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Gangs in a rural town: An analysis of community perceptions of crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population.

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Gangs in a rural town: An analysis of community perceptions of crime,

gangs, and the new in-migrant population.

by

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A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2013

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Bonnie O. and Wayne Glosser, the best parents ever.

You are the reason I was able to even get to this point in my academic career.

And to my Grandpa, and best friend, H. Maurice Beaver. I went to the Campanile and

felt your presence there. You kept your promise.

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ABSTRACT

Urban gangs have captivated social scientists and been the topic of research for decades. However, recent gang member migration has created a relatively new interest in the possibility of non-metropolitan, or rural, gang presence and activities. Current research literature contends that this phenomenon is the result of the in-migration of urban minority and immigrant gang members, whereas law enforcement asserts gang growth is caused by community apathy toward the growing problem. This research examined community perceptions within the rural case study community of Bridgetown, Iowa. Bridgetown has been experiencing an influx of minority in-migrants entering the community to work in its meat packing facility, and, according to local law enforcement, supposedly has a gang presence. Participants were residents and members of institutions of social control within the community. These individuals were selected because they would be the most likely within the community to come into direct contact or be aware of a real gang presence. They completed questionnaires and participated in one-on-one interviews designed to ascertain their general perceptions towards topics regarding crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population within the community. The research also attempted to discover what steps these individuals believed that people within their profession and other community members could take in embracing diversity within the community and whether these ideas might contribute to the reduction or elimination of gang activity within the community. The results show that while these residents do acknowledge the socioeconomic importance of the new in-migrant community members, they do believe that gangs are present and are the result of the migration of these minority groups within the community. Most participants also agreed that diversity programs

should be offered to combat the potential gang problem and eliminate racial and ethnic tensions that might exist between the native and in-migrant populations.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Growing up in Bridgetown, Iowa, they didn't have drive-by shootings, they had bicycle-by shoutings. In this rural town, there was no fear of local gangs. The only gangs rural Americans knew about were in the movies and on television. They resided in the poorest parts of Los Angeles, Chicago, Omaha, and New York. Gangs were an oddity to watch in movies like *New Jack City* (1991), *Boyz 'N the Hood* (1991), and *Menace II Society* (1993). In the 1980s and early 90s, national news told stories of the war between the Crips and the Bloods. It seemed that these two groups were targeting each other over neighborhoods, and killing innocent civilians in their drive-by shootings. However, back in small town rural America, the population went about life knowing that they were insulated against this violence because gangs would never come to a small town.

A childhood in 1980's Bridgetown was most likely idyllic. Downtown was full of shops and restaurants, and people traveled from adjacent counties to do their shopping in our small city. It was a hotbed of political activity. It was said that if a politician wanted to "win Iowa" during Caucus season, they had to stop in Bridgetown. The town was our playground, and the only fear children had was missing lunch or dinner. Today, the bustling and beautiful Bridgetown of 30 years ago is no longer there.

Today, if the local media stories and police reports are to be believed, that same small, rural town is rife with gang members and gang activity (Milner, 2009; Halfmann, 2009; Milner, 2010). It takes just a quick drive around the town to spot graffiti that litters

public buildings, stores, and houses. Yet, is graffiti really enough to conclude that the town has a gang problem and explain why gang members are in the community? Are the newspaper accounts of gang activity enough to assume that gangs have become a crime problem? What if this alarm is just a way for the media to boost ratings or sell newspapers or law enforcement to gain additional funding from the State or Federal government? What if this crime threat is real and the community does not acknowledge it? What if the talk of gangs by the media and law enforcement has been exaggerated and the community believes the talk? Is there a possible link between the arrival of new minority in-migrants and the belief that gangs are infiltrating the community?

In recent years, minority and inner city populations have been migrating into rural towns for the purpose of seeking employment. This employment is often found in the meat packing industry. The case study town of Bridgetown, Iowa, has such an employer. Since 1877, Bridgetown, Iowa, has been involved in the meat packing industry (Warren, 2000; Rachleff, 1993). The first meat packing company in Bridgetown was the town's largest employer until the factory closed in 1973. Another meat packing facility would open its doors in new facilities on the same property in Bridgetown in 1976. They would remain in operation in Bridgetown until 1987. The current meat packing operation, known in this research as Bridgetown Meat Solutions, would purchase the facility and start production in 1987. Much of the controversy that would lead to the closing and opening of the different packing plants would surround the unionization of workers. By the late 80s and early 90s, many meat packing facilities would begin to hire in-migrant minority, and later also immigrant, labor (Schlosser, 2002). Bridgetown Meat Solutions would follow suit for the Bridgetown facility. Within this community, many legalist

residents, as defined by Flora, Flora, and Tapp (2000), may see these individuals as taking income and jobs from the native population and forming criminal gangs within the communities. This negative view toward the new minority workforce has caused a rift between some of the native population and the minority migrants. One of the views by legalists toward these new community members is the belief that they are the cause of gang activity within the town.

Bridgetown, Iowa, is not alone in their struggle with perceived gang activity. At least three other similar sized communities in Iowa have experienced gang activity and growth over the past 30 years. These cities share commonalities in that they all have meat packing facilities that have recruited Latino workers, they have had levels of racial tensions surrounding the migrant status and economic benefit of these workers for their area, and they are reporting gang activity within their towns. In listening to the perceptions of gangs by community members and examining how law enforcement is dealing with the concept of gang crime in Bridgetown, maybe the beginnings of a solution can be found to resolve this issue and heal Bridgetown and like communities.

Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

While this study surrounds the concept of the community's perception of gang presence within the rural case study town, the theoretical underpinnings for the study examine why they might exist in that environ and what might shape community member opinions toward their potential existence. Previous research has demonstrated that gang migration to rural communities is occurring (Egley, 2000; Maxson, 1998; Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996; Lopez, 2008; Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). Federal

law enforcement also has been tracking migration patterns and motives for migration into rural communities (NDIC, 2010).

Gangs have been part of the urban landscape since the early inception of the United States. Luc Sante (1991) and Tyler Anbinder (2001) speak of the necessity of the gang for the poor nativist and immigrant for survival in 19th Century New York. It is this same need for survival that would drive the gangs of the 1940s through the 1960s (Schneider, 1999). These later gangs would provide adolescents "[…] with a sense of belonging, solidarity, and community that was missing elsewhere in their lives" (p. 123). These gangs also provided security and protection for their members. The modern urban gang exists today for primarily two reasons: criminal enterprise and providing a community for disenfranchised, urban youth (Klien, 2007; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001). Utilizing the works of Robert Merton (1938) and Cloward and Ohlin (1959; 1960) it can be stated that the deprivation of means to reach societal goals might cause community members to find deviant alternatives accomplish the normative fiscal goals of a society. Gangs offer an alternative to typical societal achievements through their own creation of community and criminal financial enterprises such as drug manufacturing and sales and theft.

Whereas the urban environment creates gang members because of its socioeconomic conditions, the rural gang member appears to often be the result of family transplantation into the community (Klein and Maxson, 2007; Spergel, 1995; Howell and Egley, 2005). Research has shown that the predominant number of rural gang activities is the result of youth gangs (Weisheit and Wells, 2001c; Weisheit and Wells, 2004; Lawrence, 2003). The most common characteristic of the youth gang movement in rural

communities is the creation of the hybrid gang (Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001; Curry, 2000; Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002). Modern hybrid gangs are created from assorted individual gang members from different gangs within a community and joining forces to create their own gang. They are not recognized by national organizations; however, they do utilize the names of nationally recognized street gangs. These members often retain their gang identities upon reaching the rural community because of a status frustration similar to that described by Cohen (1955).

It is disingenuous to assume that criminal opportunities made available in the rural community have not also drawn gangs into the area. Rural communities, like Bridgetown, offer a revenue stream for the drug marketplace (Miller, 2001; O'Dea, Murphy, and Balzer, 1997). Rural communities also act as stopping points within the drug trade transportation or perform as manufacturing centers for the Drug Trade Organizations (Reding, 2009).

This study attempts to respond to the posit made by Weisheit and Wells' (2001b) research in which law enforcement officers interviewed made the assertion that one reason gangs are active in rural, non-metropolitan communities is because of community member apathy. There is no community response that demonstrates this apathy, and law enforcement offers no proof that apathy exists. In fact, this apathy could be just a demonstration of deficit of knowledge toward the problem, or a lack of awareness in how to digest or respond to what the community member is experiencing.

Gang activity within the rural environment is not identical to urban gang activity (Weisheit and Wells, 2004; Howell and Egley, 2005). Earlier research reveals that rural

gang activity is more undercover and secretive (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002; Weisheit and Wells, 2004). Because of the nature of the rural community, it is in the best interests of gangs and gang members to remain undetected there. For this reason, community members, and even local law enforcement, might not be fully aware of the level of involvement of gangs and gang members within the rural community. Esbensen, Winfree, He, and Taylor (2001) point out, because of the definitional problems surrounding gangs; it is possible that gang activity could be over-reported, or under-reported. If the definitions used to describe gangs by local policymakers or law enforcement are incorrect, it can result in gang activity going undetected or cause community fear toward a non-existent problem. The research of Esbensen, Winfree, He, and Taylor (2001) might explain the discrepancy between law enforcement and community perceptions mentioned by Weisheit and Wells (2001). These groups might possess two differing definitions of gangs and gang activity. The community and law enforcement might both be aware of external signs of potential gang involvement in the town, such as graffiti and "gang" clothing. However, while law enforcement might believe that is proof of gangs, local community members might see it as simply juvenile delinquency.

The media shapes public opinion (Holder and Treno, 1997; Wahlberg and Sjoberg, 2000). The media has the ability to influence community members toward a fear or disbelief of gangs and their ideas about what gangs actually constitute (Thompson, Young, and Burns, 2000; Dowler, 2003). In examining community perceptions about gangs, it is necessary to determine what influence the media has in creating the community member's ideas about local gang issues. It is also important to determine

whether the members believe the media is being accurate in their representation of gang activity. Yet, the most influential agent in a community member's perception toward crime is law enforcement. Law enforcement drives social/public policy (Meares, 2000) and public opinion (Roberts and Stalans, 1997). The influences they exert upon the community through their policing tactics, outreach programs, and reporting to the media can result in community member's following the lead of law enforcement on gang activity without personal experience on the topic.

It is because of the variability of outside forces upon perception, and an inability to accurately assume perception without inquiry that compels this study. The quasi-theoretical purpose of this study is to uncover community perceptions from the community members, to discover the internal and external factors shaping those perceptions, and to compare those perceptions to law enforcement data.

Statement of the Problem

Previous research on gang activity in rural communities has primarily focused on interviewing law enforcement and reviewing their data, as well as only focusing on those justice systems that directly deal with potential gang problems (Weisheit and Wells, 2001). Some of this research has been critical of the community, because the chief complaint of law enforcement is the passivity of the rural community. While there has been research conducted concerning more metropolitan community members' perceptions of gangs (Takata and Zevitz, 1987; Maxon, Hennigan, and Sloane, 2005; Oehme, 1997), it is at this point that the current body of research appears to have stopped and the rural community perception remained vastly unexplored. Instead, rural gang

researchers have focused primarily on the perceptions of law enforcement and the education system (Weisheit and Wells, 2001b).

There is substance in examining rural law enforcement's crime data and crime reports. The community might just be unaware of the problem they are facing. They could be lulled into a false sense of security because the rural community does not seem like a logical location for gang activity. Yet, the growing number of rural law enforcement departments claiming gang activity in recent years does demonstrate the potentiality of rising concern. There are too many reasons to report activity that does not exist, or exaggerate its existence. It is not unreasonable to scrutinize the potential motivations of law enforcement to report a gang problem within the rural community. However, to accomplish this scrutiny, there must be another avenue of examining whether gangs are prevalent within the rural town besides just consulting local law enforcement.

The next logical step is then to explore community perspectives of potential gang issues. By interviewing leaders, or even members, of institutions of social control within the society, we can ascertain whether the community believes that a gang problem exists within the rural community. As these individuals are placed in positions of trust by community members, it is reasonable to assume that their opinions will be representative of the community as a whole. Also, as these are the individuals who drive social change, policy, laws, and community action, their opinions and beliefs shape the community reaction to potential criminal issues such as gangs.

Comparing the responses from the community to the data provided by law enforcement, it is possible to detect if a perceptional difference exists and determine if these two groups are or are not on the same page. From this point, we can ascertain what is driving the community's perception that gangs do exist; whether it is law enforcement, media, graffiti, personal experience, or potential racism. And, what role does the new in-migration of minority members play in the perception of gangs or even the presence of gangs in a rural community.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine community perceptions concerning potential gang activity within a community in which law enforcement has already deemed gang members exist. In the process of examining these perceptions, it is necessary to uncover any motivational factors that might lead the individuals to make a positive or negative determination. Factors that must be considered include, but are not limited to: media coverage, law enforcement announcements, signs of a gang presence (such as graffiti), experiences in the workplace, being victims of gang crimes, and racialization of the relatively new in-migrant and immigrant population of color.

The secondary purpose of this study is to compare community perceptions with local law enforcement data concerning gangs. During this process, it is necessary to conduct an examination of the techniques and practices of law enforcement in determining what constitutes a gang member, gang activity, and gang crime. This examination will possibly reveal any potential inadequacies or biases in their

methodology, and the likely reasons for these inadequacies or biases in identifying gang issues.

The final purpose of this study is to highlight what is currently being done to detect gangs and prevent gang activity and gang crimes within the case study community. By opening a dialogue about gangs with members of institutions of social control, it could be feasible to discover what more could be done, with the involvement of the community, to prevent gang formation and detect gang membership, gang activity, and gang crimes. These strategies will be considered with the intent of creating a guide for similar rural communities that might share the same concerns surrounding gangs.

Research Questions

1. What are community perceptions toward potential gang activity within the rural community being studied?

2. What are the factors that could possibly be shaping those perceptions?

3. What is law enforcement's stance concerning gangs within the rural community being studied?

4. Are there potential motivating factors that could cause law enforcement to report or over-report gang activity and gang crimes within a community?

5. Does law enforcement differentiate between gang-motivated crimes and crimes committed by gang members? Should they be treated differently?

6. Does the presence of gang members within a rural community mean that it should be automatically assumed that the community has a gang crime problem?

7. Does the community perception deviate from the data and stance presented by local law enforcement within the rural community being studied; and if so, what could be the reason for this difference?

Assumptions and Design Controls

It is impossible for any research project, or study, to exist without assumptions. When possible, it is necessary to point out these issues and attempt to implement design controls to limit their impact to the validity of the work. Within this study on rural gangs and community perceptions, there exists some assumptions that must be mentioned, and design controls implemented to overcome those issues.

The major assumption of this study is found in the population being surveyed and interviewed for the research. This research makes the assumption that the sub-set of the population being examined is representative of the population as a whole. Traditionally, a random sample of the community would be considered for this type of study. However, the population has been narrowed to a sampling of leaders and members of institutions of social control. The reasoning behind this strategy can be found in Wiseman's *Stations of the Lost* (1979). Wiseman researched the lives of Skid Row alcoholics. In her research she focused on the alcoholics and those who would most likely come into contact with them. Wiseman studied how the agents of social control perceived and treated the alcoholics. For this research on gangs, the agents of social control have the ability to shape and direct how the community perceives and reacts to potential gang activity and new minority in-migrants. These individuals have been bestowed by the community a

level of authority and the ability to act on the well-being of the citizenry. Logically, it can then be assumed that they are also representative of the community as a whole.

The other assumption involving the population being surveyed and interviewed can be found in the fact that in an urban environment, these individuals might not live in nor journey into the areas where graffiti or other gang signs might exist. There is a natural assumption that certain status groups do not come in contact, such as the president of a college and a gang member. Yet, previous research demonstrates that within a rural community the geographic areas that differentiate wealth and status are intermingled (Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990). In a rural community, it is quite possible that members of institutions of social control will interact within areas where gang activity is typically located and they may live or work mere blocks away from the perceived gangs. For this research, it must be then assumed that participants are more likely to come into contact with gang members or signs of gang activity on a more frequent basis than their urban counterparts.

The final assumption involving this research can be found in the belief that the participants come to their perceptions independently and without influence by other members of the community. It would be ideal if each participant formed their beliefs and perceptions entirely upon their own experiences; yet, reality is that we are as impacted by others as we are by our own circumstances. Baker (1989) would contend that while we form some of our beliefs from our personal experiences and from what we have directly seen or encountered, the impact of our interactions with others also shapes our belief systems. Thus, other's encounters and experiences are embraced as our own. To counteract issues surrounding the nature of the creation of personal perceptions of the

participants, design controls have been implemented in the form of follow up questions to determine the origin of participant perceptions. These questions also ask if the participant believes others within their profession, or community members, would agree with their perceptions.

Definitions of Terms

Because of the myriad of different terms concerning gangs, it is necessary to identify what each of these terms mean. There is no academic or legal consensus as to many of the definitions surrounding gangs, gang activity, and gang crime. To better understand this perceptional analysis and inquiry on gangs in rural communities, several terms relating to gangs, their behaviors, and the qualities of the community were defined:

NOTE: One of the purposes of this research is to compare community perceptions of potential gangs and gang activities to the local law enforcement data. For this reason, the definition during collecting data and discussing gangs outside the literature review will be the State's legal definition. This will retain cohesiveness when comparing the information from both groups.

Agrarian – Pertaining to farming or rural environs. An agrarian society is a community in which some form of agriculture or agricultural production is one of the primary driving forces of the economy.

Crime – Activity that violates the law.

Drug Trade Organization (DTO) – An organization whose prime purpose is manufacturing, distribution, and/or sales of illegal drugs. Gangs can be classified as DTOs, but not all DTOs are gangs (Department of Justice, 2008).

Gang(s) – A formal or informal organization, association, or group consisting of three or more persons possessing an identifiable name, sign, or symbol. "Having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more criminal acts… and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity" (Iowa Code 723A.1).

Gang Activity – Any activity that is committed by, for the benefit or advancement of, or on behalf of the gang.

Gang Affiliation – Also referred to as gang membership. An association with, membership in, or activity tied to an organization that meets the qualifications of the definition of a gang. (Esbensen, Winfree, He and Taylor, 2001).

Gang Crime – Illegal activity that takes place for the benefit or advancement of a gang. A crime that is committed in the name of a gang.

Gang Member – An individual who claims membership or affiliation with a gang organization. (Esbensen, Winfree, He and Taylor, 2001).

Gang Violence – Illegal acts of violence by gangs or gang members against other gangs, civilians, or property (Feere and Vaughan, 2008).

Hybrid Gang – Homogenized group of individuals from multiple gangs that have come together for the purpose of counteracting social isolation or engaging in crime.

They are often composed of multiple races, ethnicities, and genders. Hybrid gangs exist only as local gangs (Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001; Curry, 2000; Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002).

In-migrant – An individual who moves from one region to another within a country or territory.

Institutions of Social Control – Organizations or groups that effect change within a community and regulate behavior and thought within a community. They are often responsible for bringing about social change, creating and enforcing rules and laws, and/or determining the direction of the community.

International Gang – A gang that completely operates outside and inside the United States.

Immigrant - A person who comes to a country, from another country, to take up residence. This residence is usually permanent.

Local Gang – Confined to a specific neighborhood or city. They often attempt to imitate the larger, more recognized, gangs. The purpose of the local gang is typically to sell and distribute drugs. However, local gangs can organize for social status or to act against the community or any part thereof.

McDonaldization – When an organization, group, community, or culture possesses the characteristics of a fast food establishment (Ritzer, 1993). McDonaldization can also refer to the "franchising" type characteristics of a national, international, or transnational gang.

National Gang – Operate in several regions, have numerous members, and most likely have links to foreign Drug Trade Organizations (DTOs). According to the Center (2010), "The organizational structure of national gangs may vary from loosely linked networks of cells to formal hierarchies" (p. 3).

Native – A resident of the community that has lived within the community for the majority of their life.

Native Gang or Nativist Gang – Within the context of the rural, non-metropolitan, community and the introduction of gangs from outside the community, the Native gang is primarily composed of individuals who are originally from the community in which the gang is operating. They are often representative of the majority race or ethnicity within the community.

Perception – The result of observing the world around an individual. Social perception allows individuals to comprehend society, people, and groups in their social world.

Racialization – Categorize an individual or group according to their race. To categorize a group as a race when it previously was not characterized as such.

Regional Gang – Function in numerous areas within a region, they are typically more organized like a business and have more members.

Social Control – Refers to the organizational mechanisms within a society that are responsible for regulating individual or group behavior. These are often affiliated with laws, rules, mores, and norms within the community, and are driven by the social institutions that create, enforce, control, or direct behavior.

Social Inequality – Social inequality refers to the unequal social status of individuals or groups within a society.

Stakeholder – One who is involved or impacted by an event or action. A person with an interest in a particular event, location, or outcome.

Street Gang – A gang that demonstrates a concrete street presence as part of their members' activities. Street socialization and street crimes are also characteristic of these types of gangs (Vigil, 2002).

Transnational Gang – Transnational gangs are active in more than one country and are designed for the purpose of participating in criminal enterprise in each. The crimes committed by gang members in one country are typically the result of the instruction of gang leaders in other countries. These gangs are designed to be mobile and easily adaptable to new communities and countries, and their criminal activities are considered well-planned and sophisticated (Franco, 2008).

Youth Gang – Term that is often used interchangeably with gang. The main difference being the motivational factors for joining is the predominantly younger mean age of the members. The group has three or more members with an age range of 12-24 years old. Members share a group identity often designated with a name, symbols, and/or colors. The group has some degree of organization, and is often involved in an elevated level of criminal activity. (Decker and Curry, 2003; Esbensen et al., 2001; Klein, 1995b; Miller, 1992; Spergel, 1995).

Summary

Bridgetown is a small rural community located in Iowa. In recent years, it has been experiencing a population growth of new in-migrants entering the community for employment at the meat packing facility. Law enforcement within the community alleges that gangs have also begun to appear and are active in Bridgetown. As such, this community appears ideal to examine the phenomenon of gangs and the new in-migrant population.

Previous research has demonstrated that gang migration to rural communities is occurring (Egley, 2000; Maxson, 1998; Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996; Lopez, 2008; Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). Weisheit and Well (2001) posit that law enforcement believes this is occurring due to the lack of awareness by community members about gangs in their town. This study examines the concept of community perceptions of gang presence within the rural environment.

Theoretical underpinnings of this study scrutinize the community member perceptions about gangs within the community and reveals what might be evidence of their potential existence in Bridgetown. Also examined are community opinions toward the new in-migrant population with the intent to understand any factors within this migration which are causing racial tension or the production or maintenance of gang identities among youth. Using questionnaires and in-depth interviews this research hopes to uncover what might shape community member opinions toward gangs, crime and the new in-migrant population.

The intent of the research questions in this case study is to examine community perceptions toward gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population. These questions examine the following: what are the community member's perceptions toward gangs and the new in-migrant population, what is shaping those perceptions, what is law enforcement's data that substantiates its claim of gang activity, and what are the potential factors causing gang activity or crime within the community. The research also is intended to uncover any ideas of community members as to ways to deal with racial tension between the native population and new in-migrants as well as what steps could be taken to reduce gangs or gang activities within the community.

The subsequent chapter (Chapter 2) examines the current body of literature concerning the phenomenon of gangs in rural, non-metropolitan, communities. The chapter focuses on the differences between rural gangs and their urban counterparts. Chapter 2 includes the issues surrounding the legal and scholarly definitions being applied to gangs. The previous research addresses what types of gangs are potentially present in rural communities as well as why they are possibly entering the community. Finally, Chapter 2 addresses why individuals join gangs, maintain gang identities outside of the urban environment, or create gangs within a rural community.

Chapter 3 will identify and present a description of the research design, the mixed methodology for data collection, the manner in which the information collected was analyzed, and any instrumentation used in this case study. For the purpose of this research, Bridgetown is being examined as a case study community, and the methodology used is mixed-methods. The questionnaires and in-depth interviews are qualitative and are studied using the Grounded Theory approach, and are validated using member

checking and triangulation. Data from Bridgetown law enforcement is handled as

quantitative data, and will be triangulated with the questionnaires and interviews. The

results of the research outlined in Chapter 3 will be presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 will include a detailed analysis of the questionnaires and interviews and

subsequent interpretation that will link the findings to the research questions presented.

The materials will be broken down by five major themes: community perceptions toward

potential gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa, community perceptions toward the new

in-migrant population, the factors that could possibly be shaping both of those

perceptions, practices and policies that could be adopted by the community to prevent the

growth of gangs or distrust against the new in-migrant population, and law enforcement's

stance and data concerning gangs in the rural community being studied. Within the last

theme, the chapter will address the statistical data presented by Bridgetown law

enforcement, and compare that data to the community perceptions. The summary of the

research, implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research will be discussed

in Chapter 5. The case study is intended to uncover community perceptions toward

gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population with the intention of providing ideas on

ways to combat these problems and inspire future research.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Gangs have captured the interest of Americans for decades. The entertainment media has utilized the concept of gangs to demonstrate a violent sub-cultural existence that is believed to exist within the geographical confines of the urban inner-city environment. The entertainment media has been responsible for the spread of gang culture ideas, and can be directly linked to mimicry of the gang lifestyle (Klein, 1995). The news media has exploited gang violence to sell newspapers and magazines and to boost evening news ratings. Law enforcement points to potential gang activity to solicit Federal and State funding for programs designed to reduce crime. Each of these groups exploits the effects of gangs, but does little to examine the underlying cause.

Sociologists and criminologists have attempted to explain the urban gang, its motivations and its members. Each researcher who has studied gangs has taken a part of the whole topic and dissected it to discover a certain aspect that explains why gangs exist. It is in combining of the literature that the bigger picture is created. However, the bigger picture merely examines gangs in urban, or metropolitan, areas. The body of work surrounding rural gangs remains predominantly incomplete. It would be simple to assume that one can derive all knowledge concerning rural gangs from their urban peers; yet, it is inaccurate to make that assumption. The extreme difference in the environments does not allow for the total transference of past research on urban gangs toward rural gangs.

This literature review will provide an outline of the current and historical research on gangs within the United States and the potential growth of gangs in rural communities. It will focus attention on the various characteristics of gangs, as well as the numerous definitions applied to the subculture. By examining the foundations upon which Cloward and Ohlin (1960) derived their theoretical analysis of gangs, we can attempt to explain the relevance of said theory in the study of rural gangs and the roles of social inequality and criminal opportunity.

By identifying the differences between rural and urban gangs, and explaining the way in which gang membership is introduced into the rural community, we can begin to isolate the motivational factors of social inequality and criminal opportunities. No previous research in the criminological or sociological field has conclusively tied gangs to specific factors of social inequality. Criminological theorists have alluded to blocked opportunities; yet, the current research does not always delineate what constitutes these blocked opportunities, nor does it identify the causes of blocked opportunities. This literature review attempts to build the bridge between social inequality and gang membership. By discussing the implications of class and income disparity, goal and status frustration, and racial and ethnic discrimination and their direct link to deviant behavior, future researchers can begin to enact a course of study to understand the implications of social inequality among the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic classes through the subculture of gangs. Finally, as rural communities are not often seen as having many criminal opportunities that might attract organized gang movement into the community, examining research that has identified motivators in rural communities and potential motivators that are being exploited in urban environs might explain a portion of

gang membership in rural communities. From this, we can develop a research method that attempts to answer what are the causational factors resulting in gang presence within rural, non-metropolitan, communities, what events have contributed to the criminal opportunities being present, and what exactly are these opportunities that draw criminalistic gangs to rural America.

This literature review is not intended to address every aspect of the rural gang phenomenon. The topic is too broad and the research available is too limited to accomplish that task. Even the governmental bodies assigned to study gangs exhaustively are lacking in cohesive data, or even a unified definition of gangs. This review only illuminates the need to consider two aspects for future research on rural gangs, social inequality and criminal opportunity. Further research is necessary to speak to these issues concerning gang activity and affiliations within rural and non-metropolitan communities.

Defining Gangs

In order to discuss and identify who chooses gang membership and their motivational factors, we must delineate what constitutes a gang. There is no universal definition of gang within the social science research community. Each researcher has been left to their own devices to establish a definition they wish to utilize in their research. For that reason, each researcher is free to develop a definition that is conducive to answering their personal research question; however, the lack of a sociological definition is not an isolated experience. Law enforcement and governmental agencies do

not have a cohesive definition of gang. Each organization has also created their independent definition of gang.

Federal law enforcement agencies in the United States have cooperated in determining a centralized, almost quasi-clinical definition of what can be labeled as a gang organization. The FBI, the National Alliance of Gang Investigators' Associations (NAGIA), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) share a definition of what constitutes a gang. According to the National Drug Intelligence Center's (2009) National Gang Threat Assessment, "[…] a gang is a group or association of three or more persons with a common identifying sign, symbol, or name who individually or collectively engage in criminal activity that creates an atmosphere of fear or intimidation" (p. 3). The Center also identifies another component of the definition of gangs: geographic areas. The Center identifies three types of geographies of gangs: local, regional, and national. Local gangs control a neighborhood and operate in a single location. Regional gangs function in numerous areas within a region, they are typically more organized like a business and have more members. National gangs operate in several regions, have numerous members, and most likely have links to foreign Drug Trade Organizations (DTOs). According to the Center (2010), "The organizational structure of national gangs may vary from loosely linked networks of cells to formal hierarchies" (p. 3).

Black's Law Dictionary (2004) provides the legal definition of what constitutes a gang. According to the legal definition, a gang is "A group of persons who go about together or act in concert esp. for antisocial or criminal purposes." It goes on to state that "Many gangs (esp. those made up of adolescents) have common identifying signs and

symbols, such as hand signals and distinctive colors." Black's Law Dictionary does not

elaborate on regions, ethnicities, races, or other key components that are central to other

definitions of a gang, but the definition is clearly similar to the federal agency definitions

as well as the theoretical definitions of gangs.

In order to understand the sociological aspects of gang activity, we must examine

the theoretical frameworks within criminology to uncover the underlying constitution of

criminal activity and enterprise. One of the first sociologists to study gangs, Frederic M.

Thrasher (1927) wrote, "The gang is an interstitial group originally formed

spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following

types of behavior: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit,

conflict, and planning." He contended that their collective behavior was a result of

spontaneous groupings that would transform into a group-consciousness that led to

delinquency triggered by the urban neglect in which they lived. In short, Thrasher

believed that the solidarity necessary to survive in such a neglected area resulted in gang-

like organizations for a feeling of solidarity and attachment.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) simply define a gang by the concept that a gang is

a loose amalgamation of individuals who lack self-control and seek to join an

organization for the feeling of belonging. It is their contention that gangs are not the

family dynamic often asserted by the members, but rather a group of self-centered

individuals driven by the desires of their own impulses. While Gottfredson and Hirschi

explain the motivations of gang members, Kissner and Pyrooz (2009) acknowledge

differential association and group-induced decision making impact the formation and

behaviors of the entity as a whole. The parameters set by Rotters' (1954) augmented

social learning theory strays from the psychological factors of the traditional definition; yet, is also applicable in understanding the complexities of the reward in participating in gang activity while explaining how behavior is learned through peer modeling.

