Preventing Community Violence: A Case Study of Metro Detroit and Interfaith Activism

Allison D. Miller

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Planning, Governance and Globalization

Timothy W. Luke, Chair
Priya Dixit, Co-chair
James Hawdon
Max O. Stephenson, Jr.

May 14th, 2020

Keywords:
Community violence, violence prevention, interfaith, social ecological model, social disorganization theory, social determinants of health

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ABSTRACT

Community violence can have lasting impacts on populations that experience it, including but not limited to, financial damages, property damage, and psychological trauma. Therefore, exploring mechanisms of violence prevention is increasingly important, especially within the context of multicultural societies. This research does just that by approaching community violence prevention from an interdisciplinary perspective, including aspects of public health, political science, criminology, and sociology. This dissertation explores the interfaith organization InterFaith Leadership Council of Metro Detroit and those in the organization's network. It considers how interfaith leaders, through activism and dialogue, can contribute to community violence prevention. By applying the social ecological model and social disorganization theory, this research considers how to prevent community violence through building social capital, collective efficacy, and community capacity. This inquiry also utilized the social determinants of health to describe how violence and violence prevention is linked to community health. This dissertation uses qualitative data, including interviews, document analysis, and field notes to explore the mechanisms by which interfaith leadership can prevent community violence, specifically gang violence and violent extremism.

GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Community violence can have lasting impacts on populations that experience it, including but not limited to, financial damages, property damage, and psychological trauma. Therefore, exploring methods of violence prevention is increasingly important. This dissertation uses qualitative data to explore community violence prevention in Metro Detroit as carried out by the InterFaith Leadership Council and its broader network. Included in this dissertation are insights from interviews, document analysis, and field notes. All this data informs the research and attempts to address how the question of how the interfaith community in Metro Detroit is working to prevent community violence. This research utilizes the social ecological model and social disorganization theory as its overarching framework for analysis. The analysis examines interfaith relationships, collective efficacy, and community capacity. This research also frames violence and violence prevention within the context of the social determinants of health in an attempt to identify the factors that affect violence and violence prevention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not have been possible without the guidance and support of several people. I first would like to thank my committee, Dr. Tim Luke, Dr. Priya Dixit, Dr. James Hawdon, and Dr. Max Stephenson. Each of you brought a different perspective to this work, and I appreciate having the different approaches visible throughout the research. Your feedback and expertise undoubtedly increased the quality of this work. I am especially grateful to Dr. Dixit, who has been my most reliable mentor and advocate for five years. She has read draft after draft, providing revision after revision always in record time. Her insight contributed to my development as a scholar and as a person. Through her, I learned most importantly the type of mentor I would like to be in the future.

I would also like to thank Dr. Yannis Stivachtis. Your support during my time at Virginia Tech has meant so much to me. I would like to believe you saw potential in me before I really believed in myself. Every opportunity you provided me with has greatly contributed to my growth as a scholar.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank Karen Nicholