

Chapter 2

Literature Review

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

Ferguson: Suburban Development

Transportation

Railroads and streetcars established growth to the suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri and greatly influenced Ferguson's origins (Fox 1995, p. 186); producing a hotbed for freight and passenger railroad transportation at the close of the nineteenth century (City of Ferguson 2014; Fox 1995, p. 186). In 1876, a spur line connected Ferguson to St. Louis' downtown Union Depot, transforming its rural feel into a suburb attractive for wealthy estates (Fox 1995, p. 186; City of Ferguson 2014). Streetcar suburbs expanded prior to 1918, making a ten-mile commute from downtown accessible in 30 min and "laid the skeleton for the new emerging metropolitan area..." (Ames 1995).

The development of the earliest automobile suburbs occurred between the end of World War I and the end of World War II (Ames 1995). At the close of World War II, those residing in Ferguson preferred to utilize personal automobiles rather than trains and streetcars (Fox 1995). Through the Federal Aid Highway Act, 41,000 miles of limited access interstates connected major cities across the country

between 1956 and 1972. Interstate 70 was the first project in the St. Louis area to be completed, connecting the downtown area to the airport and Northwest St. Louis County into St. Charles County (Missouri Department of Transportation [MODOT] 2013). Ferguson is geographically bound by Interstate 70 on its south, Interstate 170 on its west, and Interstate 270 on its north.

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

Real Estate Expansion

St. Louis City remained a major industrial player throughout World War II. However, by the 1950s there were issues with blight, congested traffic, crime, and businesses and families moving into suburbs throughout St. Louis County (Hannon 1986). Active real estate development turned farmland into sprawling suburbs after WWII and such towns as Florissant, Missouri, a neighboring suburb of Ferguson, saw a spike in their local population. In 1950, the population of Florissant was 3737. By the mid-1970s, 18,000 homes were built and the population peaked at 65,908 (Hannon 1986; Fox 1995, p. 36). Ferguson also boomed after World War II and homes were built by the masses. During the 1940s and 1950s, simple two bedroom homes were constructed throughout Northeast St. Louis County (Duncan 2008). New arrivals to the area worked at McDonnell Aircraft, Universal Match, and Emerson Electric (Fox 1995). Figure 2.1 exhibits a house typically constructed during this era that can be found throughout Ferguson and surrounding suburbs.

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

Fig. 2.1 Example of brick house constructed Post-WWII



Inner Ring Suburbs

Ferguson, Missouri is considered an inner ring suburb because it is one of the older suburbs close to the City of St. Louis. Inner ring suburbs are also called first suburbs because they were established in the years following World War II (Duncan 2008). They have endured significant demographic and economic changes (Duncan 2008) and “have evolved into places with varied characteristics, assets, and problems” (Hanlon 2009). In the *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs (1961) explains that today’s worst cities were once dignified suburbs. “...today’s brand-new suburbs or semisuburbs are going to be engulfed in cities and will succeed or fail in that condition depending on whether they can adapt to functioning successfully as city districts” (p. 16). According to Lewyn (2000), “suburban sprawl, like the French Revolution, devours its own children. Sprawl creates inner ring suburbs, only to destroy them a few decades later by creating outer suburbs to skim off their elites. So as long as cities and older suburbs continue to lose their most affluent citizens to newer suburbs, no community is truly safe from the ravages of neighborhood decay, and no stable community can endure.” Some inner suburban sections are more attractive than others but “there are very few cities that are homogenous in terms of race, socio-economic status, or class” (Fox 1995, p. 161). In fact, Hanlon (2009) suggests, “it has been demonstrated that, in general, declining suburbs are more likely to be inner ring rather than outer suburbs (Leigh and Lee 2005; Lee 2005; Lucy and Phillips 2000, 2006; Hanlon 2008).”