The common thread between the theoretical examination of gangs and the semi-clinical definitions provided by federal agencies is a requirement for a sense of organization; however, not all researchers have utilized a uniform definition. As it currently stands, the sociological community has never created a universal definition to which each researcher adheres. For this reason, it becomes difficult to compare research results as well as combine outcomes to amalgamate a national consensus about gang activities. The most recognized definition comes from Esbensen, Winfree, He, and Taylor (2001). Finn-Aage Esbensen and his fellow researchers acknowledge that past definitions of what constitutes a gang include the following characteristics: youthful status, with an age range of 10 years old into the 20s or older, and the group membership participating in illegal or "imprudent" behavior. They assess the weaknesses of a lack of a universal definition which might have affected the accuracy of past research by "[…] underestimating it with a far too narrow definition, or overestimating it if the definition is too broad, capturing individuals, groups, and behavior that are of little interest to the intended audience" (p. 106). Klein (1971) contends that the definition of a gang should include "any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who:

  (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their
  neighborhood,
  (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a
  group name), and

(c) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to

call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents

and/or law enforcement agencies" (p. 428).

This, however, goes against previous definitions that ignore deviant behavior as a

contributing factor to gang membership (Thrasher, 1927).

Today's modern gangs are more homogenous than at any time in the past. Instead

of each gang serving a singular purpose, the gang might have fiscal elements as well as

social elements interspersed. Therefore, many different motivations to engage in gang

behavior can co-exist within the same gang. As such, motivations and roles should be

examined independently to understand the modern gang member. According to Maxson

and Klein (1995; 2001) there are many different types of gangs and these types are

indicative of the area in which they exist. However, they also contend that a "corporate-

like" structure is necessary for gangs that operate in several different arenas, whether

criminal or social. Maxson and Klein contend that within traditional and neotraditional

gang models there exists a substructural organization that defines the levels of an

individual's activity intensity, seniority, and responsibilities within the gang. Elder

(1996) contends that gang society closely imitates other organizations that are deemed

legitimate by social norms, such as businesses and social organizations, and she

illustrates the drug gang formation as a business model. While each of these researchers

alludes to a structural system, they do not give a definitive idea of what that structure

might entail. Instead, the explanation of gang hierarchy comes not from scholarly

journals, but from law enforcement and other organizations that interact with gang

membership. According to organizations like the San Antonio Police Department, the

modern gang is often structured like a corporate organization with a hierarchical system

(See Table 2.1). These different organizations describe the gang substructures as

different levels of responsibilities. It is in combining the work of Maxson and

Klein(1995; 2001), Elder (1996), Haggedorn (2008), Sheley, Zhang, Brody, and Wright

(1995), and Le Blanc and Lanctot (1998) with the work of law enforcement entities and

gang prevention organizations that we can compile a more comprehensive idea of the

gang hierarchy structure, the levels, roles, and responsibilities therein.

Table 2.1 Gang Hierarchy Structure
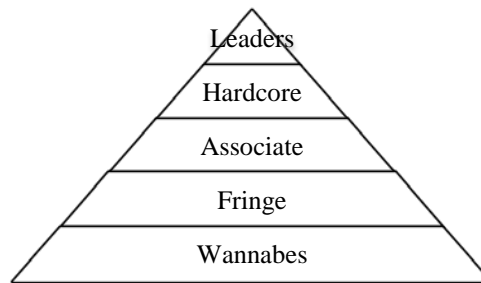
Each layer of the gang has certain responsibilities and obligations (Hagedorn,

2008; Venkatesh, 1997). The leaders are in charge of the organization. The activities of

the gang are determined by the leaders. They often determine the level of criminal

activity of the gang. Leaders can be either criminal or conflict driven, and they will

determine the direction of the hardcore members. Hardcore gang members are often

those who have been with the gang the longest, and are most likely to be gang affiliated

for life. The hardcore gang members typically comprise roughly 10% of the gang

membership, but they are most likely to be the most violent members. Hardcore

members can either be criminal or conflict members as determined by the leaders.

Associate members are members of the gang that are most likely to be conflict members.

They are usually the young recruits and are looking for inroads into higher membership. Their ability to use the gang for profit is negligible. The fringe members spend time with the gang and participate in low level behaviors; however, they still participate in other activities outside the gang. The fringe members are typically identified as conflict or retreatist members. Finally, the wannabes are not gang members. They attempt to mimic the gang culture through symbols of the gang. They might associate with gang members, but are not allowed to participate in gang activities. The wannabe is a retreatist, often using the gang as a means for self-validation or self-protection.

In discussing the transformation into today's gang phenomenon, certain types of modern gangs must be identified for their unique characteristics. These gangs include: hybrid gangs, Drug Trade Organizations, and modern street gangs (Klein and Maxson, 2006; Weisel, 2002). Hybrid gangs are typically represented in rural communities and have become the norm for gang activity in rural communities. While the concept of hybrid gangs is considered a new phenomenon, similar structures have appeared in larger, metropolitan communities for nearly a century (Thrasher, 1927). It is the modern incarnation of this trend that has caused much consternation in the law enforcement community. Hybrid gangs were historically just multi-ethnic organizations within the same race. Unlike the traditional gangs, and gang structures, modern hybrid gangs cross cultural, ethnic, and racial boundaries that are typically the causes for the creation of urban gangs (Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). They are often composed of multiple races and ethnicities, and they now include male and female members (Curry, 2000; Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002). Modern hybrid gangs are often created from various individual gang members from different gangs appearing within a community

and joining forces to create their own gang. While they often utilize the names of nationally recognized street gangs, they are not recognized by national organizations. Individual hybrid gang members may retain their previous gang identities by utilizing the symbols and colors of their original gang affiliation. Hybrid gangs are a homogenized group of individuals that join forces out of social isolation from the new community or to carry out criminal enterprise.

Drug Trade Organizations (DTOs) are not a separate kind of gang, but rather a category under which falls prison gangs, street gangs, and youth gangs. Howell and Decker (1999) illustrate the involvement of youth gangs in the drug market by focusing on the history of youth gangs. They refer to the expansion of activity by youth and adult gangs in drug sales during the 1985 cocaine epidemic, including the role of the Vice Lords in the distribution of crack. Howell and Decker go on to illustrate how youth gang drug activity is increasing, as well as violence associated with drugs (pp. 2-3).

Not all drug gangs are DTOs. Certain gangs manufacture their own product for sale and distribution. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a case in point is the Mexican gangs and their link to the production of methamphetamine (2008). The Department of Justice claims, "Violent urban gangs control most retail-level drug distribution nationally, and some have relocated from inner cities to suburban and rural areas. Moreover, gangs are increasing their involvement in wholesale-level drug distribution, aided by their connections with Mexican and Asian DTOs" (p. V). This statement shows that gangs are not just involved as distributors, but as manufacturers as well. Many government-based agencies consider any gang that distributes drugs to be DTOs; yet, other researchers believe the component necessary for this label is the actual

manufacturing of drugs (Howell and Decker, 1999; Diaz, 2009). Diaz states that groups like MS-13 have become the distributors or protection for the DTOs. Regardless of the level of involvement by gangs, drugs do play a relevant role in gang activity in rural communities.

Street gangs commonly sell drugs as part of their criminal enterprise (Klein and Maxson, 2006). Spergel (1995) contends that the drug trade for street gangs is often as a result to fund their own drug usage. However, Klein (2007) states that street gangs who do sell drugs do so at a small level. Klein's accusation of an over-exaggeration of drug sales by street gangs is met by the Department of Justice's claim that law enforcement reporting of drug involvement by street gangs has increased nationally. It is their contention street gangs are actively working with international DTOs and that "[…] drug traffickers affiliated with the Sinaloa, Gulf, Juárez, and Tijuana Cartels maintain working relationships with at least 20 street gangs […]" (p. 44).

A universal definition is problematic in that it might not apply to every scenario dealing with gangs. The majority of the research literature assumes that gangs are thusly defined by one critical component; they have some form of assembly or are gathered together within a locale. These definitions do not necessarily accurately reflect gang activity in a rural community. The difficulty in discussing gangs and rural communities lies in commonality and use of terminology. The term "gang" often implies a grouping of individuals acting in concert within the same locale. However, within the rural community, a gang might be represented by only one or two members. Rural law enforcement will often count one gang member within the community as one gang.

The importance of defining what constitutes a gang within any research into gang activity is to understand behaviors within the community, and to predict future behaviors if gang activity is allowed to go unchecked. It is important to focus some attention on what is occurring within the community in order to determine motivational factors. To merely isolate the gang for the purpose of defining the group, without taking into account what drives the organization, creates issues in exploring incentive for recruitment.

Theoretical Analysis of Gang Membership

To better understand the concept of gang activity and the draw to gang affiliation, it is necessary to examine the theoretical underpinnings to gang research. In an attempt to understand the complexities inherent in gang membership, examining the motivational factors through the membership options is crucial. While early literature has looked at the gang as a generic term to explain criminal organizations, researchers elaborate on theoretical conceptualizations, such as Strain Theory, to examine the drives to join these organizations. By examining the historical theoretical foundation of gang research, potential research on the rural gang can only be benefited. In fact, the past theories can potentially be transformed to meet the scientific needs of modern gang researchers. The most likely of these theories to be transformed was created by Cloward and Ohlin (1959; 1960). By examining the creation of their theory through the use of other theorists, we can transform Cloward and Ohlin's work to remain relevant in today's study of the modern rural gang.

In the 1960s, Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin developed the Illegitimate Opportunity Theory, also known as Differential Opportunity Theory, to explain the

concept of gangs in urban areas. Cloward and Ohlin created their theory primarily based on the theories of Robert Merton (1938). Through contributions toward the Theory of Deviance, Strain Theory, and Paradigm of Deviant Behavior (See Table 2.2), Merton explained why certain subcultures act out against the norm. It was his contention that anomie exists when societal goals and the means to legitimately meet these goals do not correspond.

Table 2.2 Merton's Paradigm of Deviant Behavior

Merton's Paradigm of Deviant Behavior		
Attitude to Goals	**Attitude to Means**	**Modes of Adaptation**
accept	accept	Conformity
accept	reject	Innovation
reject	accept	Ritualism
reject	reject	Retreatism
reject/accept	reject/accept	Rebellion

Merton's version of Anomie, Strain Theory, and his Theory of Deviance and Paradigm of Deviant Behavior, advances that for the person with access to socially accepted means to gain societal goals, such as wealth, privilege, and status, conformity is often their choice of behavior. However, for those blocked from traditional access to these goals, alternative behaviors are prescribed for gaining what the person desires and what is often held as "The American Dream." Merton, in his Paradigm of Deviant Behavior, describes four non-normative groupings that explain alternative methods and attitudes to gaining societally accepted goals. Innovators are desirous of traditional goals, and though blocked from traditional methods of meeting these aims, use unaccepted, or non-norm, methods to obtain them. Ritualists reject the goals of society, but accept the

means of working towards reaching these ambitions. Ritualists continue to follow society's norms, knowing they will never reach the goal. While ritualist behaviors are not deviant per se, nor are they illegal, their behaviors are non-normative as the ritualist is striving, knowing that the goal will never be reached. Retreaters reject the goals and any means to meet them. Retreaters have given up on society. They are typically substance abusers and "hobos." The rebellion grouping rejects societal goals and means and substitutes their own goals and means in their place. It is within the rebellion grouping that the most pronounced subculture from all of these adaptations exists.

It would be upon the adaptations of Merton's Paradigm that Cloward and Ohlin (1960) would establish their own scale explaining the different drives for criminal deviance and on which we will attempt to explain gang membership motivations (See Table 2.3). While Cloward and Ohlin change the identifying nomenclature of the different modes of adaptation to fit their modes of gang membership, the attitudes to traditional goals and means would remain the same as Merton's. They would also drop the conformist and ritualist from their theoretical structure, as these two groups would not be likely to take part in gang activity. They renamed the innovator as the criminal, and the rebel as the conflictor. The retreatist would stay the same. The new names given by Cloward and Ohlin are essential to understanding their theoretical approach to understanding gang membership.

Table 2.3 Cloward and Ohlin Differential Illegitimate Opportunity Theory

Cloward and Ohlin's Illegitimate Opportunity Structure		
Attitude to Traditional Goals	**Attitude to Traditional Means**	**Modes of Gang Membership**
accept	reject	Criminal (Innovation)
reject/accept	reject/accept	Conflict (Rebellion)
reject	reject	Retreatist (Retreatist)

Cloward and Ohlin's Illegitimate Opportunity Theory utilizes the same attitudes to traditional goals and traditional means of Merton to explain gang behaviors (See Table 2.4). Cloward and Ohlin attribute certain behaviors to different modes of gang membership. They look at the gang structure (macro) to explain the motivation of membership (micro) (Merton, 1959). For Cloward and Ohlin, the individual who wishes to gain access to wealth will only join a criminal gang, and falls within the criminal mode of gang membership. The rebel, or conflict individual, will only seek out a gang that exclusively recreates their personal goals and means to obtain those goals. The retreatist will only be able to join up with others who will participate in drug usage or other lower level deviance.

Table 2.4. Cloward and Ohlin Means to Obtain Goals

Cloward and Ohlin's Illegitimate Opportunity Structure		
Attitude to Traditional Goals	**Means to Obtain Goals**	**Modes of Gang Membership**
accept	Drug sales, robbery, profit crimes	Criminal (Innovation)
reject/accept	Vandalism, violence, petty crimes	Conflict (Rebellion)
reject	Drug usage, Hustling	Retreatist (Retreatist)

While Merton stressed that society provides differential access to legitimate means, Cloward and Ohlin argue that gangs, or subcultures, provide differential access to illegitimate means. They refer to the work of Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942) who claimed that deviance is not created at the individual strata, but rather a result of the environment in which the individual resides. The problem in applying Shaw and McKay to the rural, or non-metropolitan, gang is the fact that their theory is based on concentric zones within a set space. Those concentric zones do not apply in gang migration patterns, nor do concentric zones truly exist in rural areas. Instead, their foundational use of Cohen (1955) and Miller's (1958; 1959) theories of environmental influences upon the motivation for gang affiliation are more in line with the conceptual issues surrounding rural migration.

Albert Cohen (1955) furthered Merton's study of the delinquent subculture in his Subcultural Theory; however, he did not consider the deviant driven by economic goals or social status. His attention was instead focused upon the cultural issues, such as poverty and a slum environment, which blocked working class youth from traditional society's normative objectives. Cohen would put forward the ideologies of status frustration and reaction formation. Cohen contends that when impoverished youth are blocked from society's goals, they will become frustrated at their disadvantaged status. From these perceived inequalities and disadvantages, reaction formation would ensue. Reaction formation is the replacement of societal norms with alternative norms of the environment. These new values, and the statuses they bring, allow the gang as a collective unit to adapt to their societal ostracism. Cohen deviates from Merton in that he studied behavior from the whole gang as opposed to the individual.

Cloward and Ohlin, would take this same approach to looking at gangs as did Cohen. While they do reference the individual motivation factors to joining gangs, their research seems more intent on delineating the different gang types instead of the different players. They did not stop at just including Cohen's research, but would further their theory with the research of Walter Miller.

Walter Miller (1958) elaborated on the theory of Cohen, but argued that it was the lower class lifestyle that created gangs and delinquency. He believed that environment contributed to gang membership; status could only be gained through gang membership, the gang becomes the family, and activities taken on behalf of the gang only elevated the status of the individual. The problem with Miller's contentions is that if gang membership is about status only in a poor environment, it would seem that his ideas that gang activity as a means to curb boredom goes against his own theory. Cohen and Miller's theoretical contributions to the inspiration behind Illegitimate Opportunity Theory also explain cultural aspects in play surrounding minority gang membership.

While utilizing Cloward and Ohlin's Differential Opportunity Theory to explain entire gang organizations was appropriate for the gang subculture that existed up until the 1960's, today's gangs are more complex than being just independently criminalistic, retreatist, or conflict based. However, the transformation of gangs does not dismiss this theoretical approach; but rather transforms the usage of Cloward and Ohlin to a more focused examination of the individual members within the group and the effect of strain on their choice to affiliate with gangs (Brezina, 1996; Brezina, 2000; Agnew, 2001; Hoffman and Spence, 2010). This theory is, therefore, important to note in the current study of rural gang activity as it combines two important factors toward the gang member

growth phenomenon occurring in these non-metropolitan areas: criminal opportunity and social inequality.

Rural Gangs

Research has addressed what is perceived as a relatively new phenomenon of gang activity and migration in non-metropolitan and rural communities (Egley, 2000; Maxson, 1998; Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996; Lopez, 2008; Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). The 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment points to a rejuvenated recruiting of youth gang members and Drug Trade Organization proliferation as reasons for the appearance of gang activity in non-metropolitan areas. The 2009 National Youth Gang Survey reveals that 15 percent of rural counties are reporting gang activity, and that 33 percent of smaller towns are reporting gang problems. These statistics are considerably higher than previous decades. However, Dukes and Stein (2003) believe that gangs have always existed in rural areas, and the reason for their invisibility in the social sciences can be contributed to the fact that urban gangs were considered more important to study. These pre-existing local gangs are important to note, as Maxson (1998) reveals that non-metropolitan cities with a gang presence prior to the recent migration activity are considerably more likely to have these urban gang members arrive with the intention of retaining their gang identity. Examining these pre-existing gangs might also reveal what features are present within the community that encourages new gang affiliations or activities among in-migrants. Current literature suggests that these features are tied to criminal opportunities available and social inequalities experienced (Evans, Fitzgerald, Weigel, and Chvilicek, 1999).

For the conflict and retreatist gangs, delineated by the theory of Cloward and Ohlin (1960), external forces drive these youth gang members to retain original gang identities, form new hybrid gangs, or join up with gang members present in the community. The conflict gang member aligns themselves with a gang based on Jankowski's recreation, physical protection, resistance, and commitment to community. The retreatist seeks the refuge or camouflage and physical protection described by Jankowski. For the criminalistic and retreatist gang member, external forces come from the rural community in the form of civic ostracism, prejudice, and discrimination as a result of the racialization of the new in-migrant workforce (Brown and Bean, 2006).

Gang activity does not spontaneously appear within a community. Identifiable factors are driving the appearance of gangs in these rural communities. Walter B. Miller (2001) contends that gang proliferation throughout the country in the past thirty years can be linked to drugs, immigration, gang names, migration, and gang subculture represented within the media. Miller's causal factors are present within the rural environment. Martin Sanchez-Jankowski (1991) identifies six major motivators for gang membership: material incentives, recreation, refuge or camouflage, physical protection, resistance, and commitment to community. Criminalistic gang members, as described in Differential Opportunity Theory, seek out what Jankowski defines as material incentives. These incentives are typically fiscal, and the potential recruit perceives simplistic advantages to gaining wealth by aligning with others pursuing wealth. Fiscal opportunity must be available for criminalistic gangs and gang members to enter a rural, or non-metropolitan, environment (O'Dea, Murphy, and Balzer, 1997). Research shows that the most common fiscal opportunity drawing criminal gangs into these new areas is the drug trade.

Whether the community is used to distribute or manufacture drugs, the allure from the potential drug sales creates an attraction to the new rural location. The question then is what is rural gang activity? Does it resemble urban gang behavior, or is it a completely different object to study?

Gang activity in rural communities does not mimic its urban counterpart (Weisheit and Wells, 2004; Howell and Egley, 2005). Unlike urban gang activity, rural gang numbers vary as the population trends fluctuate. An inability to recruit new members among the nativist population often hampers the sustainability of gangs that would otherwise flourish in an urban setting (Weisheit and Wells, 2001c). The population flux is attributed to new in-migrant workers entering and leaving the community. As new minority and immigrant populations enter the community to find employment, it is the children that most often bring with them their gang ties.

In urban environs, the motivations for gang affiliation are often linked with safety or friendship ties with pre-existing gang members (Evans, Fitzgerald, Weigel, and Chvilick, 1999; Manwaring, 2005). Urban gangs exhibit a "protective function" to insulate members from victimization from society and other gangs (Melde, Taylor, and Esbensen, 2009). Dukes and Stein (2003) found that poverty and social disorganization were shared aspects that impacted gang membership. However, native rural gang members were not as distanced from the community and exhibited a strong human capital and social bond as opposed to their urban counterparts.

As mentioned earlier, the rural gang presence does not resemble the traditional urban gang behavior. In fact, previous research by others demonstrates that gang

activities within the rural environment are more secretive and somewhat dissimilar to their urban counterparts (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002; Weisheit and Wells, 2004). Therefore, it is most likely impossible to recreate the ethnographical research of Venkathesh (2008) in which he gathered data as a participant observer within a gang in an urban setting. Yet, a more beneficial method of gathering data concerning the gang phenomenon in rural communities might be to analyze community perceptions, and compare this data to law enforcement data available from the corresponding police and sheriff's department of the same community.

There exists no conclusive body of research surrounding the gang activity in rural communities. While research exists concerning rural gang activity, its scope is limited based upon the methods in which the data has been collected. The majority of research available focuses only on the reporting of gang activity from the law enforcement perspective or from schools reporting gang-like behavior (Weisheit and Wells, 2001). Therefore, the data could be construed as incomplete based upon the lack of substantive field work within the rural, non-metropolitan, community as a method to determine gang presence.

It can also be implied that law enforcement entities reporting gang activity in their communities are doing such to gain access to governmental monies designated to stop gang growth. As there is no one definition for gang researchers as to what constitutes a gang, and there is no law enforcement standardized measurement of what constitutes a gang member, it remains difficult to measure each of these research projects against each other. Because of the enormity of gang activity in urban, or metropolitan, communities, a certain standard exists in which it is not enough to simply claim allegiance to a gang to be

considered a gang member. Law enforcement in urban communities often requires

substantial corroborating evidence that conclusively identifies an individual as a gang

member (O'Deane and Murphy, 2010; University of St. Thomas, 2010; Carlie, 2011).

Unless it can be determined that these same methods are utilized in rural environments,

identifying gang members becomes a guessing game and the data collected is invalid. As

Howell (2007) contends, youths often identify as being gang members for the perceived

prestige given to that lifestyle. Research has shown that the predominant number of rural

gang activities is the result of youth gangs (Weisheit and Wells, 2001; Weisheit and

Wells, 2004; Lawrence, 2003). If Howell is correct in his assumption that youths might

self-identify as gang members for status, then it is essential to examine how rural

communities are identifying and cataloguing gang membership. If it is enough to simply

claim gang affiliation in a rural community in order to be labeled by law enforcement as a

gang member, the problem of gang activity in rural communities could potentially be

exaggerated. This might lead to future research on rural gangs concluding that the

contended rural gang phenomenon does not exist. It is therefore essential to investigate

the measurement processes of rural law enforcement to determine if the stated problem is

real or just a perception.

Gangs and the Role of Social Inequality

Prior to the industrial era, gangs have been present in the United States, and have

been historically linked to racism, classism, poverty, and immigration. The earliest

records of gang existence in the United States dates back to the eighteenth and nineteenth

century (Sante, 1991; Burrows, Wallace, and Wallace, 2000; Asbury, 2001; Anbinder,

2001). Sante contends gangs initially served as a social organization for new immigrants

and the poor. These individuals sought refuge and relief from their hard lives through gangs that operated as a social club or fraternal order for the different ethnic and racial groups within the area. Gangs were also a method of gaining both legal and illegal income. For new immigrants that had arrived from countries in which they had been powerless, gangs gave them power and influence, especially in local politics (Hochschild, 1995). In fact, looking through history from the 1800s to the 1940s and even to the 1980s, the primary element that has created gang activity has been the factors of social inequality, such as class position and race (Schneider, 1999). While modern gangs were most likely initially formed within the walls of the prison, they thrived on the outside because of the membership's inability to escape the lower class environment (Hagan, 1993). The financial downswing in the 1980s would again see an increase in gang activity in metropolitan and urban areas. An increase in activity from predominantly minority based gangs would be the direct result of the recession of the 1980s. In summary, an unequal society breeds gangs.

In the social inequalities research arena, there is a lack of a body of work linking social inequality to gangs. This does not mean the connection does not exist, but rather, that this link must be constructed by combining criminological research with research on social inequality. Both research areas discuss the same causational factors; it is just a matter of building a bridge between both schools of social science. Connecting these two concepts is a matter of illustrating that inequality behaviors, like discrimination and classism, lead to status or goal frustration and poverty. The result of status or goal frustration and poverty cause certain individuals to find alternative methods of reaching societal expressions of success, and these alternative methods are criminal deviance

(Messner and Rosenfeld, 2000). In urban environs, gang activity is often viewed as the simplest and fastest way to meet either fiscal or social needs through criminal deviance. Therefore, social inequality can be linked to gang activity (Klein and Maxson, 2010; Barbour, 2005; Papachristos and Kirk, 2006; Hall, Thornberry, and Lizotte, 2006). To build this connection, we must explain what constitutes social inequality and how it applies to those choosing to identify as gang members.

The phrase "social inequality" is a blanket term utilized to explain conditions in which certain groups within a population do not have equal access to social status or means (Grusky and Szelenyi, 2006; Blau, 1977; Massey, 2007; Marshall, 1997). Social inequality is typically manifested within the community through racial and ethnic discrimination, unequal class system, economic inequality, and gender discrimination. Past research into gang activity in the rural community does not point to gender discrimination as being a factor in gang membership; therefore, it is unnecessary to consider this aspect in research that attempts to uncover the motivations for maintaining gang identity in a rural gang.

Social inequality appears in different forms; however, for the topic of gangs, it is often expressed as class inequality, goal frustration, status frustration, and ethnic/racial. The causality between these factors and gang membership is high (Curry and Spergel, 1988; Wilkinson, Kawachi, and Kennedy, 1998; Cohen and Short, 1958). Classism, created by economic inequality, causes an unfair disparity among individuals within a community; yet, goal frustration, and status frustration are also correlated to poverty (Roach and Gursslin, 1967; Rabow, Berkman, and Kessler, 1983; Merton, 1938, Massey, 2007). As a result, classism can cause economic strain as described by Agnew (1992;

2001) and result in the individual seeking other avenues to fulfill their needs, wants, and desires (Agnew, Brezina, Wright, and Cullen, 2002; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Johnson and Morris, 2009; Aseltine, Gore, and Gordon, 2000). These avenues often result in deviant behavior, like gang affiliation.

Studying the research of Merton and his constructs of Anomie (Merton, 1938; Durkheim, 1897) and the principles of Strain Theory (Agnew, 1992; Agnew, 2001; Vowel and May, 2000) and Illegitimate Opportunity Theory (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960), we can see how blocked access to legitimate goals within an environment can lead to criminal behavior. As the combining of these two similar theories contend, if an individual is constrained from reaching traditional social goals, or their environment causes deterioration of social norms, the individual will act in whatever fashion is necessary to satisfy their needs.

Urban, or metropolitan, gangs are typically found within lower-socieconomic areas of the community. It is the obvious inequality within the metropolitan structure that leads to criminalistic behaviors typical of gang activities (Blau and Blau, 1982). The social environment within these areas most likely to present gang action is often one of social isolationism and concentrated poverty (Wilson, 1987). It is this centric community, devoid of the potential for escaping poverty, which creates a weak attachment to the labor force (Wilson, 1996). Chicago School theorists refer to the distribution of economic classes within a community through the concept of concentric zones (Park and Burgess, 1921; Shaw and McKay, 1942). Other theorists refer to these areas as poverty traps. According to the research on poverty traps and crime, poverty breeds deviancy, and, as a result of deviancy in these communities, industries and

economic growth opportunities are hesitant to enter the area (Carter and Barrett, 2006).

Therefore, as gainful employment is scant and economic growth opportunities are not

occurring within these zones, certain groups of residents see only crime as a method for

sustainability (Mauro and Carmeci, 2007; Massey and Eggers, 1990). Utilizing the

research surrounding the concept of the poverty traps; it is easy to understand that for

gang members, without legitimate opportunities for economic advancement, crime is the

logical conclusion as a potential escape from poverty. In fact, violence, through gang

membership, can be perceived as a survival mechanism (Burnett, 1999). Unfortunately,

this choice continues the poverty trap and prevents legitimate economic growth in these

neighborhoods. However, rural communities are often not subject to specific

neighborhoods labeled as slums as the town is more geographically restricted.

In rural communities, middle-income and lower-income families typically reside

within the same neighborhoods. It is only the upper-class members of the rural

community that might be set apart from others, and that separation is not always

geographically dynamic. Rural communities also have a disproportionately high level of

poverty than urban areas (Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990); therefore, poverty is not an

issue that can be locked into a small geographic location within the city limits. Current

research into rural gangs does not address the impact of lower-class housing on the

likelihood of gang membership, nor does it address whether community perceptions of

gang activity are defined by outward expressions of poverty such as housing. Future

research on gangs in rural communities might benefit from the discussion of the

correlation between housing areas and gang affiliation.

Goal frustration, also referred to as frustration-aggression, is the inability to reach one's personal goals. This condition is often because of societal or group constraints which limit the individual's ability to gain a higher socio-economic status (Massey, 2007). According to Michael Rutter (1987), adolescents are most likely to resort to violent or aggressive behavior when they are unable to meet their own expected goals. He states, "These incidents which provoke their aggressive behavior are mainly those which interfere in some way with the execution of an intended action, or else those which caused them pain or humiliation" (p. 365). He refers to the research of Thrasher, who studied youths in gangs during the 1920s. Thrasher's (1927) research revealed that adolescents were likely to join gangs in order to find a sense of belonging if societal acceptance was lacking. Thrasher's research goes on to explain a willingness to participate in aggressive activities because of a sense of nullification of societal importance. His research concludes that as youths were denied access to normal society, they began to negate its importance and instead displace the traditional societal connection onto the gang "family". This need to find human connection in which the participants are similar to the searching individual is referred to as homophily, and it is human nature (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001). There exists a homophilic desire to bond with individuals within a socioeconomic or cultural community to engage in group dynamics such as gangs.

