleod's (1987) conducted an ethnography on the future

aspirations of socially isolated high-risk low-income white and African-American males from

some similar low-income communities in Boston. Macleod found that high-risk white males

were able to accomplish some degree of success by rejecting school achievement and instead

leveraging social networks to attain employment.

The African-American young men, who focused more on individual skills and abilities,

were unable to attain any degree of social mobility. The lesson learned from the previous

ethnographies was that that human capital alone, defined as individual skills and abilities, is not

enough the end isolation. Interrupting the mindset of limited future possibility as well as social

isolation requires connections with individuals who possess social capital.

The outreach workers serve as a re-connection to social capital that many interviewees described as previously having been stripped away due to structural forces including mass incarceration and the decentralization of institutionalized gangs. As described earlier, the outreach workers initially can connect because they possess respected cultural capital. That is, the outreach workers understand the worldview of high-risk men because they have *"lived the life they lived."* The outreach workers have experienced not only the large structural oppressive forces but also were once sub-oppressors themselves because the outreach workers were able to liberate themselves from that previous role to contribute positively to their community, they can now provide social capital, as an informal social agent, to mediate conflict, promote pro-social norms, and provide social connections to opportunities.

However, this study argues that these social connections to opportunities are not enough. The high-risk males need to believe that social capital will help them. For this to happen, the mindset of the high-risk males needs to change. To engage the men in action, the outreach workers needed to interrupt their mindset. Swinder (2001) describes this process as "shifting frames." She explains that culture informs strategies of action for responding to situations. The high-risk men had their typical "repertoires or toolkits" to pull from in response to the pain, loss, and frustration they consistently experience as a result of the high exposure to violence.

The interpersonal component of psychological empowerment theory is a useful tool to explain how outreach workers were able to get high-risk males to "shift their frame" to feel self-control when responding to conflict, and to feel competent to respond to conflict in non-violent ways. The findings of this study describe that this empowering component was accomplished in three ways. The first was witnessing the outreach workers interrupting violence and providing opportunities for other high-risk residents including their peers to gain employment and actively

participate in "stop shooting"' violence prevention mobilization. The high-risk clients and non-clients were able to build up some confidence in their abilities by seeing outreach workers who were once rivals working together in the community to make the community safer. They not only observed them as messengers but also through their ability to bring other youth who were rivals together through job opportunities. Seeing workers and other high-risk youth working together worked to transform a mindset that previously only saw high-risk males interacting in anti-social ways. Some specific ways outreach workers were able to do this was through interrupting conflict, bridging boundaries of rival groups, and pro-social mobilization in community with individuals who were previously marginalized and viewed as the problem, not the solution.

Another way the outreach workers were able to activate the intrapersonal component within the young me was by imagining. Some young males didn't explicitly describe seeing the outreach workers in action, but they were aware of their work. Instead of mentioning witnessing their work, some interviewees described imagining themselves making a similar transformation as the outreach worker at some point the future. The best way to capture this phenomenon was through the quote from one high-risk male. *"If he can do it, I can do it."* It was the knowledge of the outreach worker's transformation from being submerged in a life of sub-oppression to being liberated as an active pro-social agent of informal social control. It was through this shared cultural capital and the belief that they also have the possibility of swimming their way out of being submerged in a sea of violence or reacting as a sub-oppressor (see Figure 7). Witnessing and imagining help build up efficacy among the high-risk males that they too can engage in their community in pro-social ways. However, competency and self-control are built up through direct experience. Some interviewees directly experienced the outreach workers positively resolving conflict, helping them calm down in the heat of conflict, working on a job in the same space with

a long-standing rival without any conflict, and directly experienced promoting stop shooting

campaigns in their community. These direct experiences helped some high-risk clients develop

competencies and skills on how to be in a space with a rival without resorting to violence.

The high-risk males were able to trust outreach workers because of the outreach

workers' cultural capital. They were able to strengthen connections with outreach workers

because of the outreach worker's human capital. They were able to feel self-control, self-

efficacious, and competent by witnessing and experiencing the way outreach workers were able

to use social capital to resolve conflicts and provide pro-social opportunities for high-risk males.

Empowerment for this group of men takes a diverse use of multiple forms of capital. Witnessing,

imagining, and experiencing the outreach workers in action impacted the mindset of high-risk

men, specifically by expanding their worldview or "shifting the cultural frame of how they

understood their social-political context to work (Swinder, 2001. p.31). Changing mindset was

typically described as an indicator that helped outreach workers understand if clients were ready

to liberate themselves from their sub-oppressive state. The next section will describe the last

psychological empowerment component, the behavioral component specifically describing how

the outreach workers enabled clients to engage in the community in pro-social ways.