“Mobility and migration have splintered many communities that were long based on blood ties, cultural heritage and life within a narrow geographical region” (Roseland 2005, p. 154). As a result of this mobility, migration, and suburban development, “metropolitan areas countrywide are seeing similar patterns of development-explosive sprawl where farmland and open space once reigned, matched by decline and abandonment in the central cities and older suburbs” (Dionne 1998, p. 66). Ferguson is far from being a brand-new St. Louis suburb as

newer suburbs stretch further west to the far edges of St. Louis County into the Missouri River Valley. West is also where the population of St. Louis County appears to be headed. Inhabitants of the area utilize the interstate highway system to zip past older, less desirable suburbs and quickly to houses in subdivisions that are new and sprawling with flashy attractions, malls, and restaurants. Ferguson's housing stock is older and less expensive and as a result younger newer minority families are moving in and taking advantage of the more economical, smaller, living arrangements. It also seems that landlords also take advantage of this inexpensive, smaller housing stock by converting homes into rental property.

Racial Segregation

The automobile and the interstate highway system were not the only shapers of suburban development throughout the St. Louis area. Large-scale racial segregation also contributed greatly to the suburban evolution during the middle of the twentieth century, creating future irreversible housing conditions. "The geography of America would be unrecognizable today without the racist social engineering of the mid-20th century" (Coates 2014). In the 1950s, many St. Louis African-Americans historically lived in decaying slums until the population of the city was fragmented by a fleeing White population and the collapse of industrial development (Gay 2014). The Pruitt-Igoe housing development is one of the most infamous urban renewal projects in history (Gay 2014). Pruitt was designed for Blacks and Igoe was designed for Whites. However, both Pruitt and Igoe filled with Blacks because Whites were more interested in less expensive options available in the suburbs (Rothstein 2014b). Pruitt Igoe was ultimately a catastrophic failure inundated by crime and maintenance issues; three of the high-rise buildings were imploded in 1972 (Hoffman 2000). Pruitt Igoe was located approximately 11 miles from Ferguson, Missouri.

The decay of the city quickened as urban renewal projects paired with massive highways which carved patterns through long established black areas of the community. The innermost suburbs such as Ferguson absorbed these residents as they were displaced (Gay 2014). This resulted in White residents fleeing to more affluent outer-ring and other predominately White suburban areas. Even though it is unconstitutional to discriminate based on race, St. Louis has been plagued with "geographic, cultural, and economic" segregation (Cooperman 2014). Citing the 2010 United States Census, Cooperman (2014) suggests that "North of Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis neighborhoods are about 95 % Black. South of Delmar, they are almost two-thirds White (and the median household income is \$25,000 higher). White flight and Black flight adhere to this pattern: Whites ended up in South (St. Louis) County and Blacks in North (St. Louis) County."

According to Rothstein (2014a), suburban development throughout the St. Louis area as well as the nation banned African-Americans through the utilization of community covenants mutually agreed upon by White homeowners and with "racially neutral zoning rules" designating outer-ring suburbs for the wealthy. This

left inner-ring suburbs, such as Ferguson to Black homeowners who were escaping the failing schools in the inner city. As Massey and Denton explain in their book, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, “some real-estate agents reaped huge profits by blockbusting: scaring Whites out of neighborhoods with the threat of Black neighbors, then selling their vacant homes to African-Americans at rapacious prices with predatory loans” (cited by Kovarik 2008). Rothstein (2014b), also explains that policies were purposefully designed by the government to isolate racial minorities. This was accomplished through zoning that produced regional slums, the design of nonintegrated public housing units, White only residential improvements with racially motivated neighborhood restrictions, and an overall deprivation of essential amenities to Black neighborhoods which further solidified their status as a slum to White communities.

By the 1960s, virtually the entire home real estate market was impacted by federal civil rights laws and discriminatory and segregated housing practices did not cease. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) began a program in 1968 targeting low-income homeowners and “signaled the federal government’s larger commitment to subsidizing low income families and individuals rather than the projects in which they might live (Gordon 2008).” Gordon (2008, p. 118) acknowledges that theoretically, these types of initiatives were capable of distributing homeowners receiving housing assistance throughout the geographic area, but in actuality “they simply laundered federal subsidies through the deeply discriminatory institutions of private realty” in which “money and helpless buyers were simply fed into the segregated market” (USCCR 1971; Orfield 1981). Subsequently, Gordon (2008, p. 119) affirms that Black buyers were shown homes in North St. Louis and inner-ring Northern suburbs while Whites were shown homes in predominantly White suburban areas. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) interrupted FHA sales in the transitional Skinker-deBaliviere neighborhood after residents were concerned “that federal subsidies were tipping the local housing market by making mortgages available ‘to some gal out of Pruitt Igoe.’” (Leven 1976; USCCR 1971; Orfield 1981). Many of these actions concluded in the late 20th century but “continue to determine today’s racial segregation patterns” (Rothstein 2014a) and will continue to have irreversible everlasting effects on housing, suburb development, and the history of St. Louis and our nation.

Ferguson, like much of the rest of North St. Louis County has experienced a shift in the demographics of their community. For example, the population of those 65 and older in Ferguson and other areas surrounding the Lambert International Airport area decreased between 1990 and 2000 (OSED 2013). According to OSED (2013), younger African American populations have replaced the older Caucasian populations in the area. In Ferguson, the racial composition of the community has changed significantly during the past 20 years. In 1990, Whites made up 73.8 % of the population and Blacks made up 25.1 % of the population. In 2010, Whites made up 29.3 % of the population and Blacks made up 67.4 % of the population (United States Census Bureau 1990–2010). In the 1970s, 97 % of the population in the Northeast Suburbs were White. By the 1990s, middle income Black homeowners migrated to these communities as the first generation of older

White adults moved out (Duncan 2008). Although Ferguson lies just outside the Northeast suburban boundary, it possesses a similar housing stock, has experienced the effects of foreclosure, and a change in the demographics of their community.

Picture Pleasant Suburbia

“Ferguson is a picture pleasant suburbia, a town of tree lined streets and well-kept homes, much of them built for the middle class at mid-century” (Gallagher 2013). Unfortunately, it also took a major hit during the subprime lending crisis of the mid-2000s. Between 2004 and 2007, more than half of the mortgages were subprime in the inner ring suburbs, creating a “cycle of financial destruction for residents and neighborhoods” (Gallagher 2013). Property values declined and the tax base was diminished by foreclosures (Lloyd 2012). Home prices throughout St. Louis have begun to stabilize and some have begun to rise. However, in North St. Louis County prices remain weak and there is an abundance of foreclosed homes that are older, smaller, and out of fashion; selling to landlords who then convert them into rental homes (Gallagher 2013). “Metro St. Louis is a national hot spot for ‘underwater’ mortgages...and the problem is particularly acute in north St. Louis County” (Gallagher 2014). According to Gallagher (2014), those who are underwater are “roughly twice as likely as others to default on their mortgages, leading to foreclosure. Some argue that stressed homeowners are less likely to improve their homes, or even maintain them, and that can affect the surrounding neighborhood.” Some, such as William Rogers, at the University of Missouri-St. Louis argue that, “Homeowners who can’t leave have a special interest in keeping the neighborhood nice” and “they might become better neighbors with more civic involvement” (cited by Gallagher 2014).

Ferguson was also struck by a tornado on Good Friday in 2011. According to the National Weather Service Weather Forecasting Office (NWSWFO 2012), the tornado was an EF 4; the strongest tornado St. Louis County has seen in 44 years. This tornado destroyed 251 homes in St. Louis County and thousands more were damaged (Currier 2011). Almost exactly 2-years later, in 2013, another round of tornadoes struck the St. Louis area causing damage in Ferguson, Missouri (NWSWFO 2013). The combined destruction of these tornadoes is still seen in damaged and abandoned homes.

Although Ferguson has experienced significant changes throughout its life cycle, the pride citizens have for their city and the responsibility that they feel for others in their community and future generations is intensely evident. As some would suggest, North St. Louis County seems to be consistently targeted by negative media publicity as it relates to crime, education, and the state of housing throughout the area. Unfortunately, St. Louis in general has received national attention about its crime rate. The City of St. Louis has consistently received high rankings as one of the most dangerous cities in America. However, one of the reasons for this is that unlike other growing cities, St. Louis has not grown beyond its restricted borders.

Other cities have expanded their borders, pulling in safer surrounding neighborhoods, thus diluting the overall crime statistics for the area. If St. Louis were to do this, the crime rate would be much lower (Christie 2013).

Older Adults and Fear of Crime

Minnery (1986) explains that fear of crime is problematic when it restricts the activities of individuals so gravely that it disturbs their quality of life (Garofalo 1977; Lavrakas 1982; Maxfield 1984) and can greatly affect such groups of people as the elderly (e.g., Goldsmith and Goldsmith 1976; Markson and Hess 1980). Psychologist Werner Greve presented empirical data that indicated a similar degree of fear of crime in youth and elderly, even though it is perceived that the elderly exhibit more fear of crime. However, young and old people seem to manage victimization risk differently. Older adults' inclination is to perceive danger and be accordingly careful. Youth weigh the cost versus benefit of a potential dangerous situation (Herz and Kania 2002).