With today's economic troubles and hostilities toward racial and ethnic minorities, gang activity is again a priority social issue. Existing research demonstrates that gangs have persisted in rural, non-metropolitan, communities for generations (Dukes and Stein, 2003; Maxson, 1998; NDIC, 2009). However, research on gangs in rural

communities is relatively recent. It was not until the 1990s that social science researchers began examining gangs in the rural environment. It is in examining the body of work surrounding rural gangs that the answer is discovered; minority migration into rural areas. This opens the question as to whether the problems currently experienced in the rural communities are a result of actual gangs, perception of gang problems based on community and law enforcement bias (Weisheit and Wells, 2001b), or whether researchers are now acknowledging the topic due to media attention surrounding the issue. It appears as though the concern over gangs and gang activity in rural communities is correlated to the entry of minority and immigrant (predominantly Latino) workers into the rural labor market in the form of the meat packing industry. Therefore, there is reason to believe that racial and ethnic discrimination might be a factor in gang activity, or the perception of gang activity, in rural communities.

While economic depression spurs gang growth in urban environments, the reverse is true in rural environments (Weisheit and Wells, 2004). Economic growth in rural communities has created an atmosphere that has produced gang growth (Weisheit and Wells, 2001). This is not to say that those in-migrants are obtaining a portion of that wealth (Catanzarite, 2000), but that growth creates jobs that draw the migration of workers bringing their youth gang affiliated children into the community (Brezinski, 2004). Upon arriving in the community, these families often face hostility and disconnect from a native community that perceives these individuals as taking jobs from the community (Tafoya, 2004; Johnson, Johnson-Webb, and Farrell, 1999; Marrow, 2009).

Latino migration into rural communities, especially into the Midwest, has caused

great consternation among native members of the pre-existing society (Allegro, 2010;

Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipio, and Montoya, 2009). This relatively recent phenomenon

can be attributed to the hiring practices of companies like the meat packing industry and

to new economic growth opportunities in the Midwest (Gabriel, 2008; Grey, 1999;

Schlosser, 2002; Lichter and Johnson, 2009; Gouveia and Saenz, 2000). After the near

collapse of the pork industry in the 1980s, the meat packing industry began to look for a

cheaper labor force that would not have the power once wielded by a strong union

representation (Rachleff, 1993; Warren, 2000; Fahey, 1988). The result was a drive to

hire individuals with weak or no ties with the community (Granovetter, 1983), little

education, and complete dependency upon any income. Hence, these industries targeted

poor minority members from inner cities and an immigrant workforce (Kandel and

Parrado, 2005; Huffman and Miranowski, 1996; Grey and Woodrick, 2002; Catanzarite,

2000).

Unfortunately, the new in-migration of minority and immigrant workers has led to

racial tension in certain rural communities between the native population and the new

migrants (Dalla and Christensen, 2005; Baker and Hotek, 2003). The perception that

Latino workers are entering the community and taking jobs from the native population

has created the appearance of a split labor market as described by Bonacich (1972). It is

this belief that perpetuates racial and ethnic tension. In Maldonado's (2006; 2009)

research concerning the fruit growing industry of Washington, she uncovers that Latinos

are valorized for their role in menial labor and are seen by owners and operators as

unable to be suitable for any job that rises above the minimum salary. The social

isolation and goal frustration felt by many Latinos by the blocked access to the

"American Dream" and the persistence of a Cholo identity has contributed to an increase

in gang creation within the Latino communities in the United States (Lopez and

O'Donnell-Brummett, 2003). Within these communities, the Legalist residents, as

defined by Flora, Flora, and Tapp (2000), see these individuals as taking income and jobs

from the native population. It is this tension between nativists who feel economically

threatened, and the new immigrant population that feels socially minimalized that could

lead to a social imbalance and presence of in-group/out-group tensions. The negative

viewpoint toward these new in-migrants spurs the drive to find a cultural identity that is

filled by the gang lifestyle. It is unclear as to whether the divide between nativists and

the new-inmigrant, minority population is a result of racism or an internal colonialism as

described by Omi and Winant (1994); however the perception toward the new minority

community members indicates the readjusting of racial boundaries within a

predominantly White society. These new racial/ethnic constructs could eventually result

in a bipolarization of the Latino community in similar form as what occurred to the Asian

population in Loewen's *Mississippi Chinese* (1998). The perception of race in rural

communities has also lead to the concern toward gang growth in these communities and

the potential presence of racial or ethnic discrimination driving the new Latino population

to assume, or retain, gang identities.

Previous research illustrates that the predominant number of in-migrants into rural

communities that have pre-migration gang ties are Latino (Spergel, 1995; Howell and

Egley, 2005). These individuals are often youth who arrive with their families for

employment (Weisheit and Wells, 2001). For these non-native, youth gang members

who arrive in the rural community, it is often civic ostracism and racism that leaves them clinging to this gang identity. As Americans struggle with the new racial constructs created by the recent influx of Latino immigrants into the country, the attempt to clearly define racial roles has caused ethnic and racial strain (Lee and Bean, 2004; 2007). As there is a tendency to cluster a racial or ethnic population as one homogenous out-group (Brauer, 2001), gang membership might be a method for attaining a unique cultural identity. MS-13 is an example of a gang that bases its US foundation on an attempt to maintain their Salvadoran nationality in a society that views all Latinos as "Mexican" (Franco, 2008). The drive to establish a unique ethnic identity, as described by Nagel (1994), has caused some to look to socially deviant methods to self-identify. Youth entering the rural community will cling to their previous gang status to maintain cultural roots. For the minority youth that assume a gang identity after arriving, they do so with the intention of finding a self-identity in a community that has shunned them.

As young minority members enter rural communities, it is possible the perception of the community and the subsequent treatment of the new in-migrant aids in the retention of gang identities. For youth entering the community with prior gang ties, a method of insulating against the discrimination and social inequalities leveled by the native residents is to retain that gang identity. Thus, discrimination as a social inequality potentially plays a role in gang behaviors and activities within the rural community. However, until further research is conducted to identify why youth maintain gang identities in non-metropolitan communities, the interplay between race/ethnicity and rural gangs is merely speculation.

Gangs and the Role of Criminal Opportunity

Criminal opportunities are present in every community; however, not all criminal opportunities draw gang activity. While research has focused attention on the criminal activities performed by gang members in rural communities, these deviant behaviors are not the driving force for relocation from urban to rural communities. It is not that these crimes are unimportant, but placing graffiti or committing violent acts against community members were not factors in migrations. Rural communities have reported elevated rates of crime as a result of gang in-migration (Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996); however, research has illustrated that it is actually the nativist gangs that pose more of a threat of criminal activity than the national street gang members residing within the community (Rosenbaum and Grant, 1983).

It initially appears illogical that any criminal opportunities present in rural communities would attract the attention of gangs. However, for gangs that are primarily Drug Trade Organizations, any profitable avenue for the manufacturing and distribution of illegal substances is attractive. Criminalistic gangs are entering rural communities because of the potential fiscal opportunities present.

The most common criminal activities with economic gain for the gang member are the drug trade and drug money laundering (Williams and Becnel, 1996; Webb, 1995). According to the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Association (2009), gangs are the primary transporters of drugs throughout the United States. The survey research conducted by Decker, Katz, and Webb (2008) reveals that 80% of gang members interviewed admit their particular gang sells marijuana, approximately 50% sell powder

or crack cocaine, and 31% sell methamphetamines. This growth has been attributed to two causal factors: the changes in the cocaine market and socioeconomic factors such as poverty (Howell and Decker, 1999). However, the gangs entering rural communities for no other reason than to market drugs are often considered DTOs.

The purpose of the DTO is to distribute drugs, whether on a local, national, or global scale. Their most common drugs for distribution are cocaine products (cocaine or crack), methamphetamine, heroin, and marijuana (Diaz, 2009). Over the past decade, DTOs have become remarkably organized and as well managed as some Fortune 500 companies. These organizations have often been described as franchise-type organizations (Levitt and Venkatesh, 1998). Gang leaders in different towns or regions pay the central leadership from their drug sales in exchange for the security and alliances available with the identity. Each local gang has limited contact with other branches and is left alone as long as they do not cause harm to the national gang.

Utilizing the concept of McDonaldization (Ritzer, 1993; 2004), we can draw comparisons to a franchise operation and the fast-food restaurant's operating procedures to the drug gang and DTO operations in rural environs. In order for a culture, organization, or subculture to fit the parameters of Ritzer's paradigm, four components must be present. These components are efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. Transnational drug trade requires that these same standards be in place in rural areas in order to maintain consumers and not lose territory to other organizations that can meet the needs placed by the demand. There must be an efficient method of bringing drugs into the rural community. Calculability describes the revenue to cost ratio that determines the fiscal profitability of transporting drugs into an area, despite the elevated

risk associated with the transportation. While predictability of drug quality is difficult, if not impossible, to manage and the ability to access the identical drug is sometimes improbable, drug organizations focus on the effect in a rural environment rather than brand loyalty. As widespread access to drugs is not readily available in rural environs, the addicts are more likely to seek out drugs that have an effect they desire more than a specific narcotic. This means that the drug gang, or DTO, focuses on always providing a consistency of drugs that illicit the same effects for the consumer. Finally, upper echelons within drug gangs rely on a level of control within their organization. If gangs are able to utilize rural dealers, or employ non-gang members who are addicts, control can be maintained through access to the drugs, and they can deskill their workforce and maximize profits.

The current literature available fails to explain other motivational crimes that draw gangs to rural communities. It is in further research that additional drives to relocate for fiscal gains might be discovered. Again, it is important to differentiate between crimes committed by gang members in the rural community and crimes that drive gangs to seek out rural communities. By analyzing crime trends in a case study community, it might be possible to determine if other motivators exist that have not been studied.

Theories of Perception

While the primary topics of the research discuss gangs and the new in-migrant population, it is not the purpose of this research to determine the actual existence of gangs and the new in-migrant population. Rather, it is the perceptions of the participants that are being analyzed. For this reason, it is necessary to discuss the applicable theories

surrounding the formation of perception and the processing of this information by the individual. This can be undertaken through the analysis of knowledge creation theories as theories of perception.

Perception can be defined as the way in which someone processes their experience of the world and the assumptions they make based upon these experiences. From these experiences and perceptions, perceptual belief is created. Robert Audi (2011) states that perceptual beliefs are, "beliefs grounded in perception." Therefore, it can be assumed that beliefs are the result of the information the individual obtains and the way in which they perceive the knowledge they have actively engaged in gathering. This theory is known as representative realism. Direct access to information, and the interaction between experiences and the objects being perceived, guides perceptions. When discussing the concepts of perception, it is important to analyze the view of knowledge.

The constructivist model of knowledge holds that we build our knowledge and perceptions in our minds (von Glasersfeld, 1984). Von Glasersfeld contends that individuals seek to match knowledge to reality. They search for meaning in the events taking place within society. This leads to the weakness and question present in the constructivist model that if an individual creates their own knowledge, how then can a population appear to share a common knowledge. The question can be answered in Piaget's constructivist research which states that we do not really identically match knowledge to reality, but seek the best fit (1967). Any given group of individuals exposed to the same, or similar, stimuli will generally make the same assumptions of their perceptions.

Socialization is considered the basis for knowledge creation, and thus perception (Nonaka and Toyama, 2003). In a community, the population often shares experiences, whether direct or indirect. The media places images and concepts for the community to experience together, and these concepts then become shared tacit knowledge. For a rural community, most members are only aware of their town through the reporting of the news media. From these reports, a shared knowledge is created that result in similar knowledge creation and perceptions.

In examining community perceptions, it is important to consider the role of media in perception. The media influences its consumers to some extent, but people typically are only willing to acknowledge the influence of media on the "other" (Tiedge, Silverblatt, Havice, and Rosenfeld, 1991). This concept is known as the third-person effect. The third-person effect can be summarized as the belief by an individual that only others are swayed by the media; yet, that same person takes direct actions because of their perception of the way others react to the media. The models of unrealistic optimism are directly linked to the third-person effect (Weinstein, 1980). Unrealistic optimism holds that the individual considers himself more aware or knowledgeable about the facts of a situation than their community counterparts. For this research, the participants might view themselves as experts in the issues of gangs and the new in-migrant population; however, their knowledge might be biased or limited.

The main theory of perception that applies to this research is the social psychological theory of social perception. Social perception gives individuals the opportunity to understand the rest of the people within their direct world. It gives individuals the ability to determine impressions about others in which they have contact.

Social perception is driven by observation of the environment in which the individual

resides through the interpretation of pre-existing knowledge (Smith and Mackie, 2001).

The constructs of social perception are that individuals understand that their lives

are affected by those around them (Delamate, Michener, and Myers, 2003). Because of

this direct connection, individuals form impressions of others in order to determine how

their interactions will impact their lives. These impressions are quick judgments

designed to categorize others, and are the result of interactions made with people similar

to the person being judged (Allison, Puce, and McCarthy, 2000; Calarge, Andearsen, and

O'Leary, 2003). These quick impressions can be based not only upon a face-to-face

contact with a similar person, but also drawn from media.

For the rural community member, their only knowledge about gangs prior to the

supposed arrival of gang members in their community come from movies about and news

reports from urban communities with gang problems. It is then reasonable to assume that

all people affiliated with gangs are criminals or are a threat to the native community's

safety. For this reason, it is necessary to examine perceptions of gangs and the new in-

migrant population to determine native community member thoughts, how they arrived at

these perceptions, and how these perceptions effect interaction with these new groups.

Conclusion

Upon reviewing the current literature on gangs, the uniqueness of rural gangs, and

the impact of the roles of social inequality and criminal opportunity, a deficiency in rural

gang research exists. While the research presented in this chapter indicates that gang

activity is a part of the American culture since the 1800s, it has not been until the 1960s

that gangs have drawn the attention of researchers. Rural gangs have only been the target

of researchers since the mid-1990s. In fact, long-term nativist gangs have survived for

generations in the rural community without attracting the attention of researchers. The

new influx of gangs has drawn academic attention to the gangs of rural communities.

The literature examined in this chapter illustrates that gang members are leaving

the big cities for the rural communities. Whether this move is a result of familial ties,

employment, or criminal enterprise, it is the role of social inequality and criminal

opportunity that shapes what happens when these individuals enter the rural environ. As

gangs move from the urban environment to the non-metropolitan areas, criminal

opportunities and social inequalities will play a role in whether these groups stay in the

rural communities. Future research should focus upon the community to determine what

is occurring within the rural area to entice criminal gangs to enter, and what is occurring

socially to encourage gang creation or the retention of gang ties.

The research proves that social inequality does contribute to deviant behavior, and

it does play a role in gang activity in rural communities. Future research toward youth

gang activity in rural communities should focus on the perceptions of race and ethnicity

by community members. By evaluating the perceptions of the community member

toward new populations and lower socioeconomic groups within the area, we can

determine whether there truly exists a vacuum that breeds social isolation and civic

ostracism.

While urban gangs have been the subject of a plethora of research, the research

on rural gangs is lacking. Research on rural gangs has been conducted using an almost

arm's length approach in its study. The majority of research available on rural gangs is deeply dependent upon law enforcement data. Even when attempting to measure perceptions concerning rural gangs, Weisheit and Wells (2001b) measure these perceptions by only interviewing local law enforcement.

A more appropriate measure of perceptions in rural communities would be found through Lane's (2004; Lane and Meeker, 2005) research on community opinions about gangs. Lane focuses on an urban fear of crime by gangs; yet the questions asked by the researcher can be equally relevant if developed into an interview schedule for rural community members. Therefore, a case study approach, as outlined by Yin (2009), Flyvbjerg (2011), and Stake (1995), would be undertaken to isolate one rural community that has reported a gang presence in order to determine what role community perceptions, and possible racial and ethnic tensions, play in the allegations of gang activity. The interviews will be conducted with leading community stakeholders. They will be asked questions regarding their perceptions of gang activity in the area. Once these interviews are completed, the data collected will be compared with law enforcement statistics and data concerning gang members. The research will analyze the measurement standards of rural law enforcement and attempt to determine if the alleged gang problem is gang crime or crime committed by gang members. As law enforcement has an economic advantage to reporting gang activity in a rural community for the purpose of obtaining government funding, the research will determine the accuracy of the data supplied by law enforcement.

By adopting a dual-approach in analyzing gangs in a case study community, the research intends to add to the current literature available by answering the questions of

the roles of criminal opportunities and social inequality. Examining law enforcement

data will show crime patterns that are the result of attraction to the community to commit

crimes. Interviewing stakeholders will reveal community perceptions about the new

influx of minority members within the community and whether these perceptions have

contributed to social inequality.

Gangs will always exist. As long as there is poverty, there will always emerge a

subculture that welcomes the socially isolated individual to join its ranks. Those who

believe the traditional society has rejected them will seek out the welcoming subculture

for a sense of belonging. For those denied access to legitimate means to reach wealth,

gangs will provide the opportunity to create wealth through illegitimate methods.

Whether these methods involve drugs or other nefarious acts, the individual driven to

alternate sources of fiscal opportunities will seek out deviant methods of acquiring

money. If given the opportunity to become part of a drug operation, the temptation is

high. Gangs fulfill a need, and social inequalities and criminal opportunities create that

need.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The biggest challenge in a rural community has been the acceptance of any change that might occur or be perceived to be occurring. Research has even shown that rapid population growth in a rural community can cause chaos because of the tension experienced by the native population (Luloff and Swanson, 1990). This reluctance toward change is often and readily expressed by members of the community through a variety of methods including letters to the editor, social ostracism against new community members or those advocating change, and speaking out at local political meetings such as City Council meetings.

For the community in question, change often results in community fear of perceived negative results. Nowhere is this negative perception more pronounced than in the reaction of the growth of the Latino population, and the belief that this has caused an influx of crime and gangs within the town. According to the 2000 Census, the Hispanic/Latino population comprised only 2.76% of the population. By 2010, that number soared to 11.3%. In 2000, Bridgetown residents were not discussing illegal immigration into the community. Today, the topic of illegal immigration is quite commonplace; and, for many older residents, their new Latino neighbors are automatically viewed as being undocumented, having gang ties, or taking jobs away from community residents. In 2000, graffiti in the community indicated at least two White gangs existed in the community; however, those who suggested gangs were present were ridiculed for this position. By 2008, the Bridgetown Police Department was reporting a new crime phenomenon, national Latino-based gangs. Thus, it is necessary to include the

study of the new in-migrant population growth when studying the potential gangs within the community, as the perception of gangs could be an outgrowth of the reaction of this new population.

Problem and Purposes Overview

Within the current body of research concerning gangs in rural communities, there exists a lack of research that discusses community member perceptions toward gangs. Earlier research (Swetnam and Pope, 2001; Evans, Fitzgerald, Weigel, and Chvilicek, 1999; Weisheit and Wells, 2001b; Howell and Egley, 2005) concerning community perceptions stops at law enforcement, or other small components of the community like media, educators, or juveniles, and does not progress into the perceptions of the community members. Other past research (Takata and Zevitz, 1987; 1990; Greene and Decker, 1989) interviews community members in larger towns that are not comparable to small rural communities. This research fills that void by investigating the opinions of members of institutions of social control within the small rural community. The purpose of this study is to advance knowledge concerning gangs by completing a case study on a rural community that is alleged to contain gangs and known to have gang activity present within the town.

The case study community in question is a small rural town located in Iowa. For this research, the city has been renamed Bridgetown, and the county renamed Indian, to protect the identity of the community and research participants. Bridgetown has a population size of 25,036 individuals, with a total county population of 35,421 persons (US Census, 2010). The city's racial demographic is 90.2% White (non-Hispanic),

11.3% Hispanic/Latino, and 1.9% African American. The county's racial demographic is 87.1% White (non-Hispanic), 9.2% Hispanic/Latino, and 1.6% African American; with 6.1% of the total population being foreign born and 51% of the population being female. The median household income is $40,269, with 17.8% of the population below poverty level. The US Department of Health and Human Services (2012) claims that rural communities are often defined by their "non-urban status." Even though Bridgetown is the county seat, it is defined as a rural community by the USDA (2012) as it has a population under 50,000 individuals residing within the city limits and is not adjacent to a metropolitan area. Bridgetown also meets the rural classification as it does not meet the definition of urban as delineated by the Office of Management and Budget and the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (2012). I chose Bridgetown as the case study community because of my familiarity with the town and surrounding area. I know the town is experiencing an in-growth of minority in-migrants and immigrants, and Bridgetown law enforcement and media has publicly stated the town has a gang and gang crime problem.

The idea of interviewing community members concerning gangs is not necessarily new. Community members were interviewed for their perceptions concerning gangs in Racine, Wisconsin (Takata and Zevitz, 1987; 1990). While Racine is not a metropolitan community, it is also not a small rural community like the one community being examined in this case study. In fact, according to the research of Takata and Zevitz, Racine was nearly four times larger than the city of Bridgetown and Racine County was five times larger than River County. The research of Takata and Zevitz also points to Racine's proximity to Milwaukee and Chicago, both considered larger metropolitan

communities, as the underlying cause of gang migration into Racine. The same cannot be said of Bridgetown, as there is no metropolitan community nearby.

In 2001, Swetnam and Pope published their research concerning gangs in non-metropolitan communities in the South. However, their research stopped at law enforcement, students, and educators. While these groups would have first-hand knowledge of a gang presence in a rural community, the research has gaps in that the participants are only asked to give their perceptions of community reaction instead of asking community resident's their reactions.

The most prolific gang researchers, Weisheit and Wells (2001b), researched the perception of gangs in non-metropolitan areas. However, their research ended at law enforcement agencies in non-metropolitan areas. In fact, their research revealed that law enforcement contends that gangs have been able to move into rural communities because of a sense of apathy by community members. This current research concerning the case study community, Bridgetown, builds on Weisheit and Wells' research, and attempts to uncover if indifference among community members really exists and what is shaping community member perceptions concerning the potential gangs and gang activity in the area.

The primary purpose of this case study is to examine community perceptions concerning potential gang activity within Bridgetown, a community in which law enforcement has already deemed gang members exist. In the process of examining these perceptions, it is necessary to uncover any motivational factors that might lead the individuals to make a positive or negative determination about the new minority in-

migrant population or the presence of gangs. Factors that might be considered include, but are not limited to: media coverage, law enforcement announcements, signs of a gang presence (such as graffiti), experiences in the workplace, being victims of gang crimes, and racialization of the relatively new in-migrant and immigrant population of color.

The secondary purpose of this study is to compare community perceptions with Bridgetown's law enforcement data concerning gangs. During this process, it is necessary to conduct an examination of the techniques and practices of Bridgetown law enforcement in determining what constitutes a gang member, gang activity, and gang crime. This examination will possibly reveal any potential inadequacies or biases in their methodology, and the likely reasons for these inadequacies or biases in identifying gang issues.

The final purpose of this study is to highlight what is currently being done to detect gangs and prevent gang activity and gang crimes within the case study community of Bridgetown. By opening a dialogue about gangs with members of institutions of social control, it could be feasible to discover what more could be done with the involvement of the community to prevent gang formation and detect gang membership, gang activity, and gang crimes. These strategies will be considered with the intent of creating a guide for similar rural communities that might share the same concerns surrounding gangs.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by examining the role of perceptions by civic leaders and members of institutions of social control in relation to diversity, gangs, and crime. It is the hope of the researcher that the

final product of this research may be used to direct public policy and community relations in rural, non-metropolitan communities when it comes to the issues of gangs and new in-migrants. As perceptions often drive actions and reactions, examining these beliefs may allow for new knowledge in how to confront issues of crime, gangs, and/or discrimination within the rural city.

Research Questions

The concepts surrounding perception shaped the nature of the questions posed within this research project. The overall research questions this research attempts to answer includes, but is not limited to:

1. What are community perceptions toward potential gang activity within the rural community being studied?

2. What are the factors that could possibly be shaping those perceptions?

3. What is law enforcement's stance concerning gangs within the rural community being studied?

4. Are there potential motivating factors that could cause law enforcement to report or over-report gang activity and gang crimes within a community?

5. Does law enforcement differentiate between gang-motivated crimes and crimes committed by gang members? Should they be treated differently?

6. Does the presence of gang members within a rural community mean that it should be automatically assumed that the community has a gang crime problem?

7. Does the community perception deviate from the data and stance presented by

    local law enforcement within the rural community being studied; and if so,

    what could be the reason for this difference?

Research Strategy

The research strategy utilized in this study on the perceptions of gangs in a rural

community is the case study. The case study is not a methodology, but rather the

incident, object, person, or group to be studied. Methodology is correctly defined as, "A

set of procedures used to capture data to understand theoretical frameworks. Yet, the

case study is the item on which these procedures are carried out and revolve around"

(Wies, 1989 p. 28). Stake contends, "[…] case study is defined by interest in individual

cases, not by the methods of inquiry used" (1994, p. 236). The importance of utilizing

the case study is that it brings attention to a specific issue, and what can be learned

through its study. Incorporating the case study approach can provide a systematic way of

looking at events, collecting and analyzing data, and reporting the results. The case study

is neither restricted to qualitative nor quantitative techniques, but can utilize both

research methods to gain a deeper insight toward the study's focus. It can draw from the

numerical data of the quantitative method as found in analyzing a questionnaire and pre-

existing law enforcement statistics as well as the qualitative aspects of the in-depth

interview. According to Lamnek (2005), "The case study is a research approach, situated

between concrete data taking techniques and methodological paradigms." The case study

allows for the flexibility to utilize a variety of data collection techniques, and allow

different community components to stand alone or contribute to the collective

understanding of the gang problem in rural communities.

Thomas (2011) defines a case study as an analysis of "persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates." Quite simply, this case study examines the perceptions of community members as they react to events that are occurring within Bridgetown concerning potential gang activity and the recent in-migration of minority populations.

The case study in question is the community of Bridgetown and its members through the representation of the population by community stakeholders. I utilize what Stake refers to as the instrumental case study approach and what Yin (2009) refers to as the single-case Case Study. Bridgetown is not the only rural community experiencing an increase in gang activity. Other rural towns in the Midwest are contending with this same phenomenon. The single-case case study strategy is employed for this research as the community in question, and the factors being studied within it, is common for other similar communities in the Midwest that are also reporting gang activity. Yin (2009) gives five rationales for utilizing the single-case case study approach. One of these rationales is that a single-case study is acceptable if the single case being explored is typical or representative of a commonplace situation. Yin contends if the community being studied shares a phenomenon with another community, the researcher can utilize the case study to draw inferences from one community to its like. Bridgetown is reflective of similar rural communities claiming gang activity within its Midwestern population. These similarities include, but are not limited to: the rural nature of the area

in which the community is located, Caucasian being the predominant racial makeup of the native community members, meat packing facility within the community, a relatively recent growth in an in-migrant minority population, and the allegation by law enforcement of gangs and gang activity present in the community. For this reason, this research illuminates the issues surrounding these similar communities within the Midwest, and potentially other rural communities, in the United States with comparable attributes.

However, Stake warns that when attempting to generalize, the researcher can lose focus on the case and miss the uniqueness of the case itself. This caveat is reminiscent of Karl Popper's test of falsification. Falsification is a rigorous test to determine the capacity to transfer data uncovered in one case study and apply it to other events or communities. He referred to this application as generalization. It was Popper who believed, "if just one observation does not fit with the proposition it is considered not valid generally and must therefore be either revised or rejected" (Flyvberg, 2006). It is not to say that every rural community with these similar traits are identical; however, in completing this research, hidden, or underlying, issues that have attributed to the research topics might be uncovered. Future research of similar communities might show that these hidden issues also exist in the other communities. It must be remembered that Stake reiterates, "The purpose of the case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case" (p. 244).

Population and Participant Selection

In order to understand the perspectives of a rural community in regard to crime, gangs, and their new in-migrant population, this case study examines a rural, non-metropolitan community in which local law enforcement claims gangs and gang activity exists. Also, the town has experienced an increase in minority population numbers as a result of new in-migrants moving into the community to seek employment at the local meat packing facility.

As the purpose of this study is to determine the community perceptions toward gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population, it was necessary to only select those who not only worked within the community, but also lived at least within the county borders. While Wiesheitt and Wells (2001) have written about their research into rural perceptions of gang activity, they went no farther than the law enforcement level. Their research has been very valuable in ascertaining how law enforcement feels about the potential of gangs within rural communities; however, it appears somewhat incomplete. Within their research, they stated that law enforcement believes that the current problem with gangs in rural communities is the potential apathy of community members toward gang activity and the inability of community members to recognize gang activity occurring around them. This statement makes it necessary to answer the concerns of their research by taking the next step and interviewing community constituents that are members of institutions of social control to determine their perspectives on the issues of crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population.

The original idea of choosing the participants for the case study was based upon the work of Jacqueline Wiseman (1979), in which she also chose members of institutions of social control that had contact with the focal population (alcoholics), and Cingolani's "Working with Involuntary Clients: Practitioner's Perspectives and Strategies" (1993), in which the participants were asked their perceptions of their clients and the strategies for best dealing with these clients. In her work, *Stations of the Lost*, Wiseman studied Skid Row alcoholics from the perspective of the alcoholic and the agents of social control who dealt directly with alcoholics. Wiseman's purpose of interviewing agents of social control was to understand the perspectives of those who had contact with the main interest of the study, Skid Row alcoholics. The agents of social control may also be referred to as members of institutions of social control. In Cingolani's work, the individuals were not considered members of institutions of social control; however, their employment placed them in direct contact with a particular population and the research focus was based on their perceptions gathered through their position.

In 2009, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the National Gang Center produced a guide for communities to assess their gang issues. In Section 7, the guide states, "No picture of a community's gang crime problem would be complete without the views of community leaders, community residents, parents, and gang-involved youth" (p. 95). It is their contention that at a minimum both formal and informal community leaders should be interviewed and their perceptions collected concerning gangs. Their reasons for collecting this information are to examine community leader perspectives on "gang activity and how they think gangs affect the community." This guide is not a completed research on community perceptions of gangs,

but rather a call for the research to be conducted. In designing the questionnaire and interview schedule for this research, I took care to examine the types of questions asked by this guide. While the guide's questions and the questions of this research are somewhat similar when it comes to questions about gangs, the research on Bridgetown elaborates in its examination of perceptions by community leaders (members of institutions of social control) of the new in-migrant population, possible racism, and potential solutions to the possible gang issues within the community.

Social control is best defined as the societal processes or apparatus designed to regulate individual and group behavior in a given society (Durkheim, 1997). Social control speaks to following community norms, mores, and customs. Social control is broken down into two basic forms: informal and formal. Informal social control is self-regulation, wherein an individual self-regulates their behavior to conform to their society. It relies upon internalization of social norms and values by the individual within the society. Formal social control is the external regulation of individuals by set organizations within the society. These organizations direct the norms, values, customs, and mores within the society through their existence. Each of the organizations, or institutions of social control, chosen for the purpose of this research either regulate, administrate, enforce, create, define, or contribute to the social control of the community through their influence upon the community. For example, law enforcement enforces the society's values through the use of laws that deem certain behaviors unfit for society, while the court system regulates and defines these behaviors by punishment of the violations through sentencing of incarceration or fines. Politicians create the laws that law enforcement and the court system use to punish those who violate the social norms.