E.   Doing: Small Steps Toward Change

The key to the outreach workers' ability to connect with high-risk males was first based

on their cultural capital, highlighted by their similar lived experiences. Secondly, it was their

human capital, for example, their reputation as hard workers, serious, fair, and giving back that

further solidified their connections with the high-risk males. It was this same cultural capital that

helped outreach workers to get their clients to behave in pro-social ways in the community. The

outreach workers serve as a cultural arbiter to pass down strategies on how to engage in pro-

social ways. Swinder (2001) refers to these strategies as "cultural capacities that enable one to adopt a new line of conduct." p.74. This new line of conduct is based on ways clients foster new skills to maintain a life outside of their hyper-isolated world. Due to a shared cultural identity, the outreach workers explained that they are careful not to dictate behavioral goals for their clients, as a similar approach would not have been successful for them when they were engaged in high-risk activity. As a result, the outreach workers used consistent contact and a listening ear as key elements of their engagement process. Outreach workers described this process as "hooking or winging-in" the clients. This aspect was particularly important because of the lack of positive social connections that many interviewees described possessing at a younger age which disappeared as they aged. The outreach workers provided "strategies of action" the process of incorporating new cultural scripts on how to navigate a new setting (Swindler, 2001). The outreach workers' role is critical to help support the clients as they experienced using new skills and roles beyond their previously isolated environment. To help clients stay on track, the outreach workers describe that "rolling up, hustling, being persistent" with clients as a way to keep them accountable. The outreach workers' cultural capital plays an important role as some explained that they could use their persona as a street enforcer as a means to keep clients on track. Swinder describes this as "drawing on an existing repertoire of cultural capacities as a means to achieve new values" The outreach workers also explain that being flexible is key, especially because having shared that same painful path, they understand the difficulty involved in behavior change. Within the cultural framework, Swindler describes a therapeutic ethic which is "being fluid in one's expectations that provides stability through flexibility that may keep people attuned as they change" (Swindler, 2001, p. 143).

The outreach workers explained that a "changed mindset" is usually an indicator that clients are ready for behavior change. The outreach workers then use small actionable tasks for clients to adopt as they make efforts toward behavior change. Giordano et al. (2002) best described these actionable tasks as "hooks for change," ways that individuals can connect with opportunities to desist from criminal activity. For high-risk males, these hooks include tasks like getting an identification card, completing a job application, learning how to dress for a job interview, getting a haircut, abstaining from drug use, or getting a G.E.D. Hooks, like an identification card, might not seem important but without it, social mobility is constrained. The outreach workers serve as a trusted agent of multiple forms of capital in which the clients can "learn new skills and habits within this larger worldview" (Swindler, 2001, p. 77).

Through the connections with the outreach workers, some clients created a new identity and re-established themselves in social institutions where they were previously marginalized. The clients describe how they have emerged from a sub-oppressive state to transform their identity as someone who can keep a job, be a father to their children, socialize with a larger network of peers, and abstain from negative posts on social media. In this empowered state of "doing," the clients see themselves as different than when they were marginalized and excluded from pro-social opportunities. Friere (1970) describes this as a "transformative state as liberation from oppression" in which high-risk clients are re-establishing their humanity and abandoning the role of the criminal. In addition to individual-level change, some clients described that changing their behavior also impacted how they viewed the individuals within their social network. As a result, some clients re-assessed how their social network could place their transformed identity at risk. For some clients, changing behavior meant changing people. In addition to changing who they interacted with socially, some clients explained that they changed

how they interacted with youth in their community. Some examples included coaching youth to engage in prosocial activities in the community. This phenomenon now adds another opportunity to insert more informal social controls within the community.

This study used constructivist grounded theory as a means to describe how Cure Violence outreach workers empower high-risk males to consider non-violent responses to conflict and to positively re-connect to their community. This construction aims not to solely reflect what the interviewees stated but weave in the researcher's experiences, and extant theories with the collected data. The forward of this study reflects the researcher's preconceived ideas based on attending school and growing up in communities that were impacted by structural forces including the loss of jobs, the disruption of housing, the illegal drug economy, and exposure to high levels of violence. These structural forces have largely stigmatized predominately African-American communities on the south and west side of Chicago. Stigma along with disruption and containment have been consistent experience for low-income African-American families throughout American history.

Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* serves as a useful frame to describe not only the impact of oppression but more importantly how liberation can re-connect an individual to one's humanity. The men interviewed in this study represent a small sample of men who are stigmatized by living in the low-income communities of Woodlawn and North Lawndale and also stigmatized by their involvement in illegal behavior. Using Freire's theoretical frame, this study attempts to explain how outreach workers have reestablished their own humanity by liberating themselves and other high-risk males from previous involvement in criminal activity to transform themselves into individuals who can contribute to their community in pro-social ways. This study uses psychological empowerment theory to describe how outreach workers enabled

high-risk males to connect to the outreach workers' cultural, human, and social capital as a means to this goal.

F.   <u>**Limitations**</u>

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) warn that a subjective construction of interview data is typically an "interpretive portrayal consisting of only several snapshots of a place and time and its people." Therefore, it is important to write about limitations of this approach. These limitations can come from the researcher as well as the subject. As Glesne & Peshkin (1986) explain, it is important to be sensitive to one's biases and subjectivity when interpreting the data. Although this study was able to provide the perspectives of marginalized African-American men whom views have traditionally been overlooked, this study has many limitations. One limitation was that this investigation focused solely on in-depth interviews that were limited to approximately 60 minutes. More descriptive data can be gathered for more in-depth interviews by conducting the interviews over a longer period. Also, interviews present a risk of "subjects providing what they believe the researchers want to hear" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1986). Collecting observational data along with interview data helps bridge the gap between what the interviewees say and what they do. During a member check interview with a former outreach worker who administers a separate street outreach worker intervention, he suggested that collecting secondary data of criminal records would help provide more validity to the actual risk levels of the clients. This interviewee explained that how outreach workers select clients at the highest-risk can be highly subjective. Unfortunately, this study did not use secondary data to determine the actual risk levels of the subjects interviewed. Another sample limitation is that the participants were African-American men except for one African-American female outreach worker. Interviews with high-risk women and Latinos who reside in some of the communities with high rates of

violent crime could contribute to a deeper understanding of the study's intellectual puzzle and research questions. Another limitation was this study did not include the perspectives of those interviewees that did not believe Cure Violence outreach workers (n=3) could positively contribute to the reduction of shooting in their communities. Although there were limited participants that had this perspective, there were a few interviewees who felt that the emotional toll of losing members in their social network to violence was too high for them to overcome. Some participants felt that Cure Violence would not be enough to convince victims to consider pro-social alternatives to victimization. Although the outreach workers credited mentors who recognized their human capital as the means to desist from their previous involvement in illegal and violent behavior, another limitation was that this study did not explore in more depth how outreach workers were able to desist. Finally, a previous investigation conducted in the same study communities explored the perspectives of adult residents in Woodlawn and North Lawndale (Gorman-Smith & Cosey-Gay, 2014). Using the data from this other study could have also provided a more detailed perspective of Cure Violence beyond just the perspectives of high-risk participants and outreach workers.

G.   Future Implications

Despite the oppressive structural constraints, Cure Violence outreach workers were able to empower a small group of high-risk men to learn pro-social skills to "become independent problem-solvers to take action against the social problem that affects their lives." (Zimmerman, 2000 p. 44). The current study examined empowerment theory at the individual level defined as psychological empowerment (PE). Future studies should consider how a trusted messenger can work with others in the community to reframe the stigmatization of criminality and work to achieve community empowerment. Future efforts should also attempt to incorporate ways to

rally organizations and community members to focus on healing from trauma. Although psychological empowerment theory focuses on individual level empowerment, organizational empowerment "provides opportunities for involvement, decision making, leadership, and support systems to make organizations closer to their ideals" (Zimmerman, 2000, Zimmerman et al., 2017). Entities such as the criminal justice system and trauma centers that are likely to come in contact with the highest risk population should develop creative ways to train staff to understand the oppressive historical experiences of people of color, especially in low-income communities. To truly empower these organizations, it is important to interrupt the static dichotomous worldview that oppressive systems use: us vs. them; good guys vs. bad guys, hard work vs. lazy. Organizations need to continue to view the humanity of all communities and be especially sensitive with members of the highest risk community.

Another opportunity is through community empowerment, defined as how community-based partnerships are created with the aim of problem-solving and decision-making to achieve a community-based ideal (Zimmerman, 2000, Zimmerman et al., 2017). The great incarceration experiment is coming to a close (Clear, 2018). It is important for community-based partnerships to engage and partner with high-risk populations who have been traditionally marginalized. As the finding highlights, these men and women possess strong human capital such as hard-working behavior, persistence, flexibility, and altruism that could help agencies toward their aims of collective impact.

Finally, the findings indicate that the outreach workers are a trusted community asset for the highest-risk population. As consistency and persistence are characteristics that the high-risk population finds valuable, it makes it difficult for outreach workers to say that they are off the clock or no longer being paid due to funding constraints. This phenomenon highlights the

importance of self-care. Future work should explore whether outreach workers adopt a John Henryism (Flaskerud, 2012) persona and take on more than they should because they are highly valued, and possess such strong human capital.

H.   <u>Reflexive Account</u>

This study begins and ends with my reflexive account as a means to strengthen the credibility of the research by acknowledging the theories that oriented this work as well as how my personal experiences account for any investigatory biases (Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). Freire (1970) contends that when we are trained to look at the world through prescribed dichotomies, we run the risk of viewing people through the lens that the oppressor would like us to use. Even though I grew up, attended school and conducted work in communities most constrained by structural factors and exposed to high levels of violence; this investigation forced me to confront my own biases about the small percentage of residents who commit most of the violent crime. This investigation helped open up why I sometimes loathed exiting the 71st exit on the Dan Ryan while visiting my parents. Before this study, I realized that I viewed this small group as thugs destroying what was once a decent working-class community.

However, the review of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* helped me understand that these perspectives deny humanity. Hearing the stories shared by outreach workers helped provide insight on how they used mentoring and their cultural and human capital to not only re-connect with their humanity but do the same for others that have lived a similar life. As restorative practitioners explain, "instead of asking what have these individuals done, it is important to consider the trauma related to how they have been impacted by oppressive structural forces." As a public health practitioner, I have spent a considerable amount of time in the community engaging families to participate in research studies, randomized control trials, and interventions,

and attend community meetings. I felt I possessed skills to enable me to connect with most any individual. However, I realized that I was afraid that of engaging non-clients for this study due to my own biases about high-risk youth.

Once I began recruiting non-clients for interviews and conducting interviews, I was surprised how aware they were of Cure Violence, and despite not being on their caseload, many of them saw Cure Violence as a positive answer to community problems. There were certainly non-clients that had doubts, and there were also residents who were unaware of their efforts, but ultimately I was amazed by Cure Violence's ability to connect with all high-risk males. They seemed to be like the Phoenix that re-incarnates itself from the ashes of criminality. They refused to be defined through oppressive dichotomies of the good guy versus the bad guy. It was this data collection experience that re-adjusted my lens about the small percentage of residents who have been victimized and who in turn perpetrate most of the violent crime in communities similar to where I grew up. This experience taught me always to challenge myself to see the humanity in all individuals despite the labels often given to different groups.

I.   <u>Conclusions</u>

Although there were many limitations to this study, Young (2006) explains that "it is important to pay attention to what people articulate as their understanding of how social processes work and how they as individuals might negotiate the complex social terrain, rather than simply looking at their actions." (p 10). The interviewees vividly described how conflict occurs and is sustained in their community and the need for a trusted social agent who could convince traumatized residents to consider pro-social alternatives. The outreach workers acted as cultural agents, a unique group of men whose cultural identity was constructed by experiences of stigmatization, containment, and disruption.

The previous lives of the outreach workers were viewed by society through a static lens of criminality. However, the outreach workers were able to liberate themselves by transforming into pro-social agents. In their transformed state, the outreach workers serve as "old heads" whocan pass down knowledge and provide social support while navigating existing disrupted communities born. This is a specialized role through which the outreach workers serve as avatars for what is possible. The outreach workers function as a beacon indicating transformation is indeed possible. The important components of this change are trusted social connections, opportunities to see examples of change, and opportunities for action. These components help shape the mindset of individuals, an important process needed for pro-social behavior change. The outreach workers provide a much-needed alternative to the normalized experience of high-risk youth on a pathway toward outcomes that lead to either jail, prison, or violent victimization.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Clients Interview Guide: *Beginning Time*: _____

Introduction: Thank you for coming today. My name is Franklin. I represent a research study being conducted by the Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention at the University of Chicago.

You were invited to participate in an interview to discuss your thoughts about safety in your neighborhood. I especially want to learn about your thoughts about violence and any efforts to decrease or prevent violence occurring in your community. I'll also want to hear about the potential impact violence in your community has had in your life and in the neighborhood.

This discussion should last about 1 hour.

I am going to ask for your permission to follow some strategies that will encourage a good discussion and that will help me understand your views:

Recording: Our discussion will be digitally recorded to allow for transcription and review of all comments at a future date.

Note Taking: From time to time, I will take notes to keep track of your discussion.

Confidentiality: When transcribing and analyzing our conversations, your identity and the identity of all discussion participants will remain anonymous.

Interviewer Instructions: Informed Consent

1. Give participant copy of consent form
2. Ask participant to read consent to themselves while you read copy of consent form aloud
3. Read extra copy of consent form to participant
4. Ask participant if he has any questions before signing form
5. Ask to participant to sign consent form and date
6. Sign form and date
7. Give copy of consent form for participant to keep

Note: The first two questions are for all participants

The Opening Question: Background in Neighborhood (5-10 Minutes)

> *Before we get started, I would like for you to tell me about your time in this neighborhood. Reflecting on your time in this neighborhood, please share with me how long you have lived in this house/apt and describe what it has been like living in this*

APPENDIX A (Continued)

neighborhood.
- o *Potential Probes:*
  - ▪ *How long have you lived in this neighborhood?*
  - ▪ *How would you describe your neighbors to someone who has never been in your neighborhood?*

HOW LONG_____
WHAT AREA BOUNDARIES_____

- • *How would you describe the community organizations (like churches, CBO, parks, others) to someone who has never been in your neighborhood?*
- • *Describe some positive qualities about your block/neighborhood*
- • *Describe some negative qualities about your block/neighborhood*
- • *If you could change something about your block/neighborhood what would it be?*

Introduction Question: Safety and Violence (10-15 minutes)

- • How safe do you feel in your neighborhood? During the day? In the evening?
- • Please take a moment to reflect on conflict in your neighborhood. Based on your point of view, what are things that may cause that conflict to become violent?
- • What are the attitudes of your neighbors around the use of violence?
- • Can you describe how people respond to violence in non-violent ways? (rallies/marches, prayer vigils, debates)

Are there resources in your neighborhood to address issues of safety and violence? Has the level of violence changed in the last year? How has it changed? Describe some of the reasons the level of violence has changed in the past year.

Key Question: Awareness and Impact of Cure Violence (30 Minutes):

Questions for Cure Violence Clients

1. Are you involved with cure violence?

2. How would you describe Cure Violence?

3. Describe your life before Cure Violence?

4. Does Cure Violence play any role in your life? How do you interact with Cure Violence?

   a. Potential Probes include:

APPENDIX A (Continued)

Who are they?

1. Describe your relationship with them before they were OW/VI

2. How connected to the streets would you say they were

3. How did they establish your trust?

4. How would you describe the time you spent with them?

   a. Where did you talk to them?

   b. What types of things did y'all do?

      i. Social

      ii. Court/lawyers

      iii. Spiritual

ii. What do they do?

1. How would you describe their message?

   a. Describe a time when they mediated conflict for you?

   b. What alternatives did they help you realize?

   c. What gang activity

2. How did it feel to be in their offices?

3. How often would you say you saw them?

iii. How visible do you think their workers are in your community?

2. Has Cure Violence had any impact in your neighborhood.

   a. Potential Probes include:

      i. Has Cure Violence done anything to resolve conflict in your neighborhood?

      ii. How visible would you say they were?

APPENDIX A (Continued)

        iii. Has Cure Violence done anything to help de-escalate tension in your neighborhood?

        iv. How much control would you say they had?

        v. Has Cure Violence helped improve safety in your neighborhood?

3. Please take a moment to describe how Cure Violence has impacted your life.

    a. Potential Probes include:

        i. Has Cure Violence helped you resolve conflict?

        ii. If so, what specific strategies did the Outreach Workers/Violence Interrupters use to help you resolve conflict

        iii. Has Cure Violence helped in any other parts of your life, outside of resolving conflict or the focus on violence? Have you changed in any way since you've started working with Cure Violence? If so, how have you changed?

        iv. Has any of your behavior changed since you've started working with Cure Violence? If so, what has changed? Why do you think this is? If not, why hasn't anything changed?

        v. What would you describe as your Bumpy Roads and Falls?

        vi. How has your involvement in your community changed after coming in contact with Outreach Workers and/or Violence Interrupters in Cure Violence.

        vii. How would you describe your life now after coming in contact with CF?

        viii. Tell me what you think of the following quote:
        "People are less likely to shoot if they are taking advantage of alternatives"

◻ CLOSING QUESTION (5 mins): ***If you could design a program to reduce violence and improve safety in your neighborhood what would you like to see happen in this program?***

Conclusion:

APPENDIX A (Continued)

Thank you again for participating. Today we discussed your viewpoint on XXXX, your understanding of XXXX, and XXX. Is there anything else you would like to add so that we can better understand your opinions?

Thank you for your time

(time_____)   Closing

> **The information you provided was very helpful.**

APPENDIX B

NONCLIENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE *Beginning Time*: _____

Introduction: Thank you for coming today. My name is Franklin. I represent a research study being conducted by the Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention at the University of Chicago.

You were invited to participate in an interview to discuss your thoughts about safety in your neighborhood. I especially want to learn about your thoughts about violence and any efforts to decrease or prevent violence occurring in your community. I'll also want to hear about the potential impact violence in your community has had in your life and in the neighborhood.

This discussion should last about 1 hour.

I am going to ask for your permission to follow some strategies that will encourage a good discussion and that will help me understand your views:

Recording: Our discussion will be digitally recorded to allow for transcription and review of all comments at a future date.

Note Taking: From time to time, I will take notes to keep track of your discussion.

Confidentiality: When transcribing and analyzing our conversations, your identity and the identity of all discussion participants will remain anonymous.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: INFORMED CONSENT

- Give participant copy of consent form
- Ask participant to read consent to themselves while you read copy of consent form aloud
- Read extra copy of consent form to participant
- Ask participant if he has any questions before signing form
- Ask to participant to sign consent form and date
- Sign form and date
- Give copy of consent form for participant to keep

Note: The first two questions are for all participants

1) To what degree are Cure Violence Outreach Workers perceived by high-risk youth and by other community members as resources in the community and agents of positive change related to violence?