Taylor and Covington (1993) found that residents felt that their daytime safety was compromised when they perceived that issues could ascent from unsupervised groups of youth in their community. In past conversations, one older resident in Ferguson stated that she walked in a local park regularly. However, an incident arose in which she was approached by a group of African American teenagers. Even though there was no confrontation and no harm was done, this sufficiently scared the older woman to a point where she no longer returned to the park for her regular walks.

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

Perceived Environmental Press and Individual Competence

It appears that crime has not statistically increased in Ferguson, however, as previously noted, there have been significant physical and social changes occurring in the community. It could be argued, therefore, that some of these changes symbolize

a perceived increase in crime by older adults even if actual crime is not increasing. Older adults who continue to reside in the community appear to have a sufficiently high enough competency level to deal with the psychological demands placed upon them from fear of crime. This higher level of competency potentially translates into a higher tolerance level developed from the gradual physical and social changes taking place in their community. In the past, they have been able to sufficiently “adapt to” or “tolerate” the physical and social changes happening in their community. However, as they age and perceive that their biological and mental competency level is diminishing, their ability to continually “adapt to” or tolerate the evolving physical and social changes in their community may also diminish.

As presented by Lawton (1974), the Environmental Docility Theory states that “the less competent the individual in terms of personal disability or deprived status, the more susceptible is his behavior to the influence of immediate environmental situations.” The Environmental Docility Theory is demonstrated through the Environmental Press Model seen in Fig. 2.2. As interpreted by Pollack and Patterson (1980), “through the adult life, a state of balance must exist between the individual’s competence...and environmental press...for that individual to maintain a satisfactory quality of life.” Due to the reduction of biological and psychological

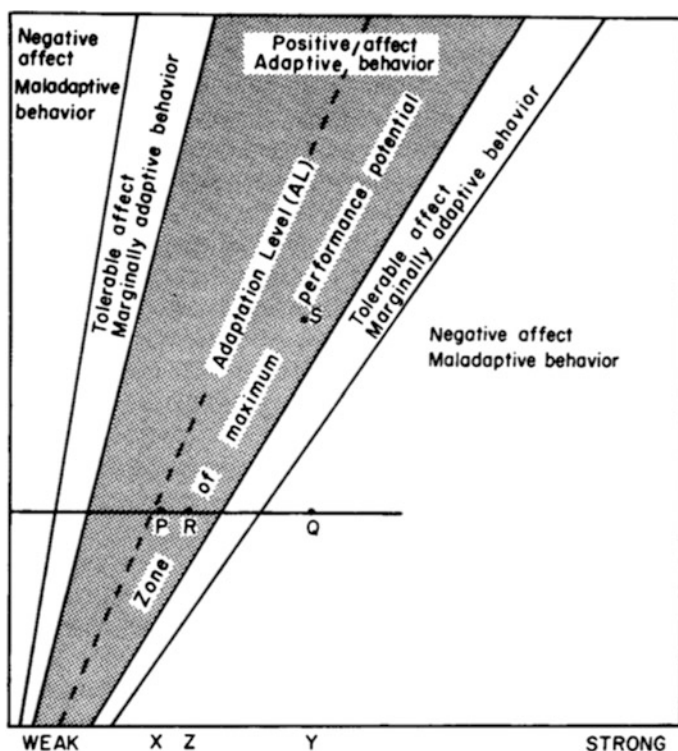


Fig. 2.2 Lawton and Nahemow (1973)

capabilities, one's competency decreases and unless environmental demands are reduced, they will be unable to continuously adapt to their surroundings. If older adults in Ferguson perceive the physical and social changes (environmental demand) taking place as an increase in crime, their ability to adjust may be exceeded. This enhances the perception that they will be victimized and increases the chance that they will begin to withdraw from the community.