The medical system is an institution of social control through the labeling of health and

"'medicalizing' much of daily living" (Zola, 1972); while education is an institution of

social control as it instructs, defines, and reinforces social norms and customs.

Businesses are institutions of social control as they direct what is available to the

community as far as housing and consumer goods. Businesses can also indirectly impact

other institutions of social control through their infusion of money within the community.

Therefore, education, business, and the medical systems are included as participants as

they are informal institutions of social control.

The participants in this case study were all members of institutions of social

control and fit into one of eight types of institutions of social control:

Academics/Education, Law Enforcement, Politics, Community

Service/Activism/Religion, Attorney/Legal, Court System, Medical, and Business. An

"Other" category was added to the questionnaire to allow the participant an easier way to

fill out the form if confused as to their position; however, this was often clarified prior to

the interview as to which of these eight categories the individual fell within. In a larger

community, there might be more than eight groupings. The case study town was a

smaller, rural community and these eight categories typically represent the community, as

the people within these categories generally dictate the way in which the community as a

whole reacts or acts to different situations.

The community participants in this study are considered leaders of institutions of

social control. The participants are individuals placed into positions of authority by the

community, or are in positions of authority that earn them a level of respect or trust by

the community, their perceptions could be construed as being representative of the

community as a whole. Not only are they members of these institutions, they would be the community members most likely to have personal experiences, or contact with potential gang members if they are present, that would shape perceptions, as opposed to just relying on media and law enforcement reports.

The participants of this study were comprised of twenty-four members of institutions of social control within the case study community of Bridgetown (See Table 3.1). The participants ranged in age from 33 to 80 years. The mean age was 52. There were fifteen males and nine females. The racial breakdown of the participants was twenty-one White, two Hispanic, and one Black. The average number of years of residence in Bridgetown was twenty-two.

Table 3.1 Participant Demographics

ID #	Gender		Marital Status		Age	Res. Yrs.	Income Level	EDUCATION LEVEL					RACE				CRIME VICTIM	
	Male	Female	S	M				GED	HS	AA	BA	GRAD	W	B	L	O	Y	N
#001		X		X	56	28	NOT REPORTED					X	X					X
#002	X			X	54	3	$100,000-above					X	X				X	
#003	X			X	36	4	$75,001-$100,000					X	X					X
#004																		
#005	X			X	38	6	$50,001-$75,000				X		X					X
#006	X			X	53	25	$75,001-$100,000				X		X					X
#007	X		X		45	22	$35,001-$50,000				X		X					X
#008	X			X	68	40	$50,001-$75,000				X		X				X	
#009	X			X	64	16	$50,001-$75,000					X	X					X
#010																		
#011	X			X	58	42	$75,001-$100,000					X	X					X
#012		X	X		Unknown	12	Under $25,000					X			X			X
#013																		
#014	X		WIDOWER		80	40	$35,001-$50,000	X						X				X
#015		X		X	53	25	$100,000-above					X	X				X	
#016		X		X	33	5.5	$50,001-$75,000					X	X					X
#017		X		X	56	32	$75,001-$100,000					X	X					X
#018																		
#019		X		X	55	54	$100,000-above			X			X					X
#020	X			X	50	12	$50,001-$75,000		X				X				X	
#021	X			X	49	2	$75,001-$100,000				X				X		X	
#022	X			X	48	2 mo	$50,001-$75,000		X				X				X	
#023	X			X	44	16.5	$50,001-$75,000		X				X				X	
#024	X		X		55	22	$75,001-$100,000			X			X				X	
#025	X			X	51	47	$50,001-$75,000		X				X				X	
#026		X		X	39	15	NOT REPORTED		X				X				X	
#027		X		X	Unknown	18	$75,001-$100,000					X	X				X	
#028		X		X	65	46	$50,001-$75,000		X				X				X	
#029																		
#030																		
total/ave	15	9	3	20	ave: 52.27	ave:22.2	ave: $50,001-$75,000	1	4	2	6	11	21	1	2	0	12	12

In choosing participants for this study, I reached out through letters of introduction (Appendix B.) and/or introductory phone calls to three or four individuals within each grouping. I also attempted to find people within these groupings who would have the most knowledge about the topics covered in this research and who would also be representative of the community. The individuals were selected based on either their leadership (or the perceived level of community trust) within their institution of social control, the likelihood that they would be willing to participate in the study, and the potential that they might have first-hand knowledge of the existence of gangs if they were present. If there were multiple people within the particular institution of social control that would equally meet the characteristics (i.e. multiple County Supervisors or City Council Members), the participants were randomly chosen. The population size originally started at thirty persons. Of this thirty, six chose not to participate, citing mainly time constraints or their position within their job as the reason they would not contribute. The final participant population size was then twenty-four. The majority of those who chose not to participate came from the medical field.

 As this case study attempts to determine whether community perceptions differ from law enforcement, it might appear as if including law enforcement officers within the participant pool might skew the results. However, it can be reasoned the law enforcement officer and the law enforcement agency are not identical, and the officer might have differing beliefs than those officially held by the department. The research cannot shy away from including an important institution of social control based on a predicted response from the members of that institution. Creswell (2007) contends that it is important to choose participants that are willing to be honest in revealing their personal

story. If law enforcement members are kept from participating in a case study directed to obtain the perspectives of institutions of social control, it could also be construed as skewing the results by leaving out an essential institution of social control because of a preconceived notion of a predictive response.

There also exists an advantage to interviewing law enforcement officers as participants, as data can be obtained that might otherwise not exist. For this case study additional questions were posed to the law enforcement officers that might reveal data not typically known to the public. This data includes, but is not limited to: the number of gangs, or gang members, local law enforcement officers believe are operating within the community, how many crimes are supposedly committed by gang members, how many gang-related crimes are committed in the community, how they determine what constitutes a gang, and what constitutes gang activity. This data is collected in the same interview as the data gathered about the law enforcement officer's personal perceptions.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The data collection techniques for this study were mixed methods. Mixed methods research incorporates the in-depth qualities of quantitative research and the more descriptive aspects of qualitative research. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) refer to the work of others, Campbell and Fiske (1959), Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1960), and Denzin (1978), to demonstrate that mixed methodology allows for data triangulation that protects validity and methodological triangulations that protect against researcher bias. Therefore, mixed methodology for this case study does not only protect validity, but allows for a multi-perspective approach. To follow the mixed

methods approach, there were three methods of data collection utilized in this research concerning community perceptions of gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population: mailed questionnaires answered by each participant (Appendix C), subsequent individual interviews (Appendix G) conducted after the questionnaire was completed and returned, and collection and interpretation of pre-existing law enforcement data of the community (Table 4.4; Table 4.5; Table 4.6).

The purpose of the questionnaire was to ask basic demographic questions that would be necessary in assisting the interpretation of the interview data. The questionnaire allowed for effective collection of answers regarding basic personal information and the ability to refer to the participant's questionnaire answers in the later interview processes (Adams and Cox, 2008). The questionnaire was utilized to gather nominal demographic information about the participants selected for participation in the case study based on their membership in the community and institutions of social control. As such, the questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions because of its ease to code and analyze (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao, and Bostick, 2004).

The non-demographic data collected by the questionnaire allowed for the researcher to compare the pre-interview responses with the interview responses to determine if any of the answers in the questionnaire were reflective of the opinions of the participant. For example, participants were asked in the questionnaire whether they had been victims of crime and what was the race of the offender. If the participant did acknowledge being a victim of a crime and the race of the offender was other than White, it can be assumed that the perception of the participant toward non-White individuals might be influenced by this act and might need to be explored in the interview process.

Also, participants were asked questions in the questionnaire that were repeated in the interview in order to validate the original answers and allow the participant to expound upon the earlier answers. Therefore, the questionnaire helped check validity and rigor of the research (Wolcott, 1994).

The second method of data collection was the semi-structured interview as defined by Lindlof and Taylor (2002). The purpose of the interview process was to uncover perceptions of the participants toward the potential of gangs and crime within the community, as well as to determine if the new in-migrant population contributed to their perceptions toward gangs. One-on-one interviews were scheduled with those who had returned their completed questionnaires and signed the Informed Consent document (Appendix D). After completing the interview, it was transcribed and a copy of the transcription was sent to the participant to member check (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004) and insures transparency (Tong, Sainsbury and Craig, 2007) of the research process. If the participant requested changes, those changes were made and the new transcription with additions was mailed to the participant for verification. If the participant requested no changes, the transcription of the interview was then treated as complete. The interviews were then analyzed and coded for common themes (Neuman, 2004; Charmaz, 2006). These themes would make up the basis of the analysis and results of the research.

The reason the interviews can be considered semi-structured is while there was an overall Interview Schedule (Appendix G), the interview structure allowed for the opportunity to ask additional questions based upon the participants' responses (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). Because of the sensitive nature of the responses that were being

elicited from the participants (questions regarding racism and perceptions about minorities) and the status of the participants (leadership and public roles within the community), it was appropriate to interview the participants individually. The one-on-one interview does protect the confidentiality of the participants (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland, 2006) and lends itself to the participants being more willing to give more forthcoming answers (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). It was imperative to protect the identity and answers of the participants because their leadership positions in the community could be seen as potentially jeopardized by their answers. It was also for this reason that when transcribing the interviews, all identifying aspects of the community and participants were redacted or changed and the participants were able to see this protection of themselves and the community when reviewing their personal transcripts. Only in one instance were two interviews conducted simultaneously, and that was at the request of the participants. These two participants were married co-owners of a business. During this one interview session, I was careful to make sure that each person was given an equal voice.

The final method of data collection was the analysis of local law enforcement data. Law enforcement within the case study community has publicly announced that the community has a gang presence and gang crime problem. They have made these statements to the media. They have held classes and public speaking engagements to announce the alleged gang issues surrounding the community. They have also put together a public handout about gangs and applied for State and Federal grants for money because of the allegation of gangs within the community. Collecting crime and gang data from these law enforcement agencies allows for the validation of their claims as well as

comparing their statements to community perceptions. The data collected from law enforcement was analyzed to determine the number of gangs claimed to be in the community, as well as what role they play in the overall crime percentages of the community. The statistics submitted by law enforcement allowed me to see if there exists a differentiation between gang related crime and crime committed by a gang member.

As stated by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007), the collection of quantitative data in a mixed methods study allows for the researcher to reduce bias and corroborate the findings of the qualitative aspects of the research. It enriches the results of the research by applying a broader brush to answer the questions posed within the research. Johnson and Turner (2003) state "In many cases, the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods will result in the most accurate and complete description of the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 299). Johnson and Turner refer to comparing open-ended interviewing with statistical data as intermethod data collection. Employment of this technique determines if the community perspectives are also in-line with law enforcement data.

Methodology Procedure

Participants received in the mail an envelope containing an Letter of Invitation (Appendix B), the Informed Consent document (Appendix D), the Participant Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix C), and a return self-addressed stamped envelope. The participants also received their participant ID number at this time. The Introductory Letter was designed to introduce the participant to the study and request

their participation. The participant was asked to read and sign the Informed Consent

document, fill out the demographic questionnaire, and return both in the enclosed

envelope within two weeks. For some of the participants, I believed it necessary to

contact them by phone before sending the initial packet. I did this in some instances

because I did not know who in that institution of social control would be the individual

who was willing, or able, to participate in the research. For some, I thought it necessary

to introduce myself because of their position in the community. I believed it would

encourage those in leadership positions to be more willing to participate.

For those participants who failed to return materials within the two weeks, they

were contacted via phone. I utilized an Initial Contact Follow-Up Phone Script

(Appendix E) to verify if the individual was intending to participate in the research

project. If the potential participant was unwilling, they were thanked for their time, no

further contact occurred, and their folder was marked "NOT PARTICIPATING." If the

participant was willing, they were asked to complete the informed consent document and

demographic questionnaire and return them in the envelope provided. If the participant

did not receive the initial mailing, or could not find their copy of the initial mailing, a

second mailing was sent with all the same materials.

Once the participant returned the Informed Consent document and demographic

questionnaire, they were contacted via phone with me utilizing the Interview Scheduling

Phone Script (Appendix F) to schedule a time for the interview. Interviews were

scheduled at the earliest convenience of the researcher and participant. This was also the

time for me to ask the participant if they had any questions and answer those questions

accordingly. For this research project, there was a longer delay with getting some of the interviews conducted due to family issues.

On the scheduled day of the interview, I met with the participant at the predetermined location and time for the interview. I brought a copy of the Informed Consent document and demographic questionnaire for the participant to keep. I also attempted to answer any additional questions the participant had at that time. I conducted the interview utilizing the interview schedule. At the conclusion of the interview, I informed the participant that they would receive a copy of the transcript by mail.

After conducting the interview with the participant, I transcribed the audio recording of the interview with the personal identifiers or community identifiers redacted, or changed to the participant's ID number and the "new" community name. A copy of the interview was stored on CD. I then mailed a copy of the participant's interview transcript to the participant with a letter thanking them for their contribution to the study and requesting they review the transcript and contact me with any questions, concerns, or additions they wish to make to their statements as part of the member checking. Member checking is a validity test that allows for the participants to be active in checking the accuracy of what the participants have contributed to the research (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It also allows for a transparency between the researcher and participants to strengthen the trust of the participant in the researcher. This trust can result in the participant being more willing to be open with the researcher as well as more willing to answer follow-up questions or participate in more research later. If the participant did not reach out after receiving a copy of the transcript, it was assumed that

they did not wish for any changes to the transcripts and the material could be coded for analysis.

Data Analysis

In order to accomplish this research project, I utilized the constructivist grounded theory as presented by Charmaz (2006). The constructivist grounded theory can best be described as a systematic qualitative research methodology that concentrates on the creation of theory from data gathered, as opposed to traditional "hypothesis first" research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Martin and Turner, 1986; Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory is a methodology that acclimates itself well to a mixed method data collection style as is utilized in this study (Glaser, 1978). Using grounded theory as a methodology in this research allows not only the transcribed interviews to be coded, but parts of the questionnaire as well, if desired.

According to Charmaz, "Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data. […] Coding is the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytical interpretations" (p. 43). In the first read through of the early transcribed interviews, I utilized an initial form of coding known as line-by-line coding in which I was able to recognize as several themes began to come to the forefront. Utilizing these initial codes, I compiled and sorted all the codes to reveal the most salient data in terms of significance and frequency. As I completed this step, concepts that had initially seemed unrelated began to share certain commonalities.

Codes that were less useful were discarded, and smaller initial coding categories were grouped together to form larger collections of data. I then began to check to see if these same themes were present in the remaining interviews. Charmaz refers to this process when she states, "Through focused coding, you can move across interviews and observations and compare people's experiences, actions, and interpretations" (p. 59). It was necessary to use focused coding because of the large volume of data that required sorting and coding for common themes from the 24 interviews and corresponding questionnaires in this study.

After organizing the data to reveal focus codes, these categories were then reorganized internally to provide axial coding of the data as prescribed by Charmaz. Axial coding is the process of reuniting data previously deconstructed. In other words, it is the act of categorizing representational initial codes to prove links within these codes that helped construct the salient focus codes "[…] to give coherence to the emerging analysis" (Charmaz, p.60). These subcategories further illustrate the constructs of the focus codes. Charmaz refers to the work of Creswell when she states, "The purposes of axial coding are to sort, synthesize, and organize large amounts of data and reassemble them in new ways […]" (p. 60).

To help facilitate the overall, and especially axial, coding of the interview transcripts, the questions were sorted into sections as follows: participant background, immigration and in-migrants within the community, perception of gang issues and crime within the community, and potential resolution ideas from the community members. These sections could then be compared against other sections. For example, perceptions of gang and gang activity from one participant was compared to another participant's

responses. However, sections were also compared within the individual interviews and then compared to other individual's responses. For example, a person's background can be analyzed as to their responses to the new in-migrant population. It would seem likely that a person with a background in diverse communities might be more willing to accept a new in-migrant minority population compared to someone without any experience with diversity. The creation of sections within the interview to aid flow and coding also assisted in the theoretical coding that would be the final step of the Grounded Theory.

The purpose of theoretical coding is to integrate a theory by joining different concepts into a hypothesis that explains the predominant issues of the participants. It is at this stage I began to apply a theoretical model to the data. It is critical that the theoretical model is not conceptualized prior to the evaluation of the material, but rather is a result of emergent data uncovered during the comparative process in the grounded theory approach (Glasser, 1978; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). From the data collected, I was able to develop a theoretical code to unite the focus codes together to explain their interrelationship. It was also at this time that I was able to integrate the questionnaire data and the law enforcement statistics to aid in the arrival of an emerging theory concerning gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population.

For this research, the coding undertaken is considered solo coding. Solo coding is when only one researcher undertakes all the coding for the research project. Without the assistance of a team or another individual collaborating, the solo coder is entirely responsible for determining what should be coded or how information gathered should be interpreted. Galman (2007) states, in most qualitative studies, coding is a solitary act by the "lone ethnographer" who becomes intimately familiar with the data. The participant

population size is relatively small; therefore, solo coding can be easily carried out for this project. If the participant numbers were larger, it would be more conducive to utilize a team, or collaborator, for the fieldwork.

Solo coding was chosen because of the emphasis placed on anonymity by the IRB committee. Because of the nature of the research, and the public positions of the participants, it was critical to guarantee that neither the location nor the participants were revealed to protect the privacy and identities of all involved. There was enough information to potentially reveal the location of the community studied and the identity of the participants in the interview transcripts. The only way to assure privacy and anonymity to the IRB committee was to not allow any individuals outside the committee direct access to the transcripts or questionnaires.

The limitation of solo coding exists in that the findings are somewhat subjective and primarily based on the perceptions of one person. However, these limitations can be overcome by utilizing the following three strategies: member checking (Ezzy, 2002), discussing coding strategies and issues with peers (Strauss, 1987), and transparency in coding (Charmaz, 2006). Member checking is giving the participants an opportunity to have input in their participation in the research. Member checking was met via allowing participants to read their transcripts and make changes to the transcripts before coding.

The coding of interviews and questionnaires was discussed with a "peer", in that Dr. Matt DeLisi was contacted several times concerning phrasing of questions to receive the most complete data, how to interpret participant responses, further exploratory questions for interviews, and how to demonstrate coding within the body of this text.

Further discussions were undertaken with other peers outside of the committee. Those individuals were also experienced in qualitative research and grounded theory. Finally, transparency in coding is manifested in the tables in this chapter and subsequent chapters of this dissertation. These tables indicate not only the number of responses for different questions posed to the participants, they also designate who answered each question and in what manner. These charts are not all encompassing, as certain questions were too nuanced to create a specific table to show response; yet, they were made available when possible.

One issue with using Grounded Theory methodology with a Case Study Research strategy is the conflict that arises between the canons and key principles of these different approaches (Glaser, 1978; Yin, 1994). Yin contends that "Theory development prior to the collection of any case study data is an essential step in doing case studies." However, Charmaz (2006) states that theory is borne out of the research itself and occurs after the research is completed. The solution to this conflict is to identify the methodology that is motivating the research. For this research, the Case Study is emphasized in that it is the strategy of the research (study of one particular community with traits shared by other similar communities); yet, Grounded Theory is the driving force behind answering the questions of the research and developing a potential theory that can be tested by further research in the area. Yin, Glaser, and Charmaz might contend that Grounded Theory and Case Studies should not be combined, but Eisenhardt (1989) states that using case data in conjunction with grounded theory has certain benefits in that "resultant theory is likely to be empirically valid." Lehmann (2001), in his research concerning theoretical foundations that influence design, creation, and use of international information systems,

claims that "Applying Grounded Theory to Case Study was very successful. It produced a prolific amount and yielded a great richness of information. […] The case settings, furthermore, contained more varied data than could be expected from individual, purely homocentric studies." This was a guiding thought as I incorporated both the Grounded Theory and Case Study approaches to formulate a theory that could later be tested against similar rural communities.

To conduct my study of Bridgetown, I implemented three methods of data collection and analysis. Stake recommends redundancy of data gathering to increase reliability, and these methods will overlap to incorporate what Stake calls triangulation. Triangulation reduces the likelihood of misinterpretation (Stake, p. 241). The first data source for triangulation is the questionnaires gathered from the participants prior to their interviews. The second data source for triangulation is the results from the coding of the interviews of the participants. The final method is to collect crime statistics and data from local law enforcement. I will utilize the local statistics gathered by City and County law enforcement entities. The State of Iowa also produces a similar report of crime data by county and by type. This data not only covers crimes committed or reported, but conviction rates and descriptive information concerning the criminal activities.

Summary

This chapter describes the procedures and methods used within this case study to answer the research questions posed concerning community perceptions toward gangs, crime and the new in-migrant population. The research problems and purpose, questions, research strategy, population and participant selection, instrumentation, and methodology

were offered. Chapter 3 also describes the data collection and data analysis techniques utilized for this case study.

Chapter 4 will address the research questions posed, identify the participants and community analyzed, and provide a detailed analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires and interviews. The results of the questionnaires and in-depth interviews will be broken down by four major themes: community perceptions toward potential gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa, community perceptions toward the new in-migrant population, community perceptions of crime, and law enforcement's stance and data concerning gangs within the rural community being studied. The summary of the research, implications, and limitations, as well as suggestions for future research will be discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Just as a group of individuals reside and unite together to form one community, the choice to examine community perceptions through the use of the qualitative research method of grounded theory allows for the many voices of a community to be combined into one. Bridgetown, Iowa, is a rural, non-metropolitan town located in River County. In the past ten years, local law enforcement has made claims that gangs are present and active within the community. In this case study, the goal was to examine Bridgetown community member perceptions concerning crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant populations. The research questions that informed this study are:

1. What are community perceptions toward potential gang activity within the rural community being studied?

2. What are the factors that could possibly be shaping those perceptions?

3. What is law enforcement's stance and data concerning gangs within the rural community being studied?

4. Are there potential motivating factors that could cause law enforcement to report or over-report gang activity and gang crimes within a community?

5. Does law enforcement differentiate between gang-motivated crimes and crimes committed by gang members? Should they be treated differently?

6. Does the presence of gang members within a rural community mean that it should be automatically assumed that the community has a gang crime problem?

7. Does the community perception deviate from the data and stance presented by local law enforcement within the rural community being studied; and, if so, what could be the reason for this difference?

Completing questionnaires, study participants not only provided demographic information but answered questions concerning their perceptions of crime within the community, gangs and gang activity within the community, and the new minority population entering the community. During in-depth interviews, study participants described their perceptions and experiences in the community in regard to racial issues, potential gangs and gang activity, and the impact of immigration on Bridgetown. They also discussed potential methods to promote diversity within the community and potentially eliminate or reduce gang activity. The research findings of this chapter are based on a mixed methods analysis of the following sources: participant questionnaires, in-depth one-on-one interviews, and crime data from Bridgetown law enforcement.

Background

The participants of this study were comprised of twenty-four members of institutions of social control within the case study community of Bridgetown (See Table 3.1). These institutions of social control included: Academics/Education, Law Enforcement, Politics, Community Service/Activism/Religion, Attorney/Legal, Court System, Medical, and Business. The participants ranged in age from 33 to 80 years. The mean age was 52. There were fifteen males and nine females.

The racial breakdown of the participants was twenty-one White, two Hispanic, and one Black. There were twenty married participants, two single, one divorced, and

one widowed. Eleven of the individuals had obtained graduate degrees, while only six

had completed a Bachelor's level, two had Associates Degrees, four had completed high

school, and two had acquired GEDs. Of the twenty-four participants, six were originally

from River County and five of those were from Bridgetown; one from an outlying

community within the County.

Each participant was mailed a participant questionnaire (Appendix C) and asked

to return the document prior to their interview. After the questionnaire was returned, an

in-depth interview (Appendix G) was conducted and transcribed. The transcribed

interview was returned to the participant as part of member checking. Once these

transcribed interviews were approved by the respective participants, the interviews and

questionnaires were coded for common themes. Their answers were also compared to

Bridgetown law enforcement data (Table 4.4; Table 4.5; Table 4.6) to compare whether

the perceptions of community members matched the collected data of law enforcement

concerning gangs, gang activity, and the potential gang crime problem.

To accomplish this research, I employed the constructivist grounded theory of

Charmaz (2006). Grounded theory is a methodology that works well in a mixed method

data collection style (Glaser, 1978). Using grounded theory as a methodology, this

permits not only the transcribed interviews to be coded, but parts of the questionnaire as

well. I first utilized an initial form of coding known as line-by-line coding. From this, I

was able to recognize several consistent themes. From these initial codes, I compiled and

sorted all the codes to uncover the most salient data in terms of significance and

frequency. It was necessary to use focused coding because of the large volume of data.

After organizing the data to reveal these focus codes, the categories were reorganized to allow axial coding of the data as prescribed by Charmaz.

The Case Study is the strategy of this research; however, Grounded Theory is the methodology behind answering the questions of the research and developing a potential testable theory by further researchers. While case study research is not typically seen as a cohesive strategy with grounded theory methodology, Eisenhardt (1989) states utilizing case data in conjunction with grounded theory is beneficial in that "resultant theory is likely to be empirically valid." Lehmann (2001) believes "Applying Grounded Theory to Case Study was very successful. It produced a prolific amount and yielded a great richness of information. […] The case settings, furthermore, contained more varied data than could be expected from individual, purely homocentric studies."

To conduct my study of Bridgetown, I implemented three methods of data collection and analysis. Stake recommends redundancy of data gathering to increase reliability in what is referred to as triangulation. Triangulation reduces the likelihood of misinterpretation (Stake, p. 241). The first data source for triangulation was the questionnaires gathered from the participants prior to their interviews. The second data source was the results from the coding of the interviews of the participants. The final method is was collect crime statistics and data from local law enforcement.

Participants contributed different quantities of information concerning the topics that comprise the narrative. While some communicated at great length on one or two topics, utilizing personal experiences and examples; other participants contributed equally among all four themes and also provided retrospective examples from their

experiences. A small number of participants were unable to delve into any detail or conclusive thoughts concerning the topics, but did answer honestly those questions to which they were aware, and were quite blunt in expressing when they had no knowledge or opinion on a topic. However, all participants' perceptions and voices are embodied in this case study of Bridgetown, Iowa.

Study Findings

The following common themes emerged from the data (See Table 4.1):

1. Community perceptions toward potential gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa.

2. Community perceptions toward the new in-migrant population.

3. Community perceptions toward crime.

4. Law enforcement's stance concerning gangs and crime within Bridgetown.

Table 4.1 Grounded Theory Flow Chart
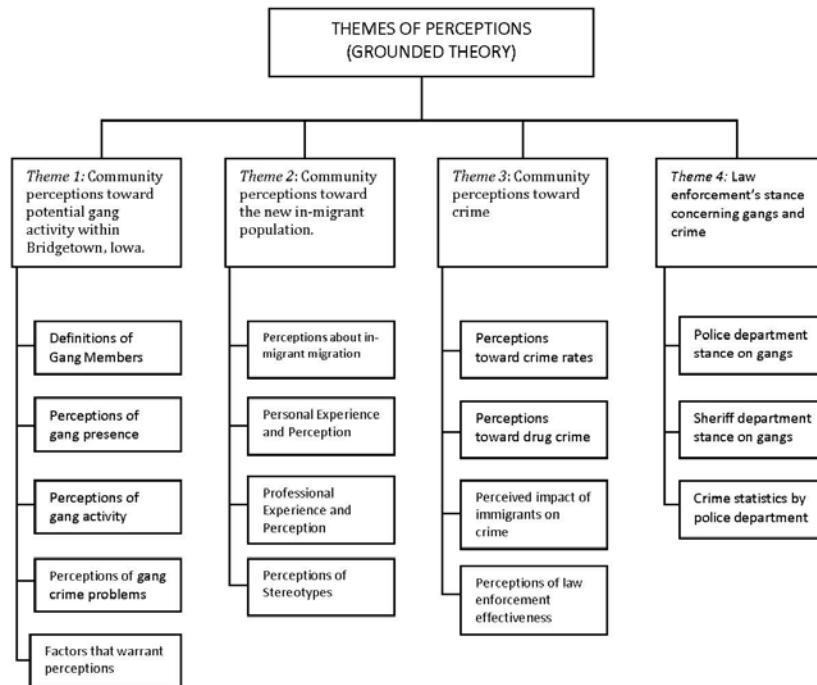
While these topics are being reported as discrete, within each of the first three themes there is some overlap. Within each of the themes exists sub-themes. Additionally, participant responses to questionnaire and interview questions frequently concentrated on more than one of the first three topics. In these instances, the interview information is described where it appears to apply most reasonably and logically.

Theme 1: Community perceptions toward potential gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa.

This theme is discussed in five parts: (1) participant definitions of gang members, (2) participant perceptions concerning potential gang members within the community, (3) participant perceptions concerning potential gang activity within the community, (4) participant perceptions concerning potential gang crime problem within the community, (5) what factors warrant these perceptions. Each part has been broken down and analyzed separately, and the findings appear in Chapter 5.

Participant definitions of gang members.

In order to begin to discuss community member perceptions of gangs and gang activity within Bridgetown, it was necessary to ask participants to define what they considered a gang member. When asked to define a gang member, the majority of the participants actually defined a gang. If asked again to define a gang member, they merely added that the individual would be part of their defined gang.

In research and law enforcement, there exists no clear singular definition of a gang member or gang. However, Federal law enforcement agencies in the United States have created an almost quasi-clinical definition of a gang organization. According to the

National Drug Intelligence Center's (2009) National Gang Threat Assessment, "[…] a gang is a group or association of three or more persons with a common identifying sign, symbol, or name who individually or collectively engage in criminal activity that creates an atmosphere of fear or intimidation" (p. 3). The most recognized research definition comes from Esbensen, Winfree, He, and Taylor (2001) in that a gang and its members are typically within an age range of 10 years old into the 20s or older, and the group membership participating in illegal or "imprudent" behavior. Klein (1971) believes the definition of a gang member should include "any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who:

(a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their

neighborhood,

(b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a

group name), and

(c) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to

call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents

and/or law enforcement agencies" (p. 428).

The preponderance of the participants collectively identified three critical components that constituted a gang. While not every person mentioned all three, these were the most common themes. These components were: necessity of an organizational structure, signs or symbols to denote their gang affiliation, and participation in some form of criminal enterprise. Some participants utilized different terms to identify the concept of organization. These terms included hierarchy, leadership, and structure. A few community members emphasized the organization must have national affiliations.