APPENDIX B (Continued)

During the time since Cure Violence implementation began in summer 2012, do high-risk youth and community members report changes in levels of violence and community attitudes about violence?

2) To what extent do they attribute changes to the activities of Cure Violence Outreach Workers and other Cure Violence community mobilization activities? To what extent do they perceive any noted changes to other activities within the neighborhood?

THE OPENING QUESTION: BACKGROUND IN NEIGHBORHOOD (5-10 minutes)

- *Before we get started, I would like for you to tell me about your time in this neighborhood. Reflecting on your time in this neighborhood, please share with me how long you have lived in this house/apt and describe what it has been like living in this neighborhood.*
  - o *Potential Probes:*
    - *How long have you lived in this neighborhood_____?*
    - *What would you describe the boundaries as_____?*
    - *How would you describe your neighbors to someone who has never been in your neighborhood?*
    - *How would you describe the community organizations (like churches, CBO, parks, others) to someone who has never been in your neighborhood?*
    - *Describe some positive qualities about your block/neighborhood*
    - *Describe some negative qualities about your block/neighborhood*
    - *If you could change something about your block/neighborhood what would it be?*

INTRODUCTION QUESTION: SAFETY AND VIOLENCE (10-15 minutes)

- *How safe do you feel in your neighborhood? During the day? In the evening?*
- *Please take a moment to reflect on conflict in your neighborhood. Based on your point of view, what are things that may cause that conflict to become violent?*
- *What are the attitudes of your neighbors around the use of violence?*
- *Are there resources in your neighborhood to address issues of safety and violence?*
- *Has the level of violence changed in the last year? How has it changed? Describe some of the reasons the level of violence has changed in the past year.*

KEY QUESTION: Awareness and Impact of Cure Violence (30 minutes):

APPENDIX B (Continued)

QUESTIONS FOR NONCLIENTS

Have you heard of Cure Violence?

- o Potential Probes include:

    - Who are they?

    - What do they do?

    - How visible do you think their workers are in your neighborhood?

    - How would you describe their presence in your neighborhood?

Describe any interaction you may have had OR contact with Outreach Workers and/or Violence Interrupters in Cure Violence.

What is your overall impression of Cure Violence?

What impact do you believe Cure Violence has in your community?

Potential probes

- Has Cure Violence had any impact? Has Cure Violence's presence made your neighborhood safer? Less safe?

- If more safe, in what ways has Cure Violence made your community safer? If less safe, in what ways?

Describe your thoughts or feelings about their attempts to resolve conflict in the community.

- *CLOSING QUESTION (5 mins):* ***If you could design a program to reduce violence and improve safety in your neighborhood what would you like to see happen in this program?***

CONCLUSION:
Thank you again for participating. Today we discussed your viewpoint on XXXX, your understanding of XXXX, and XXX. Is there anything else you would like to add so that we can better understand your opinions?

Thank you for your time (time_____) Closing

APPENDIX C

Outreach Worker Interview Guide: **Beginning Time: _____**

 Introduction:
Thank you for coming today. My name is Franklin.

You were invited to participate in an interview to discuss your thoughts about how you believe you were able to connect with high-risk males from the community you serve. I specifically aim to hear about your successes and challenges with building trust and shifting beliefs and behaviors regarding the use of violence as a means to resolve conflict.
This discussion should last about 90 minutes.

I am going to ask for your permission to follow some strategies that will encourage a good discussion, and that will help me understand your views:

Recording: Our discussion will be digitally recorded to allow for transcription and review of all comments at a future date.

Note Taking: From time to time, I will take notes to keep track of your discussion.

Confidentiality: When transcribing and analyzing our conversations, your identity and the identity of all discussion participants will remain anonymous.

Interviewer Instructions: Informed Consent

- Give participant copy of consent form
- Ask participant to read consent to themselves while you read copy of consent form aloud
- Read extra copy of consent form to participant
- Ask participant if he has any questions before signing form
- Ask participant to sign consent form and date
- Sign form and date
- Give copy of consent form for participant to keep

APPENDIX C (Continued)

<u>**THE OPENING QUESTION: BACKGROUND IN NEIGHBORHOOD (12 minutes)**</u>

- *Before we get started with questions about your experiences as an outreach worker, I would like for you to tell me about your experiences growing up in your neighborhood and whether or not those experiences contribute to who you are as a person.*
  - *Potential Probes:*
    - *How long have you lived in this neighborhood?*
    - *Is this neighborhood the same neighborhood that you work or have worked as an outreach worker?*
    - *If it is not the same neighborhood, please describe how the neighborhood you grew up in may be:*
      - *Similar*
      - *Different*