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

Because of the perceived increase in crime that older adults in Ferguson suggested was making them more fearful, it is possible that some have attempted to physically escape by moving away from the community. Those who are unable to physically relocate have attempted to cope with their situation by socially and psychologically escaping. Although there are a number of factors that could be associated with an older adult leaving the community, fear of crime could pose an environmental stress contributing to a feeling that their only way of successfully adapting is to escape to somewhere where they feel safer. For older adults who have relocated, the feeling of safety may imply a community with greater demographic homogeneity, economic stability, and fewer signs of physical decay such as litter, uncared for lawns, and run down homes. For those who have chosen to stay in Ferguson despite their perception of crime, they may have retreated socially and psychologically as a method of removing themselves from a situation they can no longer tolerate. Adams and Serpe (2000) uncover "that as social disorder increases in a neighborhood, people report less helping behavior among neighbors and less satisfaction with their neighborhood. In other words, crime is related to social isolation, which in turn contributes to fear of crime and perceived vulnerability (Skogan 1990; Lewis and Salem 1986; Thompson and Norris 1992)."

As cited by Pollack and Patterson (1980),

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

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

Social Connectedness and Social Isolation

According to Adams and Serpe (2000), "social integration refers to a person's sense of belonging or attachment to the community (Adams 1992a; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974)" and activities that socially connect people to their community contribute to feelings that they have a common bond with those around them, feeling that they are an important asset to their community, and overall increases their satisfaction with the neighborhood. Hunter and Baumer (1982) note that "social integration into the local community reduces the number of strangers in the neighborhood, reinforces the feeling that neighbors will offer assistance when needed, and contributes to perceptions that the neighborhood is a safe place to live" (cited by Adams and Serpe 2000).

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

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

From earlier discussions with older adult residents in Ferguson, it appeared that those who were more socially integrated into neighborhood watch groups, church activities, and other volunteer activities felt that they had access to more resources

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

Social Support Networks

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

Among older adults in Ferguson, the mere thought that someone would be there if necessary could be sufficient in helping combat the fears they experience. This is potentially why the local neighborhood watch meetings attract so many older adults. This venue provides a caring environment in which the local police officer in charge pays special individualized attention to their needs and concerns. He also provides them with a variety of resources and knowledge that they would otherwise be unaware of. Neighborhood watch meetings become a social gathering for the older adults where they have opportunities to share stories with one another, combating the potential psychological fear they feel. Yin (1980) observes that the presence of a vast social support network helps to reduce fear in the elderly because the catastrophic element of victimization is diminished if the elderly feel they can more easily recover with the help of those around them. Merry (1976) also suggests that “those who knew the people they encountered in their neighborhood and were

familiar with its norms have a lower degree of fear of crime. Those who regarded their neighbors as ‘strangers’ were more fearful” (cited by Yin 1980). Yin (1980) refers to a study conducted by Cohn et al. (1978) that found that “those who were involved in a community crime prevention program were less fearful than those who were not...First, joining a community crime prevention program allows access to the social structure of one’s neighborhood. Neighbors, therefore, cease to be strangers. Second, participation in any community program may foster development of one’s social support network; thus perceived ability to recuperate from a victimization experience is increased.” It is hoped that active engagement in community organizations, church groups, and neighborhood watch groups will socially engage residents and help reduce their fear of crime in neighborhood settings. As cited by Adams and Serpe (2000) and Schieman (2009), people who perceive that they have a connection with those in their neighborhood and regularly interact with one another see their neighborhood as more secure (Hartnagel 1979; Lewis and Salem 1986; Riger et al. 1981).

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

Ross and Jang (2000) found that “living in a neighborhood with a lot of perceived disorder significantly affects mistrust and fear of victimization...Perceived neighborhood disorder and social ties significantly interact: informal social ties with neighbors reduce the fear—and mistrust—producing effects of disorder. However, formal participation in neighborhood watch organizations shows little buffering effect.” Informal social ties with neighbors leads to informal surveillance of the individual’s neighborhood because residents have a reason to walk around the neighborhood, interact with one another, and show general concern for one another. Through the process of informal surveillance, residents are much more likely to identify disorder in the neighborhood.

As coined by Jacobs (1961) in her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, having “eyes on the street” is important to keep social order in check. “Public peace—the sidewalk and street peace—of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost

unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves” (pp. 31–32). As fear takes over, citizens physically and socially withdrawal into their homes and away from the community and consequently, informal surveillance decreases. Signs of physical disorder advance as criminals create mayhem, assuming citizens are apathetic about what happens in their community, and no one cares enough to observe their delinquent actions (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004).