Not all participants interviewed believed that gangs are necessarily a criminal enterprise. According to Participant #003, "A gang is a group of individuals that have common interests and are tied closely together, you know, I mean, so there are gangs that are both positive or negative. But the typical, when you hear gang is you immediately think about negative connotation of their doing things illegally for their own benefit." Participant #012 contends, " I think it's people that organize together, could be all young people; could be men and women organized together to find companionship, to find self-worth, that could be, and then that might lead to problems or wanting to feel powerful." For these participants, the idea of a gang is merely an opportunity to belong. This corresponds with previous research that indicates that youth move toward gangs when they feel disenfranchised or isolated (Vigil and Long, 1990).

Combining the most similar and common terms used by participants to describe gangs, the stakeholder definition for gangs is an organized group of individuals with a common group name, symbol, hand signs, and attire that have joined together to commit criminally deviant acts. The gang members typically share a common minority race, are younger individuals, and most likely are involved in some form of violence or drug trade. The gang member is anyone that is part of this defined group. This definition is quite similar to the descriptors of the legal system and academic researchers, and, for this case study, this definition will be the assumed description when participants refer to gangs and gang members.

Participant perceptions concerning potential gang members within the community.

Table 4.2 Gang Perceptions in Questionnaire and Interview

GANG PERCEPTIONS in questionnaire and interview

ID	News Media	Law Enforc.	Experience	Career	Presence Q-Yes	Presence Q-No	Presence I-Yes	Presence I-No	Activity Q-Yes	Activity Q-No	Activity I-Yes	Activity I-No	Crime Q-Yes	Crime Q-No	Crime I-Yes	Crime I-No	Races Q-Yes	Races Q-No	Races I-White	Races I-Black	Races I-Latino	Races I-Other
#001	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X		X		X				X	
#002				X	X		X		X		X		X		X		X				X	
#003				X	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	X	X	
#004																						
#005			X		X		X		X		X		X			X	X				X	
#006				X	X		X		X		X		X			X	X				X	
#007				X	X		X		X		X			X		X	UNSURE					
#008		X			X		X		X		X			X		X	UNSURE					
#009				X	X		X			X	X			X		X				X		
#010																						
#011		X			X		X		X		X		X		X		X				X	
#012	NONE OF THE MENTIONED				UNSURE		UNSURE		UNSURE		UNSURE		UNSURE			X		X				maybe
#013																						
#014	NONE OF THE MENTIONED					X	X			X	X					X		X	X	X	X	
#015	X				No Opinion		X		No Opinion		X		No Opinion			X		X	X			
#016				X	X		X		X		X		X		X				X		X	
#017		X			X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	X	X	
#018																						
#019			X		X		X		X		X		X		X			X	X		X	
#020	X				X		X		X		UNSURE			X	UNSURE			X	X			
#021			X		X		X		UNSURE		X		UNSURE		X		No Opinion		X	X	X	
#022			X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X				X	
#023			X		X		X			X	X			X	X			X	X	X		
#024		X			X		X		X		X		UNSURE		X			X	X	X	X	
#025		X			X		X		X		X		UNSURE			X	X				X	
#026			X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	X	X	
#027	X				X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
#028	X				X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
#029																						
#030																						
Totals	5	6	7	7	21	1	23	0	18	3	22	0	13	6	14	9	12	7	11	5	17	0

The overwhelming majority of participants (See Table 4.2) have concluded that gang members, or gangs, are present within Bridgetown. Out of the twenty-four individuals interviewed, twenty-three concluded that gang members are present within the community. When asked why gang members, or gangs, are present in the community, most participants attribute the migration of individuals, primarily minority individuals, entering the community.

According to most of those interviewed, the gang members that are coming into the community are youth gang members arriving with family. This assumption matches with the work of Maxson, Woods, and Klein (1996). The two primary reasons given for migration of gang members by participant stakeholders are following family members for employment, escaping the urban, high crime environment, and families taking advantage

of the availability of low-income housing in the community. Participant #024 explains why youth gang members are entering Bridgetown when he states,

> "Well, for starters, family members have moved here for opportunities, either work or school or housing, and then, it's the family members that comes because they want to feed off the family that was successful, or trying to be successful, or trying to get away from the evil, they come here and find that there might be a little niche for them. OK, like Hispanic gangs, a lot of those people, you know, they're getting out of a bad situation wherever they were in California, or someplace else, and they might be coming here and living with an aunt or something so that they don't get arrested."

This coincides with the claims made by others that youth gang are following their families to the rural environment. Participant #017 summarizes it best for those who believe the migrating gang members in Bridgetown are youth gang members when she asserts, "I think they are coming with family members that are seeking employment. [...] they are bringing family members that are gang members."

When developing the Interview Schedule (See Appendix G), the issue of gender was not addressed. The focus of the research was primarily on issues surrounding perceptions of race or ethnicity. In discussing who were gang members, ideas surrounding gender were not fully discussed by the participants. Their references generally attributed gang membership to males. This is not to imply that females are never gang members, but the assumption in Bridgetown is the gang members are perceived as gender male. Discussing the topic of gang members, law enforcement

officials and educators referred to only males as being gang affiliated. Females might hold an auxiliary function to a gang, but they were not given gang status. Therefore, the perception of participants is that females are not gang members or committing gang activities.

Another response concerning why gang members are entering the community is illegal drug trade. Participant #028 identifies the drug trade as the cause of gangs entering the community. A few participants referred to a nationally publicized drug bust that took place in Bridgetown in 2008 (Milner, 2008). A national Drug Trade Organization (DTO) gang, with a Chicago base, had entered the city of Bridgetown for the purpose of establishing a drug trade route, drug manufacturing, and money laundering scheme. Only a few members had moved to the Bridgetown area to start this criminal enterprise. Once here, these gang members recruited local individuals to distribute or manufacture the drugs for the organization. Participant #027 states, "[...] there's wonderful job opportunities if you are in the drug trade, so why wouldn't you come here? You know, if we're number one in terms of drug use, this is the place to go to distribute it, so that would naturally attract some gangs." Participant #001 reflected upon reading *Methland* (Reding, 2009) as proof as to why DTOs were entering the community. These perceptions are in line with the research provided by the 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment, which states that youth gangs and DTOs are the primary gangs entering rural, non-metropolitan communities (National Drug Intelligence Center).

The number of participants who believe that gang members are present within the community is not too far distant from those who believe gang activity is present within the community. In fact, there was only one individual who stated gangs were present but

was unsure if gang activity was occurring. One participant made a statement, after their interview had concluded, that "We wouldn't know gangs were here if they weren't active." This comment resonated with me. If gang members did not display themselves actively and openly would community members even be aware of their presence? The idea behind this research started with my own observance of gang graffiti in the community. I would never have thought to undertake a study on gangs in rural communities had I not personally witnessed the growing number of gang signs and symbols appearing in this quiet, rural town.

Participant perceptions concerning potential gang activity within the community.

When formulating the questions to ask participants, it was necessary to not just stop at whether they believed gang members were living in the community, but to examine whether community members perceived that they were active. To this end, it was important to uncover what participants considered gang activity. It was also essential to understand if the community members perceived just being in a gang constituted a criminal act.

In interviewing participants, each individual was asked, "Do you believe all gang members are criminals?" and "Should being in a gang constitute a criminal act?" In their definitions, a large majority concluded that the definition of a gang should include that the organization is formed for criminal activity; however, when directly asked if all gang members are criminals, almost half stated that not all gang members are criminals. To explore this idea further, when asked if being in a gang should constitute a criminal act, only three participants determined that allegiance with a gang should constitute a criminal

act. When asked as to why they believed this way, only one person retained this idea. The others quickly claimed that crime is an action and that simply belonging to gang did not warrant criminal charges.

While they did not believe that belonging to a gang constituted a gang activity, participants did conclude that gang activity was occurring in Bridgetown. Many stated that gang activity was kept low key, but that there was evidence of it occurring though things such as graffiti and stories from those who have direct contact with gang members. Participants believed the most common gang activities taking place were graffiti and drug sales.

The participants all agreed that there were neighborhood areas that contained more gang crime, and some did admit to wanting to avoid certain neighborhoods. However, none really expressed a fear of being physically harmed if they entered those areas. No one responded that they felt threatened by gangs or their activities. Three did say that they would not be happy with their children visiting these areas without their presence. One of those individuals, Participant #003, stated that he knew who his children associated with, but was still hesitant to allow them to go some places without parental supervision.

Participants believed that Hispanic individuals were more likely to participate in gang activity, especially violent acts, but some did acknowledge a White, native youth gang that was "tagging" buildings on the east side of the town. In general, they believed that gang affiliation and gang activities were racially motivated. Participant #016 stated, "[they] commit crimes against people of different races. I'm sure probably some of them

do, so I'm sure, I'm sure it is a factor in some regards." They believed that gang assaults were generally between gangs. Some did mention an assault that happened against a law enforcement officer a few years back.

Participant perceptions concerning potential gang crime problem within the community.

Asking participants whether Bridgetown has a gang crime problem, the results were mixed. For the most part, those who believed a gang crime problem did exist were those who worked in Academics/Education and those who worked in the criminal justice system. Those who did not believe a gang crime problem existed typically worked in Politics, Community service/Activism, and Business. To measure these two differing beliefs, I analyzed why they might come to these conclusions as well as how they arrived at their perceptions.

For those working in Academics/Education and the criminal justice system, it is logical to assume the belief that Bridgetown is experiencing a gang crime problem is held because these individuals are more likely to come into contact with gang members and gang activity. As a result of dealing with gang activity more often than other community members, their perception could be shaped by these interactions. In other words, because they are more likely to deal with activities and be more aware of these crimes in their profession, they are more apt to conclude that Bridgetown has a gang crime problem.

Academic/Education workers, especially those in administrative capacities, deal with reports concerning graffiti, fights, and gang signs through clothing color, style, or manufacturer. If they are dealing with these issues frequently, they could possibly begin

to assume that the sub-community of the school is representative of the town. Participant #001 reflected on seeing gang signs and symbols appearing on student tests and homework. Participant #002 mentions dealing with gang issues on campus and seeing students dressed in what is typically considered gang attire. Participant #003 states that any gang activity in a community should be equated with a gang crime problem.

Those who work in the criminal justice system span from law enforcement to the court system and attorneys. These people have reached their conclusions about gangs because they work in a field that must combat or directly handle gang crimes. Participant #005 contends that he deals with gang crimes and activities on a daily basis. Participant #016 believes that if gangs are not reigned in from their activities now, the crime problem could grow to a much bigger issue. These responses are typical of those working in their fields. However, these groups do not speak for the entire participant pool. Those outside these fields concluded that a gang crime problem does not exist.

Participant #014 works in the Community Service/Activism field. He was originally from an urban community and witnessed gang activity previously before coming to Bridgetown. He described what he saw as a gang crime problem, and stated that gangs flaunted their power in the community and fed on their reputation and ability to cause destruction and harm to their neighborhood. He is not seeing that same behavior in Bridgetown. He views the gangs in town as "wannabes", and they are not really visible in the community. Criminal actions they do commit are minor in comparison to urban gangs. Other participants agree with his assessment. They believe that gangs are not causing a crime problem, but are merely acting out because of their inability to feel like they belong in the community; because it gives them a tough image, or because they

have a problem with another group that is calling themselves a gang. Participant #012

attributes the idea that a gang crime problem exists to law enforcement and the media

spreading this fear and hype to further their agendas.

It can be concluded that there exists no real consensus on the existence of a gang

crime problem. Instead, it appears that a person's employment field directs the

perception of a potential gang crime problem. However, there is a method to test whether

gang crimes are out of control in Bridgetown, and that can be done by examining the

crime statistics recorded by law enforcement. From this, a possible answer can be found

as to whether gang activity has reached the level of a gang crime problem. This analysis

can be found in Theme 4 of the findings.

What factors warrant these perceptions.

When discussing community member perceptions, it is important to ascertain how

they arrived at their determination that gangs or gang members exist within Bridgetown.

While an individual's perception is valid to the holder of that belief, it was necessary to

determine how the members of institutions of social control reached that validation. Each

participant who stated they believed gangs or gang members are in Bridgetown was

asked what factors contributed, or led, to their determination that gangs or gang members

were present within the town.

The results of asking what factors led to the perception of gangs or gang members

within Bridgetown, Iowa, were almost evenly distributed between the news media, law

enforcement, personal experience, and occupation; with personal experience and

occupation tying for the top position (See Table 4.2). When referencing personal

experience, it is determined that if the person attributes contact with gang members, seeing signs or symbols of gangs (graffiti, gang colors, or gang hand signals), encountering a gang member or gang, or being a witness to gang activity then it was categorized as personal experience. No participant stated any membership in a gang or title of gang member.

For the purpose of this research, those who indicated a perception based on law enforcement contact in their career were designated as occupation shaping their perception. The only instance when these individuals were designated as law enforcement shaping their perception is when they specifically stated an instance outside the parameters of their occupation. It is interesting to note is that for many of those who developed their perception through occupation experiences, often referenced a law enforcement contact within their occupation that contributed to their perception. This phenomenon can be explained through a relationship between the occupations in question and local law enforcement.

For instance, in academics it is quite common for schools to have a resource officer from local law enforcement or colleges and universities to have a security staff that works closely with law enforcement. The schools and college in Bridgetown have such officers and staff within their systems. Therefore, it is most likely expected that this relationship would naturally include the sharing of potential criminal activity that might occur on campus, or by students, between law enforcement and the academic institution. Participant #003, a member of Bridgetown academia, directly stated that what contributed to their decision was "A lot of the training that I've had that I went to with our school resource officers." Participant #001, another member of academia, said the

Bridgetown Police Chief came to their campus and delivered a presentation outlining what educators should be looking for from a student to indicate their membership in a gang. However, Participant #001 also mentioned seeing media reports of gangs as well as witnessing gang signs on a student test and gang tattoos warned about by the Chief. With this relationship between schools and law enforcement, it is logical to understand how law enforcement shapes the perceptions of academia.

The other institutions in which their member perceptions are shaped by law enforcement include: politicians, the court system, and attorneys. This is especially correct if these attorneys are employed by the government or act as a criminal prosecutor, or if the court officers work on behalf of the government. It is their responsibility to take the information presented by law enforcement as factual to do their job. Politicians decide public policy concerning crime based on statistics and evidence presented by law enforcement (Brownstein, 2013). If local law enforcement has been aggressively targeting what they perceive as a gang problem, as the Bridgetown Police Department has been doing, it is understandable that politicians have potentially developed their perceptions based upon the evidence presented to them in their occupational capacity.

Despite a potential link between the participants' occupations and law enforcement possibly causing the shaping of perceptions surrounding the presence of gangs or gang members, each individual in this situation tended to elaborate beyond just their interaction with law enforcement to later verbalize supporting occupational, or external, evidence to support their position. As well, each participant was able to vocalize the reasoning behind their perception of gangs or gang members within the

community. They also often used these same reasons for justifying their belief that gang

activity was taking place within the community.

There was only one individual that stated they did not have any knowledge as to

the status of gangs or gang members within Bridgetown. Participant #012 stated that

they had no "concrete knowledge" that gangs were present. They had heard that law

enforcement had stated, through the media, that gangs were currently present in the

community. However, they doubted the veracity of that statement. This participant

believed gang activity had taken place within the community in the past twelve years, but

did not believe it was currently occurring within Bridgetown at present. It was their

perception that law enforcement and the media were creating an image of gangs to

frighten the public.

Theme 2: Community perceptions toward the new in-migrant population.

Because the participants tended to attribute the appearance of gangs in

Bridgetown to the arrival of the new in-migrant population (See Table 4.2), it was

expected they might also have a negative view toward this new migration. In fact, in

writing the Interview Schedule (See Appendix G), I was concerned about transitioning

from gang questions to in-migrant questions in that it might result in a bias in answers.

For this reason, I chose to focus on perceptions of the in-migrant population before

asking questions about gangs and gang activity.

Participants were asked a variety of questions about the new in-migration in

Bridgetown. The primary question was directed toward examining the perception as to

why in-migrants are moving to Bridgetown, Iowa. Most questions focused on personal

experiences participants might have had with the new in-migrant population, and their reaction and feelings concerning these encounters. However, some of these questions were based on common statements made throughout society and the media. These statements focus on beliefs concerning the need for every person in America to speak and understand English, immigrants and in-migrants supposedly taking jobs away from the native population, undocumented individuals entering the United States, and racism exhibited toward the new in-migrant minority persons entering the rural environment. In order to eliminate any potential view of hostility in the question or tension in answering, these stereotype questions were presented from a third-party perspective (i.e. " There are those that believe..."). Therefore, this theme is divided into four parts: (1) perceptions about why new in-migrants are entering the community and the benefits and deficits of this migration, (2) personal experiences and perceptions, (3) professional experiences and perceptions, and (4) perceptions toward stereotypically negative comments toward in-migrants, immigrants, and minorities.

Perceptions about why new in-migrants are entering the community and the benefits and deficits of this migration.

To begin determining the attitudes of the case study participant perceptions toward the new in-migrant community, and how they might relate to the perceptions of the community they represent, their attitudes toward the reasons for migration into the community must be considered. For this reason, participants were asked why they believed there has been an increase in minority members (primarily Latinos) within the community.

As stakeholders, the participants in this case study are most likely more aware of the economics within the community than the general population. Therefore, it is no surprise that the predominance of their answers then focus on the economical advantage of the arrival of the new in-migrant population. When asked why new in-migrants are entering the community, the preponderance of the responses attributes employment as the reasoning. They especially mention jobs available at the meat packing facility located within the community, and its active solicitation of potential workers in urban environments and outside the country. Participant #002 points to the new in-migrants willingness to work, even if the salary is only minimum wage, as the initial cause of the migration to Bridgetown. Other participants mention that the new in-migrants are being invited to work in the meat packing industry because many of the native population are unwilling to take jobs they believe are beneath them. This can be summarized in the statement made by Participant #006 when he said, "[The native population] wanted to make 18 dollars or 19 dollars so they chose not to work instead of taking 10 dollars an hour, whereas, the in-migrants were willing to work for 10 dollars an hour."

In examining issues of social inequality that might exist within the community, the topic of economic inequality was addressed with at least two participants. It was discovered that while there might be a perception that the new in-migrant population is paid less for the same work as the native population, they are indeed paid at the same rate as their local counterparts. As the majority of the new in-migrant population is working at the meat packing facility, their income and working conditions are protected and monitored by the union present in the facility. Schlosser (2002) implies in his research minorities and in-migrants are preferred employees in the new management style of the

meat packing field because they will work for lesser wages and in less than ideal situations. However, does not appear to be the case in Bridgetown because of the presence of a strong union representing all line employees at the local facility. As the majority of gang activity taking place in Bridgetown has some affiliation with the in-migrant and minority meat packing workers in the community, it can then be assumed that economic inequality is not driving gang affiliation. This is reiterated by participants who view the new in-migrant population as being economic equals to the rest of the working-class community members.

The second reason given by participants is the availability of government housing in Bridgetown. Participant #017 contends that community members believe that minorities are coming from Chicago to Bridgetown to get into government housing because, after a period of time, they can then return to Chicago and get to the top of the housing list more quickly there. Very few individuals pointed out this as a potential reason; however, this was frequently pointed out by participants in off-the-record conversations at the time of scheduling the interviews.

Participants were generally positive when asked if the new migration pattern benefited or harmed the community. They were far more likely to respond with benefits to the community, and often had to be asked again if there were any negatives. The participants as a whole responded that the new influx of community members was stimulating the local economy. They frequently pointed to the new businesses that were created in town to serve the needs of the new minority members entering the town. Participant #021 mentioned the benefits of diverse businesses in a rural town as pushing the community toward a global economy. Others pointed out that by filling jobs in the

meat packing industry, the new population was stimulating the local income by "dumping" money back into the community. One participant pointed out that the meat packing facility was considering expansion and that would not be possible without the new in-migrants coming to the community to work. The only consistent negative brought up by participants was that the new in-migrant community was bringing gang members and gang activity to the community, as they believed it did not exist until this migration.

Personal experiences and perceptions.

When asked about the participant's personal experiences with the new in-migrant population, the majority of stakeholders responded positively to their personal encounters outside of their profession. Participant #015 reflected upon making friends with a neighbor who was an immigrant. Even after this neighbor moved away from the community, she still spends time with this former neighbor when they come back to visit. Participant #012 recounted attending celebrations with new in-migrants, and even attending a Quinceañera. Participant #001 spoke of encountering in-migrant parents at her granddaughter's school with which she has had pleasant encounters despite language barriers. When she did mention a negative encounter, it was not the in-migrant behaving badly, but rather a native member of the community that was discriminating against the in-migrant. She expressed being upset that the man had been mistreated because of a language barrier.

While many participants had interesting and unique encounters in their personal lives, some related their stories in general terms of encountering in-migrants at the grocery store, school events, sporting events, or at restaurants. The response from

Participant #011 summarizes the general feeling concerning personal encounters with new in-migrant members when he states "Well, that they are generally good, family-oriented people and generally work hard, and are courteous." In every case, they felt their experiences were pleasant and positive. No participant responded that their personal experiences were unpleasant or recounted an encounter in which they felt less than positive. However, while all of the personal experiences outside the workplace were favorable, the same could not be said for the reported experiences in the participant's professional experiences.

Professional experiences and perceptions.

For certain participants, they reported some less than pleasant contacts in the professional experiences. Yet, this can be explained by the type of work in which these individuals are employed. Those who reported unpleasant experiences in the workplace are employed within the criminal justice fields. It can therefore be explained that their experiences were not the result of the in-migrant, racial, or ethnic status of the person they encountered, but rather the encounter itself. Even in these encounters three participants were quick to state that this was not a reflection of race or ethnicity, or even an immigrant status, but that each group has "bad apples" in their midst. This demonstrates that the participants were not judging the group of new in-migrants, but the behavior of criminals. They were quick to point out that they also worked with new in-migrants who were victims and witnesses of crimes. Despite the nature of dealing with victims of crime or witnesses, they reported that these encounters were pleasant.

Those participants who were not part of the criminal justice system reported their professional encounters to be pleasant. Educators pointed to an increase in student population and participation in extracurricular activities. Politicians pointed out that the new community members were forthright in communicating needs within Bridgetown. A landlord interviewed pointed out that new in-migrants were more likely to pay their rent for fear of the consequences if they did not, and that they took care of the property they were renting.

Perceptions toward stereotypically negative comments toward in-migrants, immigrants, and minorities.

It was necessary to discuss the stereotypes concerning the new in-migrant population. These are the opinions that are commonly heard discussed in the media, the coffee shop, and the Internet about the incoming immigrants entering this country. These are often the loudest and most negative opinions concerning Latinos entering the United States. To handle this in the least offensive manner, the participants were given questions in the third person. Some of the participants answered these questions in the first person, but each member appeared to be frank and willing to answer these tough questions. Participants were given three main topics to discuss; language issues, beliefs concerning undocumented persons, and assumptions about the Latino immigrants.

Participants were asked to reflect on whether all people who live in America should be able to speak and understand English. Every individual interviewed did believe that people coming to this country should at least attempt to learn the language. They all understood that this was a difficult task, and might not necessarily be

accomplished well by the first generation. Participant #014 stated, "You have got to give them time, and you got to remember that his or her backgrounds may not be the same as yours." Participants generally believed if immigrants to this country learned to speak English that it would make circumstances easier for both sides of the issue. However, many responded that it was natural, and positive, if the individual also retained their first language. Participant #006 contended, "I would not discourage the… I guess the discontinuation of the mother tongue, or whatever. I think that's important to keep the heritage going […]"

Extending on this topic concerning the ideas surrounding the one-language ideal held by some citizens, the participants were asked if when a community member encounters someone that appears Hispanic, if they automatically assume they do not speak English or are here illegally. Many of them denied holding this opinion, but did believe some community members did feel this way. This attitude was often attributed to a lack of education or experience by the community member. Almost all also responded in the negative when asked if they automatically assume that Latino individuals are members of a gang. One participant did admit that a younger Latino male might inspire them to wonder about gang affiliation. Two participants indicated that it is not race they are looking at when determining gang affiliation, but rather clothing, tattoos, or other gang signs and symbols. However, they do believe some community members might make this assumption. Again, they attribute this to potential racism and ignorance on the part of that community member.

Overall, participants seemed favorable to the new in-migrant population. They saw them as a financial asset to the community. They also saw the new in-migrant

population as a way for the community to grow and become a stronger part of the State and global economy. The only negative view that seemed apparent from many of the participants was the concern that the new in-migrant population was bringing gangs into the community and that could cause an increase in crime in Bridgetown.

Theme 3: Community perceptions toward crime.

There exists an assumption that gangs bring crime into the community. It is for this reason that it is necessary to examine community perceptions toward crime. This theme examines (1) community perceptions toward crime rates in River County and Bridgetown, (2) perceptions concerning drug crimes/problems within the community, (3) the impact of the new in-migrant community on crime rates, and (4) the perception of the effectiveness of county and city law enforcement. Each part has been broken down into separate sections and the findings can be found in Chapter 5.

Community perceptions toward crime rates in River County and Bridgetown.

It might be expected that in a community in which gangs are believed to exist, the crime rate might be seen by communities as elevated for the population size. Participants were asked if they believed Bridgetown and River County had higher than average crime rates. If they answered no, they were then asked if they believed the town and county had lower than average crime rates. The results can be found in Table 4.3a and Table 4.3b.

Table 4.3a. Perceptions of Crime in Questionnaire and Interview

| | Bridgetown has a _____ crime rate | | | | | | Indian County has a _____ crime rate | | | | | |
| | Higher than Average | | Average | | Lower /Average | Don't Know | Higher than Average | | Average | | Lower/Average | Don't Know |
ID #	Questionnaire	Interview	Questionnaire	Interview	Interview	Interview	Questionnaire	Interview	Questionnaire	Interview	Interview	Interview
#001		X	X					X	X			
#002	NOT SURE	X	NOT SURE				NOT SURE	X	NOT SURE			
#003	X	X					X	X				
#004												
#005	X	X					X	X				
#006	X	X					X	X				
#007			X		X				X		X	
#008		X	X					X	X			
#009	NO ANSWER	X	NO ANSWER				NO ANSWER		NO ANSWER			X
#010												
#011	NOT SURE		NOT SURE	X			NOT SURE		NOT SURE	X		
#012			X	X			NOT SURE		NOT SURE		X	
#013												
#014			X	X					X	X		
#015			X	X					X	X		
#016	X	X					X	X				
#017			X	X					X	X		
#018												
#019	X	X					X	X				
#020			X		X				X		X	
#021	X					X	X					X
#022	X	X					X	X				
#023	X	X					X	X				
#024			X	X					X	X		
#025	X	X					X	X				
#026	X	X					X	X				
#027			X	X					X	X		
#028		X	X						X	X		
#029												
#030												
total/ave	10	14	11	7	2	1	10	12	10	7	3	2

Table 4.3b Perceptions of Crime in Questionnaire and Interview (Cont.)

| | The new in-migrant population has _____ crime rates | | | | | Crime that occurs most often in | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Bridgetown | | | Indian County | | |
ID #	Increased	Contributed to	Not affected	Decreased	No Answer	Persons	Property	Victimless	Persons	Property	Victimless
#001		X					X			X	
#002		X				X			X		
#003	X						X			X	
#004											
#005			X				X			X	
#006		X					X			X	
#007			X				X			X	
#008			X					X			X
#009			X					X			X
#010											
#011	X						X			X	
#012		X				NO ANSWER			X		
#013											
#014					X		X			X	
#015			X					X			X
#016			X					X		X	
#017		X					X			X	
#018											
#019			X			X			X		
#020					X		X			X	
#021			X			X			X		
#022	X					X	X		X	X	
#023			X				X			X	
#024			X				X				X
#025	X						X			X	
#026			X			X			X		
#027			X				X			X	
#028		X					X			X	
#029											
#030											
total/ave	4	6	12	0	2	5	15	4	6	15	4

An interesting note in determining community perceptions concerning crime is a
considerable shift in answering the question between the questionnaire and the
interviews. It appears that during the interview process, considering the number of

participants, there was a shift toward more people responding that crime was higher than average in Bridgetown. A slight shift also occurred for River County. These questions came before questions about gangs in the community, and it should be noted that this potential shift could possibly be a result of knowing that the topic for this research project was to discuss gang activity in the community.

The majority of community members, during the interview process, concluded that Bridgetown's crime rate was higher than average for the population size. Participant #026, who did not change their opinion from the questionnaire to the interview, contends that Bridgetown has a higher crime rate because, "People get away with so much here. They are not getting punished." Participant #023, who works with the criminal justice system, pointed out that they moved to the community because, "Bridgetown seemed to keep coming up as the place to be for the crime." Others concluded that the socioeconomic status of Bridgetown and River County have caused the higher than average crime rate. One participant who changed their answer between the questionnaire and the interview, Participant #008, directly refers to the socioeconomic situation and its increase as poor in-migrants enter the community. Many of those that did believe the crime rate was higher in the County did believe that crime rates were also higher in Bridgetown.

Participants who believed the crime rate was normal or lower than average explained that if the crime rate was higher, it would be a major topic of discussion in the community. Participant #020 states, "You would think that if there's an overwhelming crime problem that I would hear about it." Participant #027 pointed out specific crimes and the lack thereof to conclude that the crime rate was average in the community. She

pointed out the lack of multiple murders in the community, and how each murder that did occur received so much attention.

The crime that most participants believed was occurring in Bridgetown and River County was property crime. This was not discussed in the interview, but in the questionnaire. The reason for the presence of this question in the interview was to judge what crimes were on the minds of the participants. Most of the participants are not privy to the crime data collected by law enforcement and the criminal justice system in Bridgetown.

Perceptions concerning drug crimes/problems within the community.

Iowa has been awash in narcotics for decades. The predominant drug in Iowa has historically been methamphetamine. In his book, *Methland*, Nick Reding (2009) discusses the blight upon rural Iowa that meth has caused. His book describes a rural community in which one female began to construct a meth business that resembled a major corporation, and her industrialized meth manufacturing organization grew to cover almost all of Iowa and into other Midwestern States like Missouri and Illinois. It was because of this industrialized type of meth manufacturing that Mexican meth first came to Bridgetown, Iowa.

While major arrests in the native industrialized meth manufacturing opened the door for outside meth producers to enter the area, DTOs would not become active in Bridgetown, and other rural Iowa cities, until the passage of laws that restricted local manufacturing. Iowa has attempted to curb the manufacturing of methamphetamine through legislation. The first attempt by law enforcement was through the use of

precursor laws designed to prevent the manufacturing by arresting individuals with the needed materials necessary to produce methamphetamine. These "immediate precursors" included such things as lithium batteries, coffee filters, Red Devil lye, and over-the-counter amphetamine medications. Possession of three of these items together could result in an arrest for possession of precursors (Iowa Code 124). This did little to stem the tide of meth manufacturing in Iowa. The next step was to require anhydrous dealers to place locks on anhydrous tanks, and make the tampering of anhydrous tanks a misdemeanor (Iowa Code 124.401F). However, neither of these laws would slow down the production of methamphetamine in Iowa. It would take a law passed in 2005 to curtail the majority of meth manufacturing in Iowa.