    - *Describe some positive qualities of your neighborhood*
    - *Describe some negative qualities of neighborhood*
    - *Do you believe that your neighborhood helped shape who you are (i.e., your identity)?*
      - *If so, please describe how.*
      - *If not, help me understand what factors have shaped who you are.*

- *Before we move to the next section of questions, please describe how your experiences may contribute to the way you see the world around you.*

<u>**INTRODUCTION QUESTION: MOTIVATION TO BE AN OUTREACH WORKER**</u> **(12 minutes)**

- *Please share what led you to do the work of an outreach worker for Cure Violence*

- *What is it about your personality that might help me understand why you do/did outreach work?*

I try to operate under the assumption that everyone has a strength. That is everyone can do at least one thing extremely well.
  - *Help me understand what you believe what you think you are good at doing.*

    - *How is your strength used to do street outreach?*

- *In summary, please describe some personal characteristics or personality traits required to do this work successfully.*

APPENDIX C (Continued)

- **Please describe the strategies you use to connect with high-risk men to consider non-violent alternatives to conflict.**

    - *Potential Probes:*
    - *How do you build a relationship with high-risk men*?
    - *Describe how you foster trust in this relationship*
    - *Describe some the moment you realize that a client is engaged (i.e., you have a connection with them).*
    - *Is there anything about the way you see the world that helps you build a connection with your client.*

- **Please describe how you keep them engaged as a client.**
    - *Potential Probes:*
        - *How do you keep your client from using violence to respond to conflict?*
        - *Please provide an example of how you were able to get a client from responding to conflict by using violence.*
        - *How would you describe the range of clients you have worked with?*
        - *Describe some successes working with a client*
        - *Describe some challenges working with a client.*

- **How important is it to have a shared-life experience with a client as an outreach worker? (e.g., to have lived a similar life)**
    - *Potential Probes:*
        - *Are there particular moments where it is not necessary to have a shared live experience to work with clients?*
        - *Please provide an example of how your life experience allows you to be successful when working with a client.*
        - *Describe a situation in which your life experience served as a barrier working with a client.*

We are half-way done with this interview. Thank you for sharing your insight on this work. Before we move on to the next section, if I asked you to list the ingredients in the secret sauce for engaging clients what would you list?

APPENDIX C (Continued)

KEY QUESTION: Mobilization in the Community (20 minutes):

Thank you for sharing your work connecting with clients. I now want to hear about your experience organizing activities, and events in the community aimed at changing norms/believes that are accepting of violence.

- **Please describe the strategies you use to connect with the larger community (i.e., not just clients on your caseload)**

   - *Potential Probes:*
   - *How do you build a relationship with community residents?*
   - *How do you build relationships with high-risk men that are not on your caseload?*
   - *Describe some successes organizing activities aimed at promoting pro-social norms towards handling conflict (i.e., non-violent responses to conflict)*
   - *Describe some challenges organizing activities aimed at promoting pro-social norms towards handling conflict (i.e., non-violent responses to conflict)*
   - *Can you describe a scenario when community residents went to you for help?*
   - *Is there anything about the way you see the world that helps you build a connection with community residents?*

   - **Please describe how you believe community residents view Cure Violence outreach workers.**

   - **Describe some factors that you believe could improve how community residents view Cure Violence outreach workers**

KEY QUESTION: Connecting Clients to Resources   (10 minutes):

Thank you for sharing your experiences and thoughts about work mobilizing the community. We have about 15 minutes left in the interview. I would like to wrap up by asking you some questions about how you connect clients to services. The literature describes Cure Violence outreach workers as not only credible conflict mediator but also an agent of change by providing opportunities to connect your clients to resources (e.g., employment, education, and housing).

APPENDIX C (Continued)

🗋 **Please describe the strategies you use to connect your clients with resources**

- o *Potential Probes:*
- ▪ *What helps you understand if connecting them to outside resources is successful?*

- ▪ *Please share some frustrations with connecting your clients to outside resources*

🗋 *CLOSING QUESTION (5 mins): In closing, if you were in charge of hiring outreach workers what would you write in the job description?*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:
Thank you again for participating. Today we discussed your viewpoint on XXXX, your understanding of XXXX, and XXX. Is there anything else you would like to add so that we can better understand your opinions?