The Social Disorganization Theory

The Social Disorganization Theory explains the relationship between social changes and perceptions, and how it relates to one’s thoughts about crime in their community. According to Adams and Serpe (2000) and Schieman (2009) “much of the most promising research on fear of crime is based on social disorganization theory, which stresses the relationships among demographic characteristics, social integration, and fear of crime. In particular, the theory suggests that people who feel attached to their neighbors also perceive the neighborhood as safer” (Hartnagel 1979; Lewis and Salem 1986; Riger et al. 1981). Social engagement occurs in many forms; being involved in various community organizations, church groups, volunteer opportunities, employment opportunities, or through socialization with friends and neighbors in the community. The presence of social networks also helps provide formal and informal surveillance over neighborhood issues and helps older adults feel more deeply rooted in their community, increasing their overall life satisfaction.

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

Ethnic Heterogeneity and Crime Perception

In considering the many social variables that may be associated with older adults’ fear of crime, the Social Disorganization Theory explores how ethnic heterogeneity

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

This is also evident in the history of Ferguson, Missouri. Kinloch was a predominately Black suburb neighboring a nearly all White Ferguson. The primary thoroughfare between Ferguson and Kinloch was chained off to bar most African-Americans from entering Ferguson up until the mid-1960s (Rothstein 2014b). As Ferguson became more integrated with African Americans, affluent Whites began to flee to other outer ring suburbs. As cited by Quillian and Pager (2000), “Taub et al. (1984) found that individuals respond most strongly to perceived neighborhood crime and housing deterioration in determining when to move and where to settle” and that “Whites may avoid neighborhoods with many Black residents not because of an aversion to neighbors who are Black but because Black neighborhoods on average have higher rates of neighborhood problems like higher crime rates and dilapidated housing stock (Frey 1979; Taylor 1981; Liska and Bellair 1995; Liska et al. 1998).”

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

Socioeconomic Status and Crime Perception

As part of the pilot study conducted in Southwest Ferguson during the winter of 2012, 100 % of older adult men and 71 % of older adult women surveyed strongly agreed or agreed they felt that an increase in unemployed people in their community was related to crime. Although participants were not asked to expand upon their feelings, it seems possible they felt that those who were unemployed might be more desperate than those with employment and a steady income, and therefore more likely to be prone to criminal actions. Americans often think about crime and poverty synonymously. People become more fearful when they feel that their safety is threatened by those of a lower economic status. Even worse than the challenge to their personal safety, people become apprehensive when they deem that their moral, cultural, and economic principles are being eroded (Gans 2013).

Although those of a perceived lower socioeconomic status may be targeted as crime generators, they themselves may also be more fearful of becoming a victim of crime. In Austin et al.’s (2002) study about the effects of neighborhood conditions and perceived safety, they refer to work done by Austin et al. (1994) in which they

identified a “significant positive relationship between education and feeling of perceived safety.” They also point to studies conducted by Lee (1981), Skogan and Maxfield (1981), and Toseland (1982) in which they found that “higher status was associated with lower levels of fear.” Additionally, as cited by Bennett et al. (2007), urban lower income residents from groups of racial and ethnic minorities are most likely to rate their neighborhood as unsafe (Boslaugh et al. 2004; Wilson et al. 2004; Brownson et al. 2001). However, as Austin et al. (2002) indicate, the thought that those of a lower socioeconomic status are more fearful of crime is not collective. They refer to a study performed by Baba and Austin (1989) which found that socioeconomic status had “no significant impact on perceived levels of neighborhood safety.”