By 2004, Iowa was in the midst of a meth epidemic. In 2004, 1,472 clandestine meth labs were seized. While this number is alarmingly high, it only accounts for labs that were found by law enforcement. It was predicted that the actual number of meth labs throughout the State was five times what was discovered by law enforcement, and the number of labs were growing exponentially. In March of 2005, the Governor of Iowa signed into law the *Iowa Pseudoephedrine Control Law*. It became effective in May of that same year (Senate File 169).

The effectiveness of this law was immediately seen in a sharp decline in clandestine meth labs seized. For Bridgetown and River County, their local meth manufacturing arrests were almost cut in half. However, Bridgetown still has a reputation of meth production and usage (Reding, 2009). It is for this reason that almost all of the participants questioned agreed that drugs were a problem in this rural community.

When asked about a potential drug problem, participants directly referenced the meth epidemic of the community. While this epidemic is not as pronounced as it once was in manufacturing, participants referenced the influx of gangs as continuing the drug problem. Members of the criminal justice system, predominantly those in law enforcement, mentioned that the gangs are filling a void brought about by this legislation. One law enforcement member participant referenced the new style in which meth can be made for individual consumption as arriving in the community. So, while the problem is not as pronounced as it once was, in the eyes of the participants, drugs are still a problem for Bridgetown.

The perception of the effectiveness of county and city law enforcement.

If community members believe that gangs are in Bridgetown, and that they are actively committing crimes in the town, they might then be concerned about the effectiveness of local law enforcement in dealing with crime. If they believe law enforcement is ineffective in handling crime in general, community members might attribute gangs and gang activity to a lacking in law enforcement. Therefore, participants were asked if they believed Bridgetown and River County law enforcement was doing their best to prevent or solve crime.

This question was phrased to elicit a yes or no response from the participants. As a result, there is only an overall perception to report. Except for those who answered no, in which they were asked a follow-up question to explain why they said no, there was no explanation given to qualify the opinions of the participants. The majority of the

participants believed that the city and county law enforcement were effective and doing their best at their jobs.

When asked what law enforcement could do to improve their performance, the response was to have more law enforcement officers and equipment to help effectiveness. However, participants also acknowledged that this could only occur if law enforcement was given more funding to employ more officers and purchase equipment. Another potential way to improve performance, as mentioned by Participant #012, is the need for county law enforcement to actively hire bilingual minority members. They assert that city law enforcement has made this move, and it has improved their relations with the Latino community.

Only three participants were vocally unhappy with local law enforcement. One participant requested to go off the record to verbalize their complaints about law enforcement. The other two had experienced crime problems that they believed city law enforcement was ineffective in stopping. They also believed law enforcement was not motivated to solve crimes. Despite this negative view toward city law enforcement, they did acknowledge that county law enforcement did reply to calls when needed.

Theme 4: Law enforcement's stance concerning gangs and crime within Bridgetown.

Law enforcement has taken the stance in Bridgetown that gangs are present and active. They have spoken to the media, the community, and to academic institutions about the gang presence and activity they contend is taking place in the community. They have also produced a handout, in the past, which they have distributed to whoever

wanted to read about gangs in Bridgetown. Government grants have even been given Bridgetown law enforcement to pay for an officer specializing in dealing with the gang activity they claim is taking place in the community. This theme analyzes (1) the Bridgetown Police Department's stance on gangs and gang activity (2) River County Sheriff's Department stance on gangs and gang activity, (3) crime statistics collected by Bridgetown Police.

The Bridgetown Police Department's stance on gangs and gang activity.

The Bridgetown Police Department does contend that gang and gang activity is taking place within the community. This conclusion was drawn because of their interaction with those they have dealt with that meet their requirements as being in a gang. For the Bridgetown Police to consider an individual to be part of a gang, they do not rely on just the word of the suspected gang member. Instead, they look for certain attributes that include: recognized gang tattoos, certain clothing and the way it is worn, association with known gang members, direct tie to a gang crime or criminal enterprise, moniker, or catching the individual making gang gestures (either in photographs or in person). The officer has determined that if an individual has three of these attributes, their identity and suspected gang affiliation is recorded on a card and stored in his data base. The other way in which they identify gang members is if the individual is coming into the community under parole, probation, or in the halfway house; they might receive direct notification by the Department of Corrections.

The gang officer is also responsible for collecting and maintaining the gang cards, and photographic evidence of gang activity and gang members within the community.

Not only does the gang officer photographically record gang data, but he does accept any photographic materials from other law enforcement officers and civilians who capture this criminal activity. I was allowed to view these images in his office, and he was willing to share accumulated data with me (See Table 4.4 and Table 4.5). However, for privacy and protection of sensitive material, I was not allowed full access to all his information.

Table 4.4 Monthly Incident Reports 2011-2012 (by Bridgetown Police Department)

MONTHLY INCIDENT REPORTS																										
Page 1	January		February		March		April		May		June		July		August		September		October		November		December		Total Year to Date	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
MURDER	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1
KIDNAPPING	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
SEXUAL ASSAULT	3	5	3	13	3	2	4	3	2	3	3	2	5	4	2	0	6	4	6	7	2	2	4	2	43	47
ROBBERY	3	1	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	15	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	1	10	31
AGG ASSAULT	12	14	8	13	13	10	11	15	14	16	12	9	8	18	10	16	15	12	23	13	14	9	10	17	150	162
SIMPLE ASSAULT	14	11	8	6	18	14	23	14	23	21	13	0	9	13	12	20	12	16	7	15	14	11	7	6	160	147
STALKING	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
ARSON	0	4	0	0	2	1	3	1	2	0	2	9	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	14	20
BURGLARY	11	21	11	11	16	17	16	17	16	22	14	14	16	29	19	30	25	20	20	26	15	20	20	14	199	241
SHOPLIFTING	14	8	8	7	4	9	13	12	13	11	14	62	11	4	12	10	10	8	15	9	9	10	14	11	137	161
THEFT	46	64	53	65	61	63	48	64	52	74	46	2	61	74	73	65	53	65	70	65	70	72	72	40	705	713
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	4	1	6	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	4	5	3	4	4	8	6	4	2	6	2	1	3	1	39	37
FORGERY & INS FUNDS	4	5	5	5	2	14	2	4	2	4	4	22	4	2	4	1	4	2	3	4	4	4	5	2	43	69
VANDALISM	17	15	14	16	26	33	32	17	30	24	33	17	35	16	23	22	32	26	19	17	24	14	20	10	305	227
NARCOTICS	25	35	14	20	17	21	17	25	23	20	12	2	22	16	17	19	15	13	31	23	39	21	23	20	255	235
WEAPONS VIOLATIONS	3	4	2	1	0	2	1	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	3	5	1	0	5	3	2	1	1	1	20	24
CURFEW	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	18	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	6	31
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	21	18	30	12	39	15	48	33	29	33	33	6	25	21	25	35	39	38	33	26	20	36	14	15	356	288
OWI	27	18	13	12	9	10	9	8	8	12	14	17	13	10	14	12	9	9	8	9	13	9	15	10	152	136
PUBLIC INTOXICATION	19	12	13	22	23	24	34	27	27	17	27	1	38	29	37	29	32	17	27	21	28	29	17	24	322	252
LIQUOR LAW VIOLATIONS	16	19	41	25	22	20	14	15	40	30	17	1	24	15	21	31	19	35	44	23	33	38	11	17	302	269
TRESPASS	8	2	5	2	5	7	3	10	0	6	7	4	3	1	2	8	8	3	2	2	9	3	8	4	60	52
ALL OTHER OFFENSES	74	54	63	46	80	74	71	61	55	80	74	51	64	67	47	68	42	80	38	63	43	57	46	44	697	745
TOTAL	321	315	303	279	341	342	350	335	340	379	332	260	342	328	329	384	331	353	355	339	342	339	293	240	###	3893
% increase or decrease per month		-1.9		-7.9		0.3		-4.3		11.5		-21.7		-4.1		16.7		6.6		-4.5		57.0		57.0		-2.2

Table 4.5 Race and Gender Statistics 2012 (by Bridgetown Law Enforcement)

RACE AND GENDER STATISTICS 2012

ARRESTS	JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL		MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER	
TOTAL	347		275		295		350		350		280		301		368		276		341		313	
MALE	236	68.0%	200	72.7%	210	71.2%	246	70.3%	242	69.1%	194	69.3%	212	70.4%	245	66.6%	191	69.2%	232	68.0%	203	64.9%
FEMALE	111	32.0%	75	27.3%	85	28.8%	104	29.7%	108	30.9%	86	30.7%	89	29.6%	123	33.4%	85	30.8%	109	32.0%	110	35.1%
WHITE	285	82.1%	245	89.1%	258	87.5%	277	79.2%	270	77.1%	241	86.1%	258	85.7%	315	85.6%	224	81.2%	292	85.6%	264	84.4%
BLACK	17	4.9%	12	4.4%	15	5.1%	28	8.0%	29	8.3%	15	5.3%	16	5.3%	18	4.9%	18	6.5%	18	5.3%	17	5.4%
HISPANIC	45	13.0%	17	6.2%	22	7.5%	41	11.7%	50	14.3%	24	8.6%	24	8.0%	35	9.5%	31	11.2%	30	8.8%	31	9.9%
OTHER	0		1	0.3%	0	0.0%	4	1.1%	1	0.3%	0		3	1.0%	0		3	1.1%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%

CITATIONS	JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL		MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER	
TOTAL	510		472		325		330		276		182		274		346		303		412		642	
MALE	289	56.7%	258	54.7%	182	56.0%	184	55.8%	173	62.7%	103	56.6%	186	67.9%	191	55.2%	185	61.1%	252	61.2%	400	62.3%
FEMALE	221	43.3%	214	45.3%	143	44.0%	146	44.2%	103	37.3%	79	43.4%	88	32.1%	155	44.8%	118	38.9%	160	38.8%	242	37.7%
UNKNOWN																						
WHITE	448	87.8%	422	89.4%	283	87.1%	286	86.7%	224	81.2%	162	89.0%	248	90.5%	309	89.3%	261	86.1%	345	83.7%	549	85.5%
BLACK	5	1.0%	5	1.1%	12	3.7%	11	3.3%	14	5.1%	4	2.2%	9	3.3%	12	3.5%	6	2.0%	11	2.7%	30	4.7%
HISPANIC	56	11.0%	44	9.3%	28	8.6%	29	8.8%	36	13.0%	16	8.8%	16	5.8%	23	6.6%	29	9.6%	49	11.9%	61	9.5%
OTHER	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	2	0.6%	4	1.2%	2	0.7%	0		1	0.4%	2	0.6%	7	2.3%	7	1.7%	2	0.3%

It is the stance of the Bridgetown Police Department that gang activity in the community is a partial result of the new in-migrant population. It is their contention, though, that there are multiple races and ethnicities participating in gang activity. This does include some local gangs that have been started for the purpose of targeting minorities and minority gangs. It is also acknowledged that motorcycle gangs, DTOs, and youth gangs make up the preponderance of active gangs within the community.

Law enforcement did mention that most gang activity was taking place through the phenomenon of the hybrid gang, and that it was not uncommon for a group of gang members that would normally be enemies in an urban environment were working together in this rural town. Law enforcement also contends that there exists some hybrid gangs in which multiple races are working together. These hybrid gangs were not forming a new name for identity, but rather each member was retaining their original gang name, signs, symbols, colors, and clothing. The gang officer directly referred to the

Surenos, MS-13, Peckerwoods, Latin Kings, Insane Deuces, Crips, Bloods, Fresno

Bulldogs, Gangster Disciples, and the Klan as being national gangs represented within

the community. This representation can include just the presence of one member in

Bridgetown.

According to the Bridgetown law enforcement statistics (Table 4.6), 28 separate

gang affiliations currently are present within the town. As of 2012, there were

approximately 165 gang members and associates identified as living in Bridgetown. He

identifies seven active national gangs. While law enforcement does recognize the

presence of local gangs, the data reports that there are no active local gangs. The officer

does preface this with the comment that, "There may be unknown activity at any time."

He did not present me with prior year data concerning gangs.

Table 4.6 Recorded Gang Activity (by Law Enforcement)

RECORDED GANG ACTIVITY (by law enforcement)		
	2011	2012
Gang Members	No Data	165
Gang Affiliations	No Data	28
Active National Gangs	No Data	7
Active Local Gangs	No Data	0
Gang Arrests	95	100

River County Sheriff's Department stance on gangs and gang activity.

It is the stance of the River County Sheriff's Department that gangs are residing in

the county and that gang activity is taking place. According to the representative of the

River County Sheriff's Department, they do report some gangs and gang activity taking

place outside the city limits. The representative pointed to an area in the community that has been historically known for having a high crime rate and being a location for new minority community members to initially reside. It is his contention that this area is the most common area in which the Sheriff's Department would encounter gangs and gang activity.

According to the representative, it is their contention that multiple races and ethnicities are taking part in gang activity. They do believe that the gang presence and activity is a direct result of the new in-migrant population entering the area. They cite potential racial tension as a possible reason for the retention of gang status by those entering the area.

The Sheriff's Department does not have any deputy assigned to handle gang activity or data. Any data or information gathered concerning potential gang members and gang activity is given to the police. If the Sheriff's Department needs information concerning a possible gang member or activity, they go directly to the city police to gather that data. The Sheriff's Department does not rely on criteria to determine if an individual is part of a gang and is often satisfied with just the presence of a tattoo or information from others that an individual is part of a gang. They keep no records on gangs or gang activity.

Crime statistics collected by Bridgetown Police.

As the River County Sheriff's Department did not give any data on their arrests, the only statistics available come from the Bridgetown Police Department (See Table 4.4). For this case study concerning gangs and crimes, it is apparent that while accurate, the crime statistics seem to be incomplete. The Police Department does not differentiate

between gang crimes, crimes committed by gang members, and crimes committed by others. It is their claim that there were 100 gang arrests in 2012; yet, they also mention that some members/associates were counted more than once as they were arrested multiple times. This would then appear as data that could not prove a gang crime problem, as the statistics could be representing a small number of people who are having constant contact with law enforcement.

It also does not differentiate between a crime committed by a gang member and a gang crime. While this might appear to be one and the same, there is a distinct and unique difference to each. If the individual is not acting as part of his gang, but commits a crime for personal benefit (i.e. shoplifting, failing to pay for gas, or petty crimes that have nothing to do with gang affiliation), law enforcement treats this as an interaction with a gang member or associate and refers to it as a gang crime. They also do not break down how many of each types of crimes are committed by gang members, but instead state, "The arrests included serious crimes such as Robbery/Burglary/Drug Distribution/Weapons Violations/Shootings and Stabbings/etc."

Examining the overall crime rate of the community, these 100 arrests make up approximately 2.6% of all crime incidents that occurred in 2012. While gang activity is occurring, if community members were aware of this percentage, they might not perceive that an actual gang crime problem exists. This could possibly change the perceptions of community members, if they were aware of the crime data that is available to the public.

At the time of the beginning of this case study, the population recorded for Bridgetown was approximately 24,998 persons according to the city government office.

Examining the Department of Public Safety's crime rates for cities with populations

between 10,000 to 24,999, of which Bridgetown would be on the top end, the crime rate

for these cities has run between 6,500 – 7,800 crimes per 100,000 people. Extrapolating

these numbers, Bridgetown does appear to have a higher crime rate than cities of similar

size in Iowa by almost 1,400 crimes. This would indicate that participants that concluded

the community had a higher crime rate for its population size would be correct in their

assumption.

Summary

This chapter focused on the findings of the study conducted concerning

community perceptions of crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population. These

findings are based on grounded theory analysis of participant questionnaires and

participant interviews, and the comparison of these documents to reported Bridgetown

law enforcement data. Findings were discussed within the major topics that emerged

from the data.

The first topic focused on community perceptions toward gangs within the

community. It encompassed not only the definition of a gang member by participants,

but whether community members perceived that gangs, gang activity, and/or gang crime

problems were present within Bridgetown. While definitions were not completely

consistent, there were enough similarities to demonstrate that each participant shared a

collective consciousness of thought in determining what a gang member (or gang) might

comprise. This collective idea of what a gang member might entail demonstrated an

ability to compare their answers to create a unique definition of gang members for this

research project. The participants also almost unanimously agreed that being in a gang should not constitute a criminal act, but that most gang members were criminals.

On the whole, the participants did believe that gang members were residing in the town and that gang activity was also occurring; however, there existed some disagreement as to whether the community was experiencing a gang crime problem. It can be inferred from the respective answers of those that did believe that a gang crime problem existed that this conclusion is based upon the concept that any gang activity was also a crime problem. In this topic the participants also answered that if these issues existed within the community, they did impact the local crime rate.

The second topic focused on community perceptions toward the new minority in-migrant and immigrant populations. The majority of participants believed that individuals were migrating to the community for employment. A few did believe that some were entering the community because of available government-assisted housing. Participants were generally pleased with the arrival of the new in-migrant population, as it brought commercial and economic benefits to the community as well as diversity. The only perceived negative was a belief the new in-migrants were also the reason for gangs appearing.

Participants were also asked to address certain stereotyped responses that are often heard concerning the influx of new in-migrants. The group did acknowledge that they had heard these types of statements, but generally disagreed with the negative stereotypes. They did all agree that learning to speak English benefited all groups, but believed that patience should be given to those with whom English is not their first language. They attributed these negatives to a lack of education, prejudice, and lack of

experience with diversity. The positive nature of the responses toward in-migrants contradicted the typical stereotypes presented in society and the media.

Theme three was the analysis of community perceptions toward crime in Bridgetown and River County. While there was a shift in perceptions of crime rates in Bridgetown and River County, both the questionnaire and the interview resulted in a split between participants' beliefs in whether the crime rate in the community was higher than average. However, the majority of individuals did believe that there was a higher crime rate. Those citing higher crime rates typically worked in, and with, the criminal justice system. Those that disagreed worked in fields that did not necessarily interact with law enforcement. Almost all believed that drug crime rates were higher than average and referred to methamphetamine as the cause of the elevated drug crime rate. While these arrests are on the downward trend due to recent legislation making it hard to industrially produce said product, participants believed some of the gang members entering the community were doing such in order to distribute drugs.

The final theme was a look at law enforcement's stance on gangs, and how they were dealing with the issues of gangs and gang crime. From this theme, it was discovered that while law enforcement was collecting crime statistics and keeping track of gangs and gang activity in the community, their records were incomplete. The River County Sheriff's Department kept no record of gang activity in the county, but turned that information over to the police department. The police department did record active gang member arrests, how many gangs affiliations were represented in the community, and how many gang members and associates were identified living in Bridgetown. The Bridgetown Police Department also kept photographic records of gang graffiti and

tattoos. However, they did not clearly differentiate in their crime statistics what criminal

acts were committed as a result of gang affiliation or by gang members. They also did

not differentiate between crimes committed by gang members and gang crimes.

A summary of the study will begin Chapter 5. From that point the findings,

conclusions, and implications of the study will be presented. Chapter 5 will also present

the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods case study is to analyze and interpret rural community perceptions concerning gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant populations. As such, this chapter deals with the results of that study within the sections herein described. The *Summary of the Study* is an overview of the foundation of the study on rural community member perception concerning gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population. The summary will review the research problem, the research instruments utilized, and the participant population. It will also reflect on the main points of the literature review found in Chapter 2.

The *Findings* is a review of the critical information gathered from the participants that compose the four themes of Chapter 4. This case study employs a mixed methods research strategy in which the first three themes are qualitative and the final theme uses statistical data (quantitative) to compare to the qualitative answers of the participants. The *Conclusions* section will be based on the research questions posed in Chapter 1 and will bring the study full circle. The research questions will be answered in the order as the questions posited in Chapter 1 and will analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what was discovered in the research process and the literature review.

The *Implications of the Study* illuminate practical suggestions for combating gangs and racial tension through the implementation of possible diversity activities that could take place within Bridgetown and other rural communities undergoing these same issues. The implications will not only discuss what should be done, but how it can be

done through community outreach, community activities, and law enforcement education

through the media. The *Limitations of the Study* addresses the limitations in which the

researcher had no control. The *Limitations* also address the generalizability of the study,

the choices concerning the participant selection, and the subjectivity of qualitative

research methodology.

This case study identified a need for research geared toward the perception of

community members about gangs and the new in-migrant population. Within the

Suggestions for Future Research, potential strategies to expand the research within

Bridgetown are addressed. It also addresses ways in which to use the methods employed

in this research project to study similar rural communities or rural communities with a

growth of new in-migrants that is not facing gang issues.

Summary of the Literature

This case study began as an analysis of rural community perceptions toward

gangs, as has been the challenge posed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention (OJJDP) and the National Gang Center (2009) to complete. In examining the

literature surrounding gangs in urban environments; poverty, disenfranchisement, and

race were noticed as contributing factors to gang affiliation (Klien, 2007; McPherson,

Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001). These same factors became apparent in rural gangs as

well (Evans, Fitzgerald, Weigel, and Chvilicek, 1999; Dukes and Stein, 2003).

Therefore, questions concerning poverty, disenfranchisement, and race must be asked to

the participants. Rural communities in Iowa have been historically populated by White

individuals. The racial shift has been a direct result of the new in-migration of minority members (predominantly Latino) into rural towns like Bridgetown.

There has been some contention as to whether there has always been an existence of gangs in rural communities (Dukes and Stein, 2003). It is important to consider the native gang population as non-metropolitan cities, with a gang presence prior to migration activity, are more likely to have urban gang members retain their gang identity after arrival (Maxson, 1998). Examining native gangs might also reveal community issues that encourage retention of gang affiliation among in-migrants. Current literature suggests that these features are tied to criminal opportunities available and social inequalities experienced (Evans, Fitzgerald, Weigel, and Chvilicek, 1999).

Gangs and their activity do not unexpectedly occur in a rural community and there exists recognizable factors which create the appearance of gangs in rural settings. The most common of these factors can be linked to drugs, in-migration, and pop culture that glorifies the idea of gang life (Walter B. Miller, 2001) and are present in the case study community of Bridgetown, Iowa. There are six major motivators for gang membership: material incentives, recreation, refuge or camouflage, physical protection, resistance, and commitment to community (Martin Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991). In examining the rural town of Bridgetown, all these factors appear to exist.

Gang activity in rural communities does not mimic its urban counterpart (Weisheit and Wells, 2004; Howell and Egley, 2005). The rural gang population varies as the in-migrant population fluctuates in a rural town. In urban areas, gang affiliation is motivated by safety or friendship ties with pre-existing gang members (Evans, Fitzgerald,

Weigel, and Chvilick, 1999; Manwaring, 2005), is open for all resident's to see, and acts as a "protective function" to insulate members from victimization (Melde, Taylor, and Esbensen, 2009). The rural gang's presence is more secretive and hidden than urban counterparts (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002; Weisheit and Wells, 2004). Thus, it is more difficult to study. Urban gang activity is seen as the simplest and fastest way to meet fiscal and social needs. Social inequality creates the poverty that drives the motivation to join gangs. Therefore, social inequality can be linked to gang activity (Klein and Maxson, 2010; Barbour, 2005; Papachristos and Kirk, 2006; Hall, Thornberry, and Lizotte, 2006). Rural communities also have a disproportionately high level of poverty than urban areas (Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990).

Previous research states the predominant number of in-migrants into rural communities that have pre-migration gang ties are Latino (Klein, 2010; Spergel, 1995; Howell and Egley, 2005). These individuals are often youth who arrive with their families for employment (Weisheit and Wells, 2001; 2001b; 2001c). As there exists a tendency to cluster a racial or ethnic population as one homogenous out-group (Brauer, 2001), gang membership might be a method for attaining a unique cultural identity in a rural community.

Rural communities have reported higher rates of crime because of gang in-migration (Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996). Research has demonstrated that it is not necessarily the in-migrant gangs that pose the greatest threat of criminal activity, but that it is the nativist gangs that pose more of a threat than the national street gang members (Rosenbaum and Grant, 1983). The most common criminal gang activities are the drug

trade and drug money laundering (Williams and Becnel, 1996; Webb, 1995). This goes as well for the rural gang members.

Perceptions are guided by external forces as well as how we see our environment. In the rural community, an individual will develop their ideas concerning gangs by the media, entertainment, and by their experiences. From these encounters, a reality is constructed and character perceptions about individuals are made upon immediately meeting an "other".

Summary of the Study

In order to study rural community perceptions concerning gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population, a qualitative case study was undertaken using Bridgetown, Iowa. Previous research has demonstrated that gang migration to rural communities is occurring (Egley, 2000; Maxson, 1998; Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996; Lopez, 2008; Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). According to the 2009 National Youth Gang Survey, 15 percent of rural counties and 33 percent of smaller towns are reporting gang activity and gang problems.

This research focuses on the contention that a reason for gangs flourishing in rural communities is the result of member apathy (Weisheit and Wells, 2001), and examines the perceptions of community members to determine whether such apathy does exist. The theoretical underpinnings of this study analyze the community member perceptions about gangs within the community and reveals what might be the evidence of their potential existence in Bridgetown. This case study also examined community perceptions toward the new in-migrant population. The purpose of including perceptions

concerning the new in-migrant population is to reveal any potential factors within this migration causing racial tension which might lead to the creation or maintenance of gang identities among youth.

Using the research strategy of Wiseman (1979), the community population participating in the research were leaders of institutions of social control. In choosing institutions of social control, the institutions chosen were based on their likelihood of having some direct knowledge of gangs, if they existed, as similarly used by Cingolani (1993) in her research which also focused on perceptions of the research participants. The idea of examining community member perceptions concerning gangs has been undertaken before in larger, more urban communities (Decker and Kempf, 1991; Howell and Decker, 1999). Community members were interviewed for their perceptions concerning gangs in Racine, Wisconsin (Takata & Zevitz, 1987; 1990). In this case study, the target was perceptions within a rural, non-metropolitan community.

The participants in this case study were all members of institutions of social control and fit into one of eight types of institutions of social control: Academics/Education, Law Enforcement, Politics, Community Service/Activism/Religion, Attorney/Legal, Court System, Medical, and Business. These organizations are considered institutions of social control because their existence and power dictate the norms, values, customs, and mores within the society. Each one of these institutions of social control either regulate, administrate, enforce, create, define, or contribute to the social control of the community through their influence upon the community.

The population size originally started at thirty persons. The final participant population size was twenty-four after six chose not to participate. The majority of those who chose not to participate came from the medical field. Each potential participant was contacted through letters of introduction and/or introductory phone calls. The individuals were selected based on either their position within their particular institution of social control, the likelihood they would participate in the study, and the potential of personal knowledge concerning the existence of gangs. If there were multiple people within the particular institution of social control, the participants were randomly chosen out of that classification.

In order to evaluate community perceptions, two qualitative data collection tools were utilized; the questionnaire (Appendix C) and the in-depth interview (Appendix G). The reason for employing both the questionnaire and the in-depth interview was to give participants a chance to answer simple demographic questions in the questionnaire, thus shortening the interview time needed, and to increase reliability in the results using what Stake (1994) calls triangulation. Triangulation reduces the likelihood of misinterpretation, and increases the validity of the data collected.

The questionnaire was mailed with the introduction letter. Upon return of the questionnaire and signed informed consent, an interview time was scheduled. The participant was interviewed one-on-one, with an audio recording taken of the interview. The interview was then transcribed and a copy of their transcription was sent to the participant in order to provide transparency in the process and member checking (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The questionnaires and interviews were then analyzed and coded for common themes using the Grounded Theory approach (Neuman, 2004; Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory is a methodology that is well suited to a mixed method data collection style employed in this study (Glaser, 1978).   Using grounded theory as the methodology in this case study allows the transcribed interviews, and parts of the questionnaire, to be coded. To assist in the coding of the interview transcripts, the questions were sorted into sections as follows: participant background, immigration and in-migrants within the community, perception of gang issues and crime within the community, and potential resolution ideas from the community members. These sections could then be compared against other sections. However, sections were also compared within the individual interviews and then compared to other individual's responses.

Once all the interviews were collected and coded for common themes, the responses were grouped according to four major themes that emerged from the interviews. Within these themes exists separate parts (See Table 4.1). These themes and their parts are as follows:

1. Community perceptions toward potential gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa.

    a. Participant definitions of gang members,

    b. Participant perceptions concerning potential gang members within the community,

    c. Participant perceptions concerning potential gang activity within the community,

    d. Participant perceptions concerning potential gang crime problem within the community, and

e. What factors warrant these perceptions.

2. Community's perceptions toward the new in-migrant population.

    a. Perceptions about why new in-migrants are entering the community and the benefits and deficits of this migration,

    b. Personal experiences and perceptions,

    c. Professional experiences and perceptions, and

    d. Perceptions toward stereotypically negative comments toward in-migrants, immigrants, and minorities.

3. Community perceptions toward crime.

    a. Community perceptions toward crime rates in River County and Bridgetown,

    b. Perceptions concerning drug crimes/problems within the community,

    c. The impact of the new in-migrant community on crime rates, and

    d. The perception of the effectiveness of county and city law enforcement.

4. Law enforcement's stance concerning gangs and crime within Bridgetown.

    a. The Bridgetown Police Department's stance on gangs and gang activity,

    b. River County Sheriff's Department stance on gangs and gang activity, and

    c. Crime statistics collected by Bridgetown Police.

The results from which answered the research questions posed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The outcome of those groupings can be found in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Summary of Major Findings

The research questions this case study hopes to examine deal directly with community perceptions toward gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population. These questions are intended to examine the following: what are the community member's perceptions toward gangs and the new in-migrant population, what is shaping those perceptions, what is law enforcement's data that substantiates its claim of gang activity, and what are the potential factors causing gang activity or crime within the community. The research also is intended to uncover any ideas of community members as to ways to deal with racial tension between the native population and new in-migrants as well as what steps could be taken to reduce gangs or gang activities within the community.

With the development of the research, four major themes emerge from the data collected. These themes were community perceptions toward potential gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa, community perceptions toward the new in-migrant population, community perceptions toward crime, and law enforcement's stance and data concerning gangs and crime within Bridgetown. Within these themes, three focus on community perceptions; while the fourth examines law enforcement's stance and statistics. The three community perceptions are gangs, in-migrants, and crime. The fourth theme examines law enforcement's stance and data concerning gangs and crime.

Theme one analyzed community perceptions toward potential gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa. The participants' common definition of a gang is an organized group of individuals with a common group name, symbol, hand signs, and attire that have joined together to commit criminally deviant acts. The group members typically share a common minority race, are younger individuals, and most likely are involved in some form of violence or drug trade. The gang member is anyone who is part of this defined group.