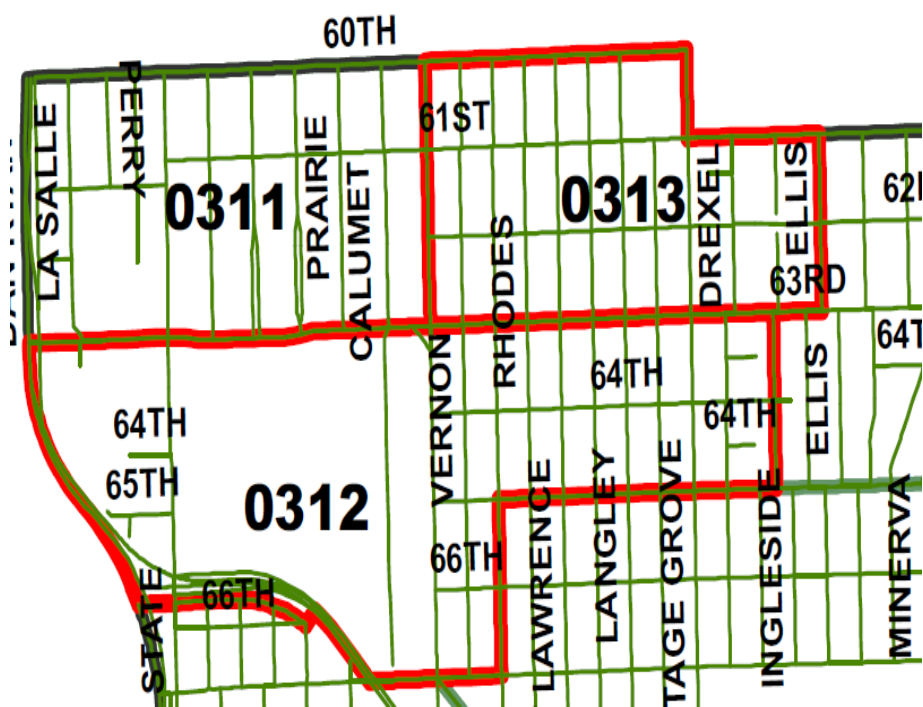**INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: POST-INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

1. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INTERVIEW, GIVE PARTICIPANT COPY OF POST INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM
2. ASK PARTICIPANT TO READ THE POST INTERVIEW CONSENT TO THEMSELVES WHILE YOU READ COPY OF CONSENT FORM ALOUD
3. READ EXTRA COPY OF CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPANT
4. ASK PARTICIPANT IF HE HAS ANY QUESTIONS BEFORE SIGNING FORM
5. ASK PARTICIPANT TO SIGN CONSENT FORM AND DATE
6. SIGN FORM AND DATE
7. GIVE COPY OF CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANT TO KEEP

Thank you for your time. The information you provided was very helpful.
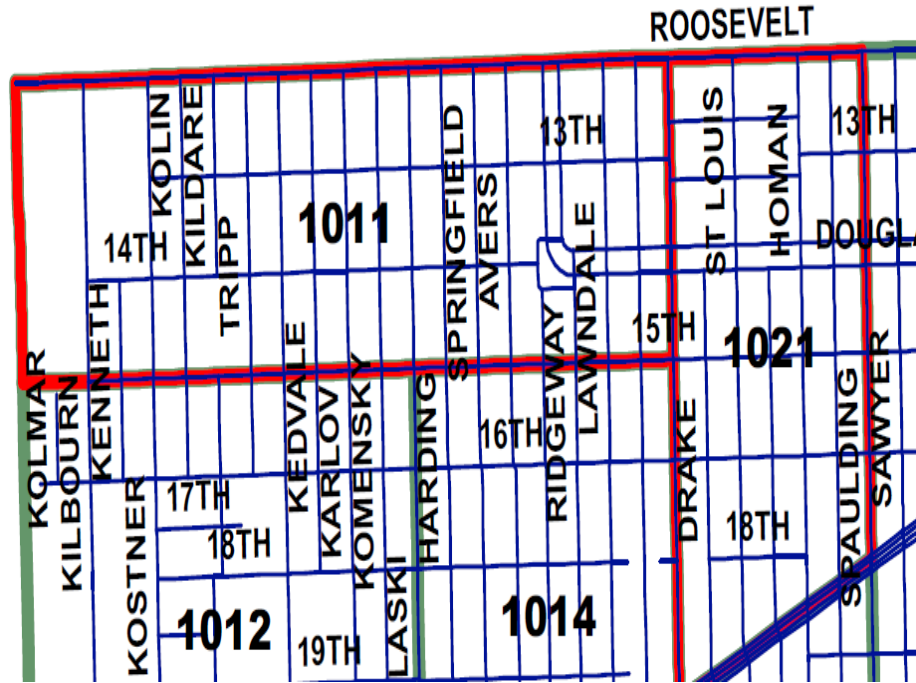
(time_____)   **Closing**

APPENDIX D

WOODLAWN MAP OF CURE VIOLENCE PARTICIPANT

APPENDIX E

NORTH LAWNDALE MAP OF CURE VIOLENCE PARTICIPANTS

VITA

NAME	Franklin Niles Cosey-Gay

EDUCATION   B.S. Sociology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 1994

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