The Broken Window Theory

Areas with multiple physical incivilities such as litter, graffiti, broken windows, unkempt lawns, and homes in disrepair suffer consequences beyond those of the immediate physical decay and disorder. These physical characteristics become important symbols that residents and others cannot or will not protect their neighborhood from crime (Kelling and Wilson 1982; Skogan 1990). Kelling and Wilson (1982) identify what is known as the Broken Window Theory: “if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, all of the remaining windows will soon be broken.” One unrepaired window signals to those passing by that no one cares about the building and invites others to break more windows. This can apply to other various situations, such as abandoned cars, empty lots littered with trash, and graffiti. If one person dumps trash in the empty lot next door and no one complains about it or cleans it up, then it must not concern people. This might invite others who have had similar ideas to also use the empty lot as their personal dumping grounds. As referred to in Herzog and Flynn-Smith (2001), how people care for their environment also connects with the Broken Window Theory and “draws support from the wide range of studies implicating maintenance as a predictor of fear of crime (e.g., Perkins et al. 1992, 1993; Schroeder and Anderson 1984; Taylor et al. 1985; Wilson 1975; Wilson and Kelling 1982).” Brown et al. (2004), suggest “residents react to the symbolism of these incivilities by withdrawing from social activity in the neighborhood.” According to Taylor et al. (1985), “signs of neighborhood decay make residents infer that their community is going downhill and that nobody is doing or can do anything about it and residents begin to fear for their own safety.” From a criminology perspective, this can lead to serious social breakdowns in the community. “A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, and a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out and unattached adults move in” (Kelling and Wilson 1982). This explains the process simply, but essentially describes how physical and social disorder can quickly snowball, resulting in residents migrating out of the community.

The Defensible Space Theory

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

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

Territorial Reinforcement

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

A significant issue in Ferguson is that older adults have felt like there was nothing they could do to alleviate crime related problems. Residents can be

provided with knowledge and skills to protect themselves from criminal activity. Some methods of territorial reinforcement may be feasible for older adults to apply to their home and surrounding property. Other methods may be more difficult or less feasible to apply. Carefully designed landscaping around homes in Ferguson may be a simple approach to define territory and provide a symbolic transitional edge between public and private space. Some streets in residential neighborhoods within Ferguson have no sidewalks between public streets and private residential yards. Constructing sidewalks to define territory, to provide paths for natural access control, and to provide opportunities for natural surveillance is a sizeable project that would need to be systematically organized and carried out by the City of Ferguson.

However, what should be avoided, and what Newman did not intend to happen is for territorial reinforcement to become a form of “target hardening.” Target hardening refers to the use of locks, bars on windows, and gates as an obtrusive version of territorial reinforcement. Although these measures may be effective in keeping potential offenders out, they can negatively alter the mental psyche of someone who is already fearful of crime in their neighborhood. As cited by Wortley (1996), “concerns have been raised about the social implications of the unfettered application of target-hardening principles” (Bottoms 1990; Grabosky 1994; Weiss 1987). Wortley (1996) argues that such features as “walls, guards, conspicuous security devices and the like divide rather than build communities by separating and isolating their members” and “run the danger of becoming counterproductive, creating the very social conditions which foster criminal behavior.” Territorial reinforcement principles should rely on subtle measures that convey a similar message, but that also blend in more aesthetically with the built and natural environment. Measures of territorial reinforcement should not be utilized to provoke more fear among residents thus creating additional social isolation for those living in the community.

Natural Surveillance

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

literature type, different phrases are used to describe surveillance. In the Criminology literature the phrases, “informal” and “formal” surveillance are used to describe the ways in which people keep an eye on the neighborhood. Formal methods are carried out by police, security guards, and surveillance cameras. Informal methods can be carried out by wives and husbands, older adults, children, and pedestrians. In the Environment and Behavior literature, surveillance is often referred to in the form of natural surveillance carried out by residents as part of their everyday life; giving less attention to formal methods of surveillance.

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

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

Environmental Perception of Place

The perceptions that people have of their own environment can greatly affect the way that they feel about crime in their neighborhood and community. “The environment...is a language of communication, with a syntactic and semantic structure” (Appleyard 1979). In other words, the environment, while highly structured, is also full of potential meaning, symbols, and interpretations (Appleyard 1979). The way that individuals interpret the structure of their neighborhood is so powerful that it can dictate the entire way they experience it. As people experience their neighborhood, they may interpret what they observe in the form of social symbols and meaning. The social meanings attached to the environment become extremely critical when a perceived conflict occurs in the community or environment. One’s

environment, especially one's home and immediate neighborhood, are symbol-laden. The home environment, over which one has more direct immediate control, evolves as one evolves, taking on one's personality as one changes, adapts, and grows. However, outside the door, the immediate neighborhood is uncertain territory because individuals may feel they have little control over their neighbors, their neighbors' actions, and what generally happens in the streets of their community (Appleyard 1979). Fear may ensue if people begin to perceive their neighborhood is deteriorating in a physical and/or social sense and there is little they feel they can do to control the circumstances.