According to the majority of the participants of the case study, gang members are residing in the town (See Table 4.2). The most common reason given by participants for the existence of gang members in the community is the in-migration of minority individuals entering the community. More concisely, these gang members are likely the children of in-migrants who have entered the community for employment. The secondary reason is individuals entering the community to take advantage of government housing. The least given reason is for the distribution of drugs.

Participants did agree that gang activity was occurring in Bridgetown. Many believed gang activity was not out in the open, but evidence existed through things such as graffiti. The most common gang activities participants believed were taking place were graffiti and drug sales. Participants believed that Latino youth were more likely to participate in gang activity, but some did acknowledge a White youth gang native to the community.

Participant reactions toward a potential gang crime problems existence were mixed. Those more likely to encounter gang members in their profession did believe it

existed. Those who did not generally come into contact with gang members did not believe Bridgetown had a gang crime problem. In discussing how participants came to their perceptions, the factors were almost evenly distributed between the news media, law enforcement, personal experience, and occupation; with personal experience and occupation tying for the top position (See Table 4.3). Again, employment type and interaction with law enforcement in their career impacted how an individual came to their perceptions.

Theme two analyzed community perceptions toward the new in-migrant population. Generally, the participants' attitudes were favorable toward the new in-migrant population. They believed the new in-migrant population added to the economy and the population growth. They also discussed the willingness to work in the meat packing facility and the starting of businesses as an advantage to the community.

Participants related positive stories about their personal interaction with the new in-migrant population. The only complaint was the way in which other community members had treated Latinos. For professional interactions, the majority of the stakeholders relayed positive experiences about the new in-migrant community. Law enforcement, and some court workers, did relay negative interactions. However, they attributed these interactions to the individual not the status of in-migrant. Even these individuals did also mention positive experiences within their jobs.

Participants recognized stereotypes against the new in-migrant population; however, they did not generally agree with them. The participants did not make assumptions about legal status or gang affiliation based upon race. The only agreement

with the stereotypes was the perceived benefit if the whole community population spoke English.

Theme three examined community perceptions toward crime (See Table 4.3). Participants generally believed, in the interview, that Bridgetown's crime rate was higher than average for the population size. They cited lack of punishment and the lower socioeconomic situation in the community for the reason for this high crime rate. Those who did not believe the crime rate was higher referenced the lack of community discussion concerning crime as their justification.

Participants did believe there were higher drug crime problems within the community than in comparable communities. They referred to the historical data that generally points to River County as having a high drug problem. The drug most thought to be in Bridgetown was methamphetamine. When asked about the effectiveness of city and county law enforcement, the majority were happy with the performance. Only three cited problems they had with law enforcement, and many gave ways to improve performance. The most common way the participants believed that law enforcement's performance could be improved is through more funding to hire more officers and obtain better equipment.

The final theme, theme four, analyzed law enforcement's stance concerning gangs and crime within the community. Bridgetown Police Department and the River County Sheriff's Department have both concluded that gangs are present and active in their jurisdictions. Bridgetown Police Department does log data concerning gang members and gang activity. They do record photographic evidence, as well as keep records concerning

each gang member identified as living in the town. However, the majority of their gang data was considered confidential, and I was unable to access that data. Law enforcement cited the phenomenon of the hybrid gang, but did note the presence of major national gangs present or operating within the city limits.

River County Sheriff's Department does not keep any data or records concerning gangs or gang activity. Any information they gain is forwarded to the police department for compilation. They do acknowledge one area of the County as having a higher gang problem but do not necessarily believe that the County, overall, has a gang problem.

For this case study, the crime statistics of the police seem to be incomplete. City law enforcement does not differentiate between gang crimes, crimes committed by gang members, and crimes committed by others. They do not have long standing data that would show a growth of gang activity (See Table 4.6). It is their claim that there were 100 gang arrests in 2012; yet, they also mention that some members/associates were counted more than once as they were arrested multiple times. Bridgetown Police Department does not differentiate between a crime and a gang crime in their statistics, or a gang crime and a crime committed by a gang member (See Table 4.5). Law enforcement does not break down how many of each type of crimes are committed by gang members.

Participants contributed different quantities of information concerning the themes. Some communicated on one or two topics, while others contributed equally among all four topics. They derived their perceptions from personal experience and the experiences of others. All participants' perceptions were represented in this case study, and they

comprised the themes of Chapter 4. It is from these themes that the conclusions of this research can be reached.

Conclusions

QUESTION 1: What are community perceptions toward potential gang activity within the rural community being studied?

In analyzing the questionnaires and in-depth interviews with participants in this case study, it is clear that the majority have concluded that gangs are present and gang activity is occurring (Table 4.2). Most have attributed the growth of gangs to the introduction of the new in-migrant population and the predominance of these individuals being Latino.

Not all participants interviewed believed gangs are always a criminal enterprise. For these participants, the idea of a gang is merely an opportunity to belong. Out of the twenty-four individuals interviewed, twenty-three concluded that gang members are present within the community. When asked why gang members, or gangs, are present in the community, most participants attribute the migration of individuals entering the community.

According to most of those interviewed, the gang members entering the community are youth gang members arriving with family. This assumption matches with the work of Maxson, Woods, and Klein (1996). The two reasons given for gang members entering Bridgetown, Iowa, are following family members for employment, escaping the urban, high-crime environment, and families taking advantage of the

availability of low income housing in the community. Gang members are also entering the community to participate in illegal drug trade.

Participant opinions were mixed in relation to gang activity being a gang crime problem. Many participants saw gang members, gangs, and gang activities in the community as being committed by "wannabes", not necessarily gang members and gang activity a person would witness in an urban environment. The majority of crimes the participants attributed to gangs were graffiti, assault, and drugs. However, they did not ascribe drug sales to the youthful gang members. Therefore, gang activity was viewed as present within the community. The level of which was highly dependent upon the individual and their field of employment.

The closer a person's interaction with law enforcement in their career field, the more likely they were to report higher levels of activity and more serious offenses. Those who did not work in those fields typically reported graffiti as the most common action. Overall, community member perceptions were that gangs were present and active within the community. It was the level of their action and presence that varied from participant to participant.

QUESTION 2: What are the factors that could possibly be shaping those perceptions?

This case study revealed that perceptions are not always drawn from personal experiences or first-hand knowledge. Individuals will come to conclusions that shape their perceptions based upon what they have heard from others. However, this second-hand data appears to only be valid to the individual if they receive such information from

someone they believe is trustworthy and knowledgeable concerning the topic. Perceptions toward gang activity and presence do not seem to be formed from innuendo or unsubstantiated rumors.

 The factors that are shaping community perceptions in Bridgetown appear to be fourfold. For the participants of this study, almost one-quarter attributed information gathered through some contact with law enforcement as the contributing factor to determining gang presence in the community. Other participants cite their jobs as being the factor shaping their perceptions. Finally, the remainder of the participants reference personal experience or the media as the reason for their belief in gang presence in Bridgetown.

Most of the participants were leaders of institutions of social control that had direct contact with law enforcement. From this contact, they were told by law enforcement that gangs were present within Bridgetown. For these individuals, law enforcement had presented them with some form of proof of gang presence. Academics, law enforcement, and court systems workers believed gangs were present from encountering them in their workplace. Their occupation thus shaped their perceptions concerning gangs within Bridgetown.

Finally, personal experiences and the news media shape perceptions concerning gangs in rural communities. An individual who sees graffiti on a building, encounters an individual who appears to be, or identifies themselves as, part of a gang, holds prejudicial opinions toward the new in-migrant or minority population, or witnesses what they believe is a gang crime. From this, their perception is shaped by personal experiences.

The news media also contributes to perceptions concerning gangs. Regardless of whether the reporting is accurate or not, hearing and reading from the media of gang incidents creates the perception of gang presence and activity. From the participants who discussed the media as their source for validation of their perception of gangs in Bridgetown, all cited the same two cases reported frequently by the media (Milner, 2008; Milner, 2009). This would then seem that repetition of reporting isolated cases creates a perception of more gang activity than is actually occurring.

QUESTION 3: What is law enforcement's stance concerning gangs within the rural community being studied?

Local law enforcement has concluded that gangs are present within the community and that some activity is taking place within Bridgetown. Law enforcement officers contacted state that gang activity is not as prevalent in an urban environment, and that the activity is mostly covert to the population of the community. The Bridgetown Police Department's Gang Intelligence Officer believes that this low-key presence in the community is intentional to keep from law enforcement detection and interaction. They reference professional contact with gang members as well as information provided from external criminal justice sources as proof that gangs are present within the community. The Bridgetown Gang Intelligence Officer showed me pictures of gang member tattoos and graffiti that he and other officers had gathered in the town. Many of these images had backgrounds that could easily be identified as Bridgetown, and several were of graffiti that I had also photographically captured during my initial research stages. The Chief of Police in Bridgetown also has produced and distributed a manuscript citing the proof of

gang presence and activity in town. I was unable to obtain a copy of this document, but many participants referenced seeing said work.

In Bridgetown, Iowa, law enforcement includes both a police department and sheriff's department working within the community and county. According to the River County Sheriff, they do not keep any data concerning gangs. They transfer any information they acquire concerning gangs to the Gang Intelligence Officer of Bridgetown Police Department. In turn, the Bridgetown Police Department shares any gang files they might have with the River County Sheriff's office. In discussing potential gangs and gang activity with the Sheriff's Department, it is their official opinion that gangs are present and active within River County. However, they keep basic crime statistics with no differentiation for gang crimes.

Bridgetown Police Department does keep statistical track of how many gang members are living in the community, how many gangs are represented, and the identity of each of those gangs. In discussing gangs with the Gang Intelligence Officer, he did believe that hybrid gangs are working within the community. However, for reporting purposes, he separates gang members out of their new hybrid gangs and categorizes them by their original gang identity. The Gang Intelligence Officer does keep a log of all gang movement, gang graffiti, gang tattoos, and gang members. Yet, he did not possess a data breakdown that identifies what exact crimes were the result of gang activity or just crimes committed by gang members (Table 4.5). These breakdowns are located in the personal arrest files of each individual, and those files are not available to the public.

The Gang Intelligence Officer did supply statistical data of crimes committed within the city limits of Bridgetown. Yet, these did not denote what might be considered gang activity nor did they detail the crimes in question. Bridgetown law enforcement statistics did break down citations versus arrests, charges, months, gender, race/ethnicity, and the changes in crime rates. In looking at these statistics, it is unclear the motivations behind criminal activity and there is no way to infer a gang affiliation to the crimes.

QUESTION 4: Are there potential motivating factors that could cause law enforcement to report or over-report gang activity and gang crimes within a community?

There are potential motivating factors that cause law enforcement to report gang activity and gang crimes in Bridgetown, Iowa. The main motivating factor for Bridgetown Police Department to report gang activity is the Federal and State funding it receives because of this reported crime problem. Bridgetown Police Department pays for its Gang Intelligence Officer through grants provided because of their ability to prove gang presence within the community. They were also able to install surveillance cameras throughout the town because of grant funding they received because of their reported gang activity. While the police department would not state the exact financial sum it receives, the dollar amount given to Bridgetown for use to combat gang problems appears to be over-inflated by the public and the media.

There are motivating factors for over-reporting gang activity and gang crimes within a community. Again, funding is given based on the potential gang threat in the community. In speaking to the Iowa Department of Public Safety, in order to receive funds, a law enforcement entity must prove conclusively that gang activity is taking place

within the community and to what extent. It is therefore unlikely that a law enforcement office could over-report gang activity successfully to receive grant money. It is also necessary to point out the candor and transparency of the Bridgetown Police Department, in conjunction with the evidence provided by the Gang Intelligence Officer, would indicate that over-reporting is not occurring in Bridgetown or River County.

QUESTION 5: Does law enforcement differentiate between gang-motivated crimes and crimes committed by gang members? Should they be treated differently?

As mentioned in answering Question 1, Bridgetown law enforcement does not differentiate between gang-motivated crimes and crimes committed by gang members in their statistical data (See Table 4.5). They also do not differentiate between gang crimes and non-gang crimes in their statistical data. It was revealed in the interviews that Iowa does have an enhancement charge for gang crimes. While Iowa does have this enhancement charge for gang activity, I was informed that is handled at the County Attorney's office, at their discretion, and not at the law enforcement department.

Because of this enhancement charge, it is necessary for gang crimes to be separated from crimes committed by a gang member. Failure to do so would allow the court system to unduly punish individuals because of their status within the community. This would also encourage law enforcement and agencies within the court system to identify community residents as gang members to employ this enhancement when the individual is charged criminally.

QUESTION 6: Does the presence of gang members within a rural community mean that it should be automatically assumed that the community has a gang crime problem?

Participants who encountered gang members and gang activity through their work believed that Bridgetown had a gang crime problem. However, when looking at the statistics from local law enforcement, the potential gang crimes reported (See Table 4.6) represented approximately 2.6% of all crime incidents that occurred in 2012 (See Table 4.5). This would indicate that there is not a gang crime problem, but merely personal perceptions of a gang crime problem. Instead of this assumption of a gang crime problem, law enforcement should look at the rate of gang crimes in comparison to overall crime rates. With the lack of breakdown in gang crimes, it is impossible to ascertain if Bridgetown does have a gang crime problem.

Extending this out to all rural communities that might have a gang presence, it is necessary to statistically track gang crimes and compare these crimes to the town and county crime rates. This measurement would identify if a gang crime problem does exist. To assume that a gang presence immediately constitutes a gang crime problem is incorrect. As was pointed out in previous research, many of the gang members entering communities are the children of families moving into rural communities to improve their lives through employment (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002; Weisheit and Wells, 2004; Weisheit and Wells, 2001; Lawrence, 2003). Howell (2007) states that many youth claim a gang status for perceived prestige. These youth do not constitute a gang crime problem, and their presence should not conclusively prove that a gang crime problem exists.

QUESTION 7: Does the community perception deviate from the data and stance presented by local law enforcement within the rural community being studied; and if so, what could be the reason for this difference?

It is the stance of Bridgetown law enforcement that gangs do exist and are active in the town. The community perceptions do not deviate from these stances presented by local law enforcement within Bridgetown, Iowa. In examining the perceptions of the participants in this research (See Table 4.2), the community perceptions are in line with law enforcement's stance. The only difference that exists is the perception of the existence of a gang crime problem. This difference can be explained in the levels of interaction between law enforcement and other community members. However, those who do believe a crime problem does exist typically are in more contact with law enforcement or the court system than those who do not agree. This could explain the variation, as those that work with law enforcement and the court system might be swayed by law enforcement or might have more encounters with gang activity.

Law enforcement does believe a gang crime problem exists; yet, participant perceptions on that issue are mixed. In examining law enforcement's data concerning gangs, it is incomplete. Therefore, it is not possible to compare community perceptions to law enforcement statistics.

Implications for Future Study

The case study examined community perceptions toward gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant population. It also addressed potential ways to relieve racial tension and promote diversity in an attempt to counteract the possible reasons for youths to maintain gang identities or join gangs upon arrival to the community. By joining leaders within the community, certain actions and policies could be implemented to educate Bridgetown residents on how to deal with these particular issues within their community.

The findings of this study reveal that leaders of institutions of social control predominantly believe that gangs are present and active within the community. The findings also reveal that the majority of case study participants agree that diversity training and programs should be in place within the community. It is this diversity initiative that could potentially lead to the reduction of racial tension, gangs, and gang activity within Bridgetown, Iowa.

The findings of this study could be used to assist Bridgetown, and similar rural Iowa communities facing these problems, in developing a diversity program to bring the native population and the new in-migrant population together. Participants of this case study were generally positive in utilizing diversity programs to reduce racial tension and gang activity in Bridgetown (See Table 5.1). Participants pointed to past diversity programs, but none gave any indication of future programs that might work to aid in these problems.

Table 5.1 Diversity Programs Questions in Questionnaire and Interview

	DIVERSITY PROGRAMS QUESTIONS in Questionnaire and Interview										
	Diversity programs would ___ in the community				Would you participate in diversity programs?				Would citizens participate?		
	Reduce racial tension		Reduce gang issues		as a professional		as a citizen				
ID #	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unsure
#001	X		X		X		X		X		
#002	X		X		X		X			X	
#003	X		X		X		X		X		
#004											
#005	X		X		X		X		X		
#006	X		X		X		X		X		
#007	X		X		X		X		X		
#008	X		X		X		X		X		
#009	X		X		X		X		X		
#010											
#011	DID NOT ANSWER					X		X		X	
#012	X		X		X		X		X		
#013											
#014	X		X		X		X		X		
#015	X		X		X		X		DID NOT ANSWER		
#016	X		X		X		X		X		
#017		X		X		X		X			X
#018											
#019	X		X		X		X			X	
#020		X		X		X		X		X	
#021	X		X		X		X		X		
#022	X		X			X		X		X	
#023	X		X		X		X		X		
#024	X		X		X		X				X
#025	X		X		X		X		X		
#026	X		X		X				X		
#027	X		X		X		X			X	
#028	X		X		X		X			X	
#029											
#030											
total/ave	21	2	21	2	20	4	20	4	14	7	2

The issue with this potential solution to gang problems and racial tension seem to be found in how to get community members to participate in such events. This case study illuminates the problem and encourages discussion on how to bring community members together to embrace the relatively new ethnic and racial diversity of Bridgetown. If these programs are successful, they could be implemented by other similar rural communities confronting similar issues of gangs and new racial dynamics.

Previous research indicates that the majority of gang members entering rural communities are youth following parents and family into the community (Decker and Curry, 2003; Esbensen et al., 2001; Weisheit and Wells, 2001; Weisheit and Wells, 2004; Lawrence, 2003; Howell, 2007). According to the case study participants, especially in the academic field, they agree with this assertion. If this is the case, an implication of this study is for community members and leaders to open dialogue on how to combat youth gang issues. Howell contends youth gang members are maintaining their gang identity for status purposes in the rural community. As one research participant indicated, young Latino males are identifying as a gang member to intimidate the native community and gain a level of respect they believe they are not receiving from the community. The native rural youth gang is perceived as acting out for attention and to follow a perceived cultural trend. If this is the case, this research indicates the need for the community to devise programs directed toward youth members. Whether this be events, youth centers, or sports activities; giving these youth alternatives to gang identification might reduce gang statuses and gang activity (especially graffiti).

An incidental discovery was made during the course of this research. When participants were asked what role or action they could take as community members to

deal with gang crimes or gang activity, very few responded that they could notify

authorities if they witnessed any potential gang issues. This lack of response would

perhaps indicate that community members are unaware of what actions to take if they

witness gang activity. This lack of knowledge indicates a potential need for education on

what the signs of gang activity are and what action community members should engage.

As the majority of participants indicated a general trust in local media, it would seem to

be the most likely vehicle for educating individuals on what to look for and how to

respond. This education should be discussed by community leaders to present the best

option for delivering this message.

There is potential for this research to bring about awareness in Bridgetown and

similar communities facing the same issues regarding gangs and racial tension. However,

the results of this study only highlight broad areas in the need for social change. It is up

to community leaders, like the ones who participated in this study, to come together to

enact these necessary changes.

Limitations of the Study

This case study contains certain limitations that may impact the transferability to

other communities or to Bridgetown as a whole. First, the case study was limited to a

specific population within the community, leaders of institutions of social control. As

this was pursued as an exploratory research project, it was important to first assess the

perceptions of those most likely to have contact with potential gang members and also be

responsible for helping shape public policy or knowledge. The choice to use this

particularly narrow group within the community restricted the randomness of the

population sample. As there is such a narrow amount of individuals within Bridgetown

that meet the descriptors of leaders of institutions of social control, the persons asked

were most often already known personally to the research. This also produced a

participant population that generally had a higher income, higher level of education, and

higher age mean. As a result, the research participants might not be seen as

representative of the entire population of Bridgetown, Iowa, or an entire population of a

similar city. However, the results may be comparable to the perceptions of leaders of

institutions of social control in analogous communities.

Second, qualitative research is generally subjective, and perceptions of

individuals are equally introspectively subjective. The questionnaire and interview

schedule might not have addressed all issues or were phrased or organized in such a way

that directed the answers of the participants. This might have resulted in a research bias

resulting from potential data pollution. One such example can be found in questions

regarding perceptions concerning the new in-migrant population. The participants in this

case study are considered prominent members of the community. Despite the promise of

anonymity, they might determine that positive answers concerning minority members

place them in the best light and would answer accordingly to avoid perceived shame or

community scorn. As the researcher is originally from the community, self-reflection of

the researcher toward their own perceptions and connection to the participants and

community might result in potential researcher bias. To reduce this potential issue,

member checking and data and methodological triangulation were utilized to protect

validity and protect against researcher bias.

The limitation of solo coding exists in that the findings are also somewhat subjective and primarily based on the perceptions of one person. However, these limitations can be overcome by utilizing the following three strategies: member checking (Ezzy, 2002), discussing coding strategies and issues with peers (Strauss, 1987), and transparency in coding (Charmaz, 2006). Member checking is giving the participants an opportunity to have input in their participation in the research. Member checking was met via allowing participants to read their transcripts and make changes to the transcripts before coding. Future research might be best served with team coding. This would allow for checking of the interpretation of themes and the introduction of new ideas that might further the research.

The third weakness of the study is found in the incomplete data collected by law enforcement (See Tables 4.4; Table 4.6; Table 4.6). The Bridgetown Police Department does not identify in their statistics what crimes are committed by gang members and what crimes are gang crimes. They also record gang arrests, not by individual gang members, but overall arrests that might include multiple contacts with individuals. For this reason, it is difficult to conclude how active gangs are in Bridgetown. A River County Sheriff's Department official stated that they do not keep longterm statistics, but rather sends their arrest and incident numbers to the State and Federal agencies and Bridgetown Police Department. They also do not record any gang incidents or track gang members. They rely solely on the police department to handle any gang data collected in the area. Without these numbers, it is impossible to confirm gang activity or presence outside the city limits of Bridgetown.

The final limitation involving the participants can be found in the layout of a rural community.   In an urban environment, leaders of institutions of social control might not live in, nor journey into, the areas where gang signs might exist. Previous research of rural communities demonstrates the geographic boundaries that differentiate wealth and status are not as existent, and the population is often intermingled (Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990). In a rural community, it is probable that members of institutions of social control will encounter areas where gang activity is typically located and this experience might shape their opinions differently than their urban peers who are able to avoid such confrontations. There is no way to avoid this limitation but to acknowledge its existence and assume this same limitation exists in all rural communities similar to the case study community of Bridgetown.

The limitations discussed must be considered when future research is undertaken. To recreate this case study, the design controls discussed in Chapter 1 must be maintained to counteract certain limitations. When future researchers use the results of this case study, they must be conscious of all these factors to maintain the validity and objectivity of their own work.

Suggestions for Future Research

This mixed methods case study was undertaken for the purpose of examining the contention that gangs are present in rural communities because of community apathy, and because there has been a call to examine community perceptions regarding gangs in rural communities. This study was in no way intended to be a definitive answer to the question regarding community perceptions to gangs, crime, and the new in-migrant

population. Instead, it was intended to provide a starting point to a more expanded

examination of Bridgetown, Iowa, as a comparative study to similar rural communities

facing the same challenges of Bridgetown, or as a comparative study to similar rural

communities facing new in-migrant growth without gang activity present.

The current study undertaken relied on information gathered from leaders of

institutions of social control within the community. This particular subset of the

population was very limited in size and might not be reflective of the community as a

whole. However, future studies could utilize the research questions, questionnaire, and

interview schedule from this research and expand upon it to examine the community

outside this small group. Using a random sampling of the entire population of

Bridgetown, future researchers can evaluate a more diverse base of the community and

their perceptions on these issues. Those findings could then be compared to the original

findings in this study to verify the claims of this research or to find areas of difference

that might need to be explored further.

This case study revealed that participants perceived that gangs were present and

gang activity was happening in the community. They directly linked drugs and the new

in-migrant population as a cause of gangs taking up residence within the community.

Participants implied that the majority of gang members in the community were youth

joining their families in the community. This corroborates the allegations made by

Brezinski (2004). Future research could evaluate this potential link by comparing

communities similar to Bridgetown that are facing a new in-migrant growth, but with or

without gang issues. This research might reveal if there is another mitigating factor,

beyond the in-migrant population arrival, causing gangs to appear.

Future research might be best served by expanding into the issues of economic and gender inequalities as the reasons for maintaining gang affiliation in a rural community. This research focused on the issues of race and ethnicity. It is reasonable to assume that race and ethnicity are strongly tied to economic, or class, inequality. For Bridgetown, the general population is working-class and the employed new in-migrants are making an income that is equal to the native population. In examining the perceptions of the entire community, the issues of class and gender should be discussed to get a better overall picture of what the community might perceive as all potential reasons for gang involvement.

Final Thoughts

The Bridgetown of 30 years ago has long since gone, and it is never coming back; just like many other rural communities that dot the Iowa landscape. That is the reality of rural America after the farm crisis in the 1980's (Davidson, 1996). The towns that haven't died have changed and adapted. They have found new ways to survive. For Bridgetown, the salvation is found in the new in-migrant population.

Each one of the participants in this case study acknowledged the new in-migrant population has brought economic viability to the community, and are keeping certain industries supplied with needed employees; yet are causing gangs and gang activity to occur in Bridgetown. Almost every participant perceives that gangs and gang activity is taking place within the community. However, almost every participant agreed that this problem, and other problems like racial tension, could be combated successfully by diversity education programs and by positive community involvement.

Where Bridgetown will be in the future is up to the community members. The native and the new in-migrant populations should work together to build a stronger town that will continue to thrive and grow. Law enforcement should continue to reach out to the population to help control the potential gang crime problem. If these steps are taken, Bridgetown has the potential to surpass its earlier successes.

APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL AND CONSENT FORMS

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515 294-4566
FAX 515 294-4267

Date: 8/29/2012

To: Angela Michelle Glosser
2969 Queens Ave
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

CC: Dr. Matt DeLisi
203A East Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Gangs in a Rural Town: A Narrative Analysis of Community Perceptions of Crime, Gangs, and the New In-Migrant Population

IRB ID: 12-373

Approval Date:	8/27/2012	**Date for Continuing Review:**	8/6/2014
Submission Type:	New	**Review Type:**	Full Committee

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials** in your research, including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.

- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study,** when documented consent is required.

- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.

- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.

- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses,** unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.

- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.

APPENDIX B. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

[DATE]

PARTICIPANT NAME
PARTICIPANT ADDRESS
PARTICIPANT ADDRESS

Dear PARTICIPANT NAME,

I am a graduate student completing the research for my dissertation for my PhD in Sociology at Iowa State University. As a civic leader and member of an institution of social control, your input is crucial toward understanding the perspectives of people in leadership positions concerning crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population.

I am hoping you will be willing to participate in my dissertation research entitled: Gangs in a Rural Town: A Narrative Analysis of Community Perceptions of Crime, Gangs, and the New In-Migrant Population. As part of my research project, I am interviewing civic leaders and I would like to schedule an interview with you about your perspectives on crime, gangs, and in-migrant population in your community. If you would be willing to be interviewed for my project, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and informed consent document and mail them back to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Your participation in the study would be confidential and all identifying information about you would be removed. To help keep your identification confidential, your participant ID number is _____.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by directing public policy and community relations in rural, non-metropolitan communities when it comes to the issues of gangs and new in-migrants. As perceptions of civic leaders drive actions and reactions, examining these beliefs may allow for new knowledge in how to confront issues of crime, gangs, and/or discrimination within the rural city. I would appreciate your participation in this study.

If you have questions about this research project, please contact me at: xxxxxxxx@iastate.edu or by phone at (641) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Glosser
RETURN ADDRESS

APPENDIX C. PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant #:_____

Non-Metropolitan Community Stakeholder Questionnaire

Introduction and Instructions:
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire for Non-Metropolitan Community Stakeholders. Your input is important for the completion of my dissertation research. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather demographic data concerning stakeholders in your community. Therefore, it is appreciated if you answer questions honestly and to the best of your ability. The information you provide will be kept confidential. You may refuse to answer any of the following questions within the questionnaire. You may quit, or refuse to participate in, this research project at any time. If you have any questions concerning this questionnaire or the research project, please contact Angela M. Glosser by phone at (641) 799-4348 or by email at aglosser@iastate.edu. You may also contact Dr. Matt DeLisi at delisi@iastate.edu.

1. Age: _____   2. Gender: ☐ Male   ☐ Female

3. Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed/Widower

4. Race/Ethnicity: ☐ Caucasian/White ☐ Caucasian/Non-White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian
   ☐ Middle Eastern ☐ Black ☐ Native American ☐ Other:_____

5. Highest Education Level Completed: ☐ High School/GED ☐ Associates Degree
   ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Graduate Degree ☐ PhD

6. Income Level (per year): ☐ Less than $25,000 ☐ $25,001- $35,000 ☐ $35,001 - $50,000
   ☐ $50,001 - $75,000 ☐ $75,001 - $100,000 ☐ Above $100,000

7. Profession (check the one box that best describes your profession):
   ☐ Academics/Education ☐ Law Enforcement ☐ Politics ☐ Community Service/Activism/Religion
   ☐ Attorney/Legal ☐ Court System ☐ Medical ☐ Business ☐ Other:_____

   7a. How many years have you been in this profession? _____ In Ottumwa? _____

   7b. If you have worked in this profession for less than 5 years, what job did you hold previously:

   _____

8. Do you live within the city limits of Ottumwa, Iowa? ☐ Yes ☐ No

   8a. If Yes, how many many years have you lived in Ottumwa, Iowa? _____

   8b. If Yes, what best describes your residence location? ☐ North Side ☐ South Side
   ☐ East End/North Side ☐ West End/North Side

8c. If No, do you live in Wapello County, Iowa? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8d. If No, and you do not live in Wapello County, Iowa, in what county do you reside? _____

9. Have you ever been the victim of a crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9a. If yes, what was the type of crime? _____

9b. If yes, did the crime occur while you were at work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9c. If yes, did the crime occur in Wapello County, Iowa? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9d. If yes, did the crime occur in Ottumwa, Iowa? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9e. If yes, what was the race/ethnicity of the offender (put NA if unknown)? _____

9f. If yes, was the offender arrested? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown **9g.** Convicted? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

10. Do you believe Wapello County, Iowa has a higher than average crime problem for its population size?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion ☐ Not Sure

11. What crimes do you believe occur most commonly in Wapello County, Iowa?

    ☐ Crimes against Persons ☐ Property Crimes ☐ Victimless Crimes (ie OUI)

12. Do you believe Ottumwa, Iowa has a higher than average crime problem for its population size?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion ☐ Not Sure

13. What crimes do you believe occur most commonly in Ottumwa, Iowa?

    ☐ Crimes against Persons ☐ Property Crimes ☐ Victimless Crimes (ie OUI)

14. Do you believe there are gang members residing in Ottumwa, Iowa? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion ☐ Not sure

15. Do you believe there are active gangs in Ottumwa, Iowa? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion ☐ Not Sure

16. Do you believe there is a gang crime problem in Ottumwa, Iowa? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion ☐ Not Sure

17. Do you believe that minority members are more likely to be involved with gang activity than Whites/Caucasians?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion ☐ Not Sure

18. Do you believe that Ottumwa, Iowa has a problem with illegal immigration?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion ☐ Not Sure

APPENDIX D. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL AND CONSENT FORMS

Title of Study: Perceptions of Crime, Gangs, and New In-Migrants in Non-Metropolitan Communities

Investigators: Angela M. Glosser, MCJ

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to learn about perceptions of crime, gangs, and minorities (primarily new in-migrants) within a rural, non-metropolitan community. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are considered a leader or member of a major institution of social control within the community. An institution of social control, for the purpose of this project, is an organization that is affiliated with the three branches of government (executive, legislative, or judicial), religion, community activism, commerce, medicine, law, and/or education. These organizations are considered institutions of social control as they are responsible for directing and/or influencing the behaviors, norms, actions, and/or policies within the community, and they work on behalf of the interests and welfare of the members of the city and county.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire about yourself and your opinions concerning crime, gangs, and new in-migrants in your community. This questionnaire should take less than 5 minutes to complete. You will also be asked to participate in an interview concerning your perceptions of crime, gangs, discrimination, and new minority groups entering the community. The interview will be audio recorded, and transcribed by the researcher. The total scheduled contacts necessary for the completion of your input in this project will not exceed three contacts. However, you do have the right to get in touch with the researcher at any time during the research project.

You will be asked about your perception of crime in your community. Questions will also be asked about the potential of gangs within the community and your opinions as to the impact of the new in-migrant population on these activities.

Your participation will last for at least three scheduled contacts, but the participant may contact the researcher for any reason surrounding this research at any time. You will be asked to fill out, and return via self-addressed stamped envelope, a questionnaire that should take no more than 5 minutes. You will then be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview that should last between 60 minutes to approximately 90 minutes. If further questions arise, you might be asked to participate in a follow-up interview to be conducted via phone that should last between 15 minutes to 30 minutes. After all interviews are complete, you will be mailed a copy of your interview transcript and thank you letter and asked to read the transcript for any changes, corrections, or additions that you might want to make. If you wish to get in touch with the researcher in regard to the transcript, contact information will be provided in the thank you letter. Otherwise, you will not be contacted again by the researcher.

RISKS

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks: there is minimal risk to the participants. The only foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants could be negative attention drawn to the community and those who participate as a result of this study. To protect the participants and the community, the name of the town will be changed to Bridgetown in the project, and the identity of the participants will be withheld. Participants will be given participant numbers that are unique to each participant, and the only identifiers will be their participant number and the institution of social control in which they belong. The information collected by the PI will be kept confidential and secured in a password protected computer or a locked file cabinet within a locked room within the residence of the PI, of which only the PI resides.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by examining the role of perceptions by civic leaders and members of institutions of social control in relation to diversity and crime. It is the hope of the researcher that the final product of this research may be used to direct public policy and community relations in rural, non-metropolitan communities when it comes to the issues of gangs and new in-migrants. As perceptions drive actions and reactions, examining these beliefs may allow for new knowledge in how to confront issues of crime and/or discrimination within the rural city.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, auditing departments of Iowa State University and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: each participant will be assigned a participant ID number prior to contact. The participant ID numbers and identifying information will be kept confidential and stored in a password protected computer. The data from the questionnaires will be stored in a locking file cabinet within the researcher's residence with access limited to the researcher and the head of the dissertation committee, Dr. Matt DeLisi. To promote confidentiality and protect the participants in this research project, the names and identifying characteristics of all participants will be coded and changed in the reporting of the data gleaned from questionnaire and interview. The recordings from the interviews will be transcribed by the researcher and that data as well as notes from the interviews will be kept together with the questionnaires in a locking file cabinet within the researcher's residence with access limited to the researcher and the head of the dissertation committee, Dr. Matt DeLisi. The information will be kept until the dissertation is completed and passed and possibly until the findings are published. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential. After completion of the dissertation and possible publication, the interviews, recordings, transcripts, questionnaires, and participant IDs will be destroyed.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the <u>study</u> contact Angela M. Glosser at (641) XXX-XXXX or by email xxxxxxxx@iastate.edu , or Dr. Matt DeLisi at xxxxxx@iastate.edu.

- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

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PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

_____   _____

(Participant's Signature)   (Date)

APPENDIX E. INITIAL CONTACT FOLLOW-UP PHONE SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Angela Glosser. May I please speak with (PARTICIPANT NAME HERE)? Hello, (PARTICIPANT NAME HERE). May I have a moment of your time?

I am calling regarding a packet I sent to you two weeks ago. Did you receive the packet? (If no, go to #1. If yes, go to #2)

1. Let me tell you a little bit about the packet. I am a graduate student at Iowa State University. I am conducting a research project for my dissertation to complete my PhD in sociology. I am studying community perceptions concerning crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population in the rural community of Bridgetown, Iowa. You have been selected to participate in this research project because of your role as a member or leader of an institution of social control. Institutions of social control for the purpose of this project, is an organization that is affiliated with the three branches of government (executive, legislative, or judicial), religion, community activism, commerce, medicine, law, and/or education. These organizations are considered institutions of social control as they are responsible for directing and/or influencing the behaviors, norms, actions, and/or policies within the community, and they work on behalf of the interests and welfare of the members of the city and county. This research has the potential to benefit the community by providing insight into community perceptions on the very important issues of crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by examining the role of perceptions by civic leaders and members of institutions of social control in relation to diversity and crime. It is the hope of the researcher that the final product of this research may be used to direct public policy and community relations in rural, non-metropolitan communities when it comes to the issues of gangs and new in-migrants. As perceptions drive actions and reactions, examining these beliefs may allow for new knowledge in how to confront issues of crime and/or discrimination within the rural city.

   If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire and participate in a one-on-one interview. Your identity will be kept confidential, and the name of the town will be changed to protect the identity of the participants and the community. You will also be provided copies of the questionnaire and interview transcripts for the purpose of transparency with the participants. If I re-sent the packet, would you be willing to participate in this important study? (if yes, go to #1a. If no, go to #1b).

1a. Thank you. I will send out another packet to you immediately. Let me make sure I have your address correct before I mail it out to you. Could you please give me your address? Thank you for your time, I will get this to you as soon as possible and I look forward to having your participation in the study. (END CALL)

1b. Thank you for your time. If you should change your mind and wish to be involved in the study, you may contact me at xxxxxxxx@iastate.edu or by phone at (641) XXX-XXXX. Again, thank you for your time. (END CALL)

2. Have you had a chance to look over the packet? (If yes, go to #2a. If no, go to #2d)

2a. Are you interested in participating in the study? (If no, go to #2c)

2b. Do you have any questions for me at this time regarding the study? (ANSWER QUESTIONS). I would like to ask if you would please complete the questionnaire and sign the informed consent document and return them to me so that I may schedule our interview as soon as possible. Could you please do that for me? Thank you for your time and I look forward to receiving your packet in the mail and setting up our interview time.

2c. Thank you for your time. If you should change your mind and wish to be involved in the study, you may contact me at xxxxxxxx@iastate.edu or by phone at (641) XXX-XXXX. Again, thank you for your time. (END CALL)

2d. Let me tell you a little bit about the packet. I am a graduate student at Iowa State University. I am conducting a research project for my dissertation to complete my PhD in sociology. I am studying community perceptions concerning crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population in the rural community of Bridgetown, Iowa. You have been selected to participate in this research project because of your role as a member or leader of an institution of social control. Institutions of social control for the purpose of this project, is an organization that is affiliated with the three branches of government (executive, legislative, or judicial), religion, community activism, commerce, medicine, law, and/or education. These organizations are considered institutions of social control as they are responsible for directing and/or influencing the behaviors, norms, actions,

and/or policies within the community, and they work on behalf of the interests and welfare of the members of the city and county. This research has the potential to benefit the community by providing insight into community perceptions on the very important issues of crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by examining the role of perceptions by civic leaders and members of institutions of social control in relation to diversity and crime. It is the hope of the researcher that the final product of this research may be used to direct public policy and community relations in rural, non-metropolitan communities when it comes to the issues of gangs and new in-migrants. As perceptions drive actions and reactions, examining these beliefs may allow for new knowledge in how to confront issues of crime and/or discrimination within the rural city.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire and participate in a one-on-one interview. Your identity will be kept confidential, and the name of the town will be changed to protect the identity of the participants and the community. You will also be provided copies of the questionnaire and interview transcripts for the purpose of transparency with the participants. Would you be willing to participate in this important study? (if yes, go to #2e. If no, go to #2f).

2e. Do you have any questions for me at this time regarding the study? (ANSWER QUESTIONS). I would like to ask if you would please complete the questionnaire and sign the informed consent document and return them to me so that I may schedule our interview as soon as possible. Could you please do that for me? Thank you for your time and I look forward to receiving your packet in the mail and setting up our interview time. (END CALL)

2f. Thank you for your time. If you should change your mind and wish to be involved in the study, you may contact me at xxxxxxxx@iastate.edu or by phone at (641) XXX-XXXX. Again, thank you for your time. (END CALL)

APPENDIX F. INTERVIEW SCHEDULING PHONE SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Angela Glosser. May I please speak with (PARTICIPANT NAME HERE)? Hello, (PARTICIPANT NAME HERE). May I have a moment of your time?

You recently received, completed, and returned an informed consent document and questionnaire for my dissertation research on perceptions of crime, gangs, and immigrants within a rural community. I would like to thank you for taking the time to complete and return these items. Are you still interested in participating (If yes, continue. If no, thank them for their time)?

I am now calling to schedule a time and place to interview you further on my research topics. The interview should last one hour and no more than two. I am currently a professor at a local university, and my class schedule is (Insert schedule here). If necessary, I am able to have someone fill in for me if you are only free during those times. I would like to schedule the interview as soon as possible. What date and time would best work for you? (Write down time)

As I want to make this as easy a process as possible for you, where would you like to meet for this interview? (Write down location)

I would like to remind you that your identity and the identity of the community will be kept confidential, and you will be given a copy of the interview transcript for your perusal. I will also be bringing to the interview a copy of your informed consent document and the questionnaire for you to keep. Do you have any questions for me regarding this study, the paperwork you have submitted, or the interview process?

Ok, I have you scheduled to be interviewed at (DATE and TIME) at (LOCATION). If circumstances change and you need to reschedule, feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided to you in my introductory letter. Do you need me to give those to you again?

Thank you for your participation, and I look forward to seeing you for our interview.

APPENDIX G. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<u>INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</u>

I.   Opening

My name is Angela Glosser. I am a graduate student completing the research for my dissertation for my PhD in Sociology at Iowa State University. As a civic leader and member of an institution of social control, your input is crucial toward understanding the perspectives of people in leadership positions within Bridgetown, Iowa concerning crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population.

This interview should take about 60 to 90 minutes. I would like to ask you some questions about your background, experiences here in Bridgetown, and your perceptions on different issues surrounding crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population here in the city and county to help better understand how to deal with these issues.

I hope to use this information to provide a better understanding about concerns within the community in regard to crime, gangs, and the new in-migrant population.

Are you willing to participate in this research project? To aid me in my interview with you, I would like to audio tape our conversation. No one else, beside the head of my committee, will have access to these recordings or the transcripts. Would it be ok if I recorded this interview?

You have the right to not answer any question posed to you today. If you do not understand the question as it is phrased, do not hesitate to ask for clarification. You also have to right to end your participation in this study at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Prior to this interview, you completed and return a questionnaire that was demographic in nature. I have brought your questionnaire with me today. If you want to look it over before we begin, I can give you that opportunity. If you see anything you wish to change or add, please feel free to let me know of those changes or additions.

(Transition: Let me begin by asking some questions about where you have lived and your background. Then we're going to talk about gangs and immigrants. And I'm going to end with some questions about your profession.)

II.   Body

In your questionnaire, you stated that you have lived in Bridgetown (or River County) for _____ years.

1. Are you originally from Bridgetown, Iowa or River County? (If yes, continue to #2. If no, go to #1a).
   a. Where are you originally from?
   b. How long did you live there.
   c. Were there gangs in that community?
   d. What was the racial make-up of that community?
2. Where else have you lived besides Bridgetown, Iowa or River County? (If the subject has only lived in Bridgetown, Iowa or River County, continue to #3. If not, go to 2a). (Ask the questions 2a-2c for each place they have lived).
   a. How long did you live there?
   b. Were there gangs in that community?
   c. What was the racial make-up of that community?
3. It says that your highest level of education completed was _____. What schools did you attend to reach that degree?
   a. Did you ever witness a crime as a student on campus? (if no, go to #4. If yes, go to 3b.)
   b. What was the race and gender of the perpetrator?
   c. What was the race and gender of the victim?
   d. Do you know if gang membership played a role in the crime? If yes, ask the participant to elaborate.
4. Your profession is _____. What made you enter that profession?

(Transition: In recent years, there has been an increase in Latinos and other minority groups moving into the community. Of this population, there are some that have immigrated from other countries and some that have in-migrated from urban communities. This has been a topic of discussion within the community, and I would like to get your perspectives about the issues surrounding this topic.)

5. There are those that believe that all people who live in America should be able to speak and understand English. What do you think of this statement?

6. There are those that believe if they encounter someone who cannot speak English they automatically assume that they must not be an American citizen or are here undocumented (aka illegal alien). What do you think of this statement? Do you agree?

7. Do you think that when a community member encounters someone who appears Hispanic, they automatically assume they do not speak English or are here illegally?

8. If you encounter someone who appears Hispanic, do you ever wonder if they are a member of a gang? Elaborate if yes.

9. What is your opinion concerning the rise in the Latino population within the community?

    a. Does it benefit Bridgetown and River County? If so, how? If not, why not?

    b. Does it hurt Bridgetown and River County? If so, how? In not, why not?

10. There are those that believe that the minority in-migrants are taking away jobs from community residents. What do you think?

    a. Why do you believe some might feel that way here?

    b. Do you believe that this perception is based on the race or ethnicity of those entering the community

11. Why do you believe there has been an increase in minority members (primarily Latinos) within the community? Elaborate

12. Do you believe that racism exists in Bridgetown or River County?

    a. Why or why not?

b. Do you believe that there is any racism that exists against these new in-migrants and minority members?

c. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being no problem at all and 10 being a serious problem) how would you judge the issue of racism within our community?

d. Do you believe that people within your profession in Bridgetown or River County feel the same as you?

13. Do you believe that the majority of people in this town agree with your perspectives on minorities and the growth of the in-migrant and Latino population? Elaborate.

14. Do you believe that people in your profession agree with your perspective? Elaborate.

15. In your profession, do you have the opportunity to come into contact with the new in-migrant, Latino, or minority population? (If yes, ask #15a. If no, go to #16).

a. Please describe what types of experiences you have had and how they relate to your profession.

b. Were these experiences pleasant or unpleasant?

c. Did you form an opinion about the new in-migrant, Latino, or minority population from these encounters? What opinion did you form about them?

16. Have you ever had to use a translator or translate yourself a language other than English in your profession? (If no, go to #17. If yes, go to #16a).

a. On a scale of 1 to 10, one being easy and ten being very frustrating, how would you best describe your experience with translation?

b. What language was needed to be translated?

c. Was the person that needed translation an American citizen or documented individual, or were they here undocumented?

d. How did you feel about the situation?

17. In your personal life, have you had the opportunity to interact with the new in-migrant population? (If yes, ask #17a. If no, go to #18).

a. Please describe what types of experiences you have had.

    b. Were these experiences pleasant or unpleasant?

    c. What language was needed to be translated?

    d. Did you form an opinion about the new in-migrant population from these encounters? What opinion did you form from this experience?

18. What is your overall perception of the new in-migrant, Latino, or minority population?

    a. Do you believe that the rest of the community shares your perceptions? Elaborate

    b. Do you believe that those in your profession share your perceptions? Elaborate

19. Do you believe that River County has a higher than average crime rate for its population size? (If no, go to # 19a. If yes, go to #19c)

    a. Why do you believe it does not?

    b. Do you believe it has a lower than average crime rate for its population size?

    c. Why do you believe it does?

    d. Do you believe that the new in-migrant or Latino population has caused the higher than average crime rate

    e. Do you believe it has a higher drug problem for its population size? If yes, why? If no, why not?

    f. Do you believe law enforcement is doing its best to prevent or solve crimes? If yes, how so? If no, what could they do to improve their performance?

20. Do you believe that Bridgetown has a higher than average crime rate for its population size? (If no, go to # 20a. If yes, go to #20c)

    a. Why do you believe it does not?

    b. Do you believe it has a lower than average crime rate for its population size?

    c. Why do you believe it does?

    d. Do you believe that the new in-migrant or Latino population has caused the higher than average crime rate?

e. Do you believe it has a higher drug problem for its population size? If yes, why? If no, why not?

f. Do you believe law enforcement is doing its best to prevent or solve crimes? If yes, how so? If no, what could they do to improve their performance?

(Transition: There had been a lot of discussion about gangs in this community in the media. I would like to get your perspective on gang members and gangs and whether you believe they are actually here in town and what impact they might have upon the community.)

21. Do you believe there are gang members living in River County? Bridgetown? (if no, go to #25)

    a. What contributed to your decision? (Media, Graffiti, Personal Experience)
    b. What is your definition of a gang member?
    c. What race(s) are the gang members here in Bridgetown?
    d. Why do you believe gang members have come into this community?
    e. Do you believe all gang members are criminals?
    f. Should being in a gang constitute a criminal act?
    g. Do you believe that people in your profession agree with your assessments about gang members?
    h. Do you believe that a person's perceptions of race can color their opinions about certain minorities being affiliated with gangs?

22. Do you believe there is gang activity within River County? Bridgetown? (if no, go to #25)

    a. What kind of gang activity is taking place within River County? Bridgetown?
    b. From your knowledge, do you believe there have always been gangs in Bridgetown?
    c. Why do you believe gang activity is taking place within River County or Bridgetown now?
    d. Do you feel threatened by gangs or their activities?

e.   Are there certain areas or neighborhoods that you avoid because of a fear of gang activity?

f.   What race(s) are involved in the gang activity?

g.   What role do you believe race has played in gang activity?

h.   Do you believe that people in your profession agree with your assessment about gang activity?

23. Do you believe that River County or Bridgetown or both have a gang problem or gang crime problem that needs to be addressed? (if no, go to #25)

a.   Why do you think we have a gang problem?

b.   How do you think it should be addressed?

c.   Is it possible to end the gang problem now?

d.   Do people in your profession in this town or county agree with your assessment?

24. Do you believe that law enforcement has exaggerated or created a perception of a gang problem or activity? Why? Why not?

25. Why do you believe the media has portrayed Bridgetown as having an issue with gangs?

a.   Are their portrayals accurate? Inaccurate?

b.   How should the media deal with the issue of gangs in Bridgetown?

26. Do you think the average Bridgetownian believes that the city or county has a gang crime problem?

(Transition: As a community leader, or someone within a position to help shape the way Bridgetown and River County deals with issues of crime, gangs, and race, I would like to ask you your opinions concerning potential ways to combat crime, gangs, and racism.)

27. Do you believe there is racial tension between the native Bridgetown or River County population and the new in-migrant population?

a.   Why do you believe it exists, or why do you believe it does not? (if #28 is yes, continue on to #28b. if #28 is no, go to #30)

    b.   Have you witnessed anything that might confirm this belief? If yes, please describe your experience. If no, have you heard stories that might confirm this belief?

28. If you believe there is a racial tension between the native Bridgetown or River County population and the new in-migrant population, what role or action do you believe people in your profession could take in eliminating that tension?

    a.   What do you think you could do to eliminate that tension as a citizen in the community?

    b.   How would this eliminate racial tension?

    c.   Do you believe people in this community, both native population and in-migrant population, would be willing to do this to help eliminate racial tension? Why or why not?

29. Should diversity education be involved in preventing or eliminating racial tension?

    a.   Why? Why not?

    b.   How could people in your profession participating in this diversity education?

    c.   Would you be willing to take part in diversity education?

    d.   Do you believe people in this community, both native population and in-migrant population, would be willing to do this to help eliminate racial tension? Why or why not?

30. If you believe there is gang activity or a gang problem in the community, what role or action could people in your profession do to eliminate this problem?

    a.   What do you think you could do to eliminate that problem as a citizen in the community?

    b.   How would this eliminate gang problems?

    c.   Do you believe people in this community, both native population and in-migrant population, would be willing to do this to help eliminate gang problems? Why or why not?

31. Should diversity education be involved in preventing or eliminating the gang problem?

    a.   Why? Why not?

    b.   How could people in your profession participating in this diversity education?

    c.   Would you be willing to take part in diversity education?

    d.   Do you believe people in this community, both native population and in-migrant population, would be willing to do this to help eliminate gang problems? Why or why not?

32. Do you have any other ideas for ways to potentially eliminate or prevent racial tension or gang activity?

    a.   Please describe these methods and why and how they would be successful.

    b.   Do you believe people in your profession would be willing to help with these ideas

    c.   Do you believe people within the community would be willing to help with these ideas

III.   Additional questions for law enforcement

33. Just to confirm, do you believe we have gang members and gang activity in River County or Bridgetown, Iowa?

    a.   Is this based upon your experience as a law enforcement officer in River County or Bridgetown, Iowa?

    b.   What experiences have helped you form this opinion?

34. Is your assessment of gang members and gang activity shared by your department?

35. Does your department have a unit that deals directly with gangs? (if no, go to #35a. if yes, go to #35b)

    a.   How then does your department handle investigating gang activity or gangs? (go to #36)

    b.   What is the name of your gang unit? Official and Unofficial names

    c.   How many people are in your gang unit?

    d.   How were those people chosen to be in the gang unit? Special training, experience, etc.

    e.   How is the gang unit funded? (State or Federal funding or grants)

    f.   Is there any special training that takes place for the gang unit members?

36. How does your department identify those people you suspect are part of a gang?

    Criteria

37. When someone is labeled by your department as being involved in a gang, what do you do with that information?

    a.   Is it kept within the department or given to a state or federal agency?

    b.   Do you share the information with the Jail or other law enforcement agency in the city/county?

    c.   Can I get a copy of your gang statistics? Crime rate statistics?

    d.   Do you get information from other agencies that might identify someone as a gang member? If so, how do you treat that information?

38. Do you record graffiti in the area?

    a.   How do you do this, and would you make that data available to me?

39. Does your department differentiate between gang crimes and crimes committed by gang members? (if yes, go to question #8. If no, go to 7a)

    a.   How do you differentiate between the two?

    b.   Do you keep these stats separate?

40. If your department considers there to be gangs or gang members in your community, do you know how many gangs are represented in your community? (If no, go to #9

    a.   How many gangs are represented in your community?

    b.   How does your department determine gang representation? Is one member enough to consider the gang represented locally?

    c.   How often do you update that number?

    d.   Do you differentiate between national gangs and local "homegrown gangs" when considering these statistics?

41. Do you have local groups of native populations that consider, or call, themselves gangs?

    a.   Do you treat these groups differently than national or international gangs? Why or why not.

42. What steps is your department taking to prevent gang activity in your area?

43. What steps is your department taking to detect and catch gang activity in your area?

44. What is your department doing as far as outreach to the new in-migrant population?

    a. Has this been beneficial to your department

    b. Do you believe this has been beneficial to the community

    c. Do you believe this has been beneficial to the new in-migrant population

45. What do you believe you could do differently to prevent or detect gang activity in your area?

46. What do you believe you could do additionally to reach out to the new in-migrant population?

IV. Additional questions for educators

47. Does your school have a policy for dealing with gang activity on campus?

    a. (If yes) What is your policy regarding gang activity on campus?

    b. (If no) Why have you not instituted a policy regarding gang activity on campus?

48. Has your campus had any gang activity?

    a. What was the outcome?

49. What has your institution done to prevent gang activity on your campus?

50. What do you think you, your educators, and other members of your institution could do to prevent gang activity in the future?

V. Additional questions for politicians

51. Have you utilized the medias contention of gang activity in the community in any of your campaigning? (If yes, go to #51a. If no, go to #51c)

    a. What did you say?

    b. Do you believe it helped you in your election?

    c. Why did you not utilize the medias contention of gang activity?

    d. Did your opponents in your last election use references to gang activity in the community? (If yes, go to #51e. If no, go to #52)

    e. How did they use gang activity in their campaign?

    f. Do you believe it helped them or harmed them?

52. As a politician, how would you like to see the issue of gang activity addressed in the community?

53. As a politician, how would you like to see the issue of minorities and in-migrants addressed in the community?

VI.   Closing

I appreciate the time you took for this interview and for your input. Is there anything else you would think that might be helpful in understanding the issues of crime, gangs, and in-migration in Bridgetown or River County, Iowa? Would you like to add anything that I might have missed in our interview so that I can accurately represent your perceptions on these issues?

Thank you again for your time. I should have all the information I need from you. However, would it be alright if I contacted you again if I have any more questions? Would you prefer me to contact you by phone or by email? Do you have any questions for me? If you have any questions at a later date, please do not hesitate to contact me through the information I have provided in my letter or business card (hand card to participant). Thank you again.

APPENDIX H. LETTER OF THANKS AND TRANSCRIPTS

[DATE]

PARTICIPANT NAME
PARTICIPANT ADDRESS
PARTICIPANT ADDRESS

Dear PARTICIPANT NAME,

Thank you for your participation in the study entitled: Gangs in a Rural Town: A Narrative Analysis of Community Perceptions of Crime, Gangs, and the New In-Migrant Population. Your contribution to the study was important to the completion of the research. Hopefully this dissertation will be utilized to open up a dialogue among community members in rural communities surrounding the issues of gangs and diversity, and will shape future public policy concerning these issues.

Enclosed is a copy of the transcript of your interview. Please take the time to review the transcript for your benefit. You will notice that any mention of the town, specific community members you might have mentioned, or your identification have been redacted or renamed and CAPITALIZED. This is to ensure confidentiality and to protect you and the community. Please take the time to review the transcript for your benefit. If you have questions, concerns, or additional comments you wish to make; please feel free to contact the researcher at: xxxxxxxx@iastate.edu or by phone at (641) XXX-XXXX.

Again, thank you for your assistance and participation. It was greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Glosser
[RETURN ADDRESS]

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Go to the edge of the cliff and jump off. Build your wings on the way down." – T.K. Thorne

No individual goes through the process of completing a PhD and writing a dissertation alone. Over the past four years I have been blessed to receive support and encouragement from a number of people that have made this milestone in my life possible. Without their love and support, I could not have completed this interesting journey.

My first thanks goes to God. He is the one that has made this journey possible and placed those very special people in my life. His first greatest gift to me was my wonderful parents. To Bonnie O. and Wayne Glosser, thank you for being the greatest parents I could have. You have loved me when I have been at my worst and my best. The emphasis you placed on education has followed me throughout my life. You have done my laundry and mowed my yard so I could use that time to work on my dissertation. You have even sent food to my house because you knew I wouldn't stop working one night to cook my meal. I love you and know that I am who I am today because of you. For H. Maurice and Lois Beaver, Grandpa and Grandma, your unconditional love and support have made this journey easier. I will always miss you, Grandpa; however, I know that you are with me in my heart.

Dr. Matt DeLisi served as my major professor and advocate throughout my journey at ISU. You gave me the encouragement and support I needed to get through this process, especially when I lost my Grandpa. Thank you for all that you have done. I hope this dissertation makes you proud.

I can honestly say that I believe I had the world's greatest committee, even though it changed throughout the process. I have stated that my committee member decisions were based upon one simple concept, find the best in their fields and beg them to be on my committee. Dr. Gloria Jones-Johnson was there from beginning to end. I never took a class from Dr. Jones-Johnson, but she was instrumental in my completion of my degree. When I was ready to give up and head home, Dr. Jones-Johnson would miraculously appear and give me words of encouragement to continue. Dr. Abdi Kusow agreed to take on this challenge when a committee member retired. Dr. Kusow has been great to work with. He is always there with words of encouragement and advice, on my dissertation and career goals. I believe Dr. Monic Behnken agreed to join my committee before the last box was unpacked in her office. She has been a beacon of light and ready to contribute to helping me be successful in this endeavor. Dr. Sapp graciously stepped into the role of my last committee member. His willingness to be part of the team has made it possible to forge ahead and finish this arduous task. To Dr. Neil, Dr. Andy, and Dr. Teresa, thank you for your participation in making this dissertation possible. Every professor I encountered at ISU, in and outside the class, has been wonderful. I am thankful that I had the chance to learn from you.

I owe a special thanks to the people who have listened to me discuss my thoughts, concerns, theories, and assorted ramblings while completing my classes and dissertation. I have been blessed to find a mentor and friend in Dr. Robert Cadigan (Boston University). While I have not been his student for nearly 8 years, he listens to me and points me to new and interesting ways of viewing the world around me. I always find I take away knowledge and a desire to learn more after our conversations about all things

sociology and criminology. I can only hope that he is proud of what his student has accomplished. There is no greater friend than one who will read your dissertation chapters and offer advice, instruction, and consolation. I have found this friend in Dr. Jennifer Terry Boyenga. While we started out as coworkers at Indian Hills Community College, we have ended up close friends and confidants. Jennifer, I can say that I owe a debt of gratitude to you that I can never repay. To Drs. Jan and Cornelia Flora, thank you for being such great friends and role models. You were there when I needed advice or just a set of ears and pair of shoulders. For Beverly Bethune, Heidi Peterson, and Dr. James North, you have been great friends and a soft place to fall during this process. For Teresa Dawson, thank you for running my emergency copies at the last minute because I was too focused on my dissertation to bring my exams to you earlier. To all my friends and former coworkers at Indian Hills Community College, thank you for your support. To my landlords, Jay and Phyllis Fox, thanks for checking on me and giving me an awesome place in which to write this dissertation. Carleigh Hobson, thank you for helping keep me awake through the final stretch of this process. I have shared with you my thoughts, fears, and dreams. I have so many people to thank, but only so much space and time. If I have not mentioned you by name, it is not that I have not appreciated your support, thank you.

Finally, I would like to thank a group of people that often go overlooked in an acknowledgement page; my former and current students. Thank you for listening to me refer to my dissertation in class. Thank you for tolerating my absences and absentmindedness that occurred to complete this dissertation. Thank you for being my inspiration when I could not find that inspiration inside of me.