For the older adults in Ferguson, they and their homes have become the constant, when the outside world seems to be transforming physically and socially. Their interpretation of the deteriorating physical condition (litter, un-maintained homes, and unkempt lawns) of their neighborhood and the social changes (change in racial composition, population age, and socioeconomics) taking place become potential symbols of community decline and crime. As previously noted, as people's ability to adapt decreases, their ability to continually adjust to the physical and social changes taking place in their community diminishes. Unless the environmental press placed upon them can be reduced, a satisfactory quality of life will likely not be able to be maintained (Lawton 1974; Pollack and Patterson 1980). As older adults begin to experience increased environmental press from changes in the physical and social condition of their neighborhood and their window of adaption decreases, they may believe that there is little that they can do to improve the environment outside of their home. As they retreat into the familiarity of their home and isolation increases, social relationships suffer, and natural surveillance throughout the neighborhood decreases.

Fear of Crime and Threats to Placemaking

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

her door where she had tracked the height of her children over the years. This was the moment when their connection to home and community despite their fears became apparent.

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

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

As part of identifying with a place, Cuba and Hummon (1993) recognize that “community attachment research indicates that integration into the local area is a prime determinant of attachment to locale. Local social involvements—particularly those with friends, but also those involving kin, organizational memberships, and local shopping—prove to be the most consistent and significant sources of sentimental ties to local places (Gerson et al. 1977; Goudy 1982; Guest and Lee 1983; Hunter 1974; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; St. John et al. 1986).” Social engagement for the older adults in Ferguson is especially critical to staying connected and attached to their local community thus increasing social support and hopefully decreasing the fears they experience. It is impossible to feel like an insider in a community of ever evolving change without a series of networks of other people. As the needs and wants of the older adults in Ferguson change, these series of networks will become increasingly crucial. Networks can be maintained through social integration in formal, more organized community groups or through an informal exchange of words with a neighbor across a dividing fence. Public casual conversation may seem trivial, but it establishes public respect, trust, and identity within the community (Jacobs 1961, p. 56).

“To create a ‘sense of place’ and foster connections among people, the physical characteristics of neighborhoods must draw people together and encourage an atmosphere of peace, security, and pride among residents of a community” and “while responsible participation in governance is important, getting to know your neighbors is a simple first step” (Roseland 2005, p. 156). Residents in Ferguson

remember a time when they were more actively engaged with their neighbors. In initial conversations with a Ferguson resident prior to this research study, they suggested that neighbors do not stop and chat with each other anymore, that they did not really know their neighbors, and that they were more fearful because they would not even feel comfortable asking their neighbors for help if they needed it. It becomes difficult for older adults to trust their neighbors and feel comfortable talking about how the physical and social environment can foster safety and security. Especially when they do not feel like anyone takes the time to get to know one another. It may be that residents young and old are feeling similar frustrations with their sense of security, but have not taken the time to talk with their neighbors and community members about it. Collective action towards a common goal must first begin by discussing and deliberating about the issue and deciding what needs to be done, who will do it, and how a plan for action will be carried out. As with the older adults in Ferguson, “there is a longing, among millions of Americans now reaching middle age, for a stable and secure social world that they believe existed during their childhoods and does not exist now” (Dionne 1998, p. 93).

Although nostalgia may have both positive and negative aspects, it becomes one way to engage older adults in thinking about how to physically and socially improve their community to help reduce fear of crime. For older adults in Ferguson, nostalgia reflects a yearning for what they remember as a simpler life, full of comfortable and reliable relationships in their community (Dionne 1998, p. 93). “Residents of crime-ridden neighborhoods miss the street corner and doorstep sociability made possible by physical security” (Dionne 1998, p. 7). Older adults in Ferguson want back a neighborhood where they remember their children playing safely, where they could walk down the street safely, and one in which they did not live in fear of becoming a victim of criminal activity in their homes. They long for a place “where everyone knows your name, and probably a good many other things about you, and your commitments, and your family” (Dionne 1998, p. 3). They long for a network of community members capable of coming together for the collective good of the neighborhood.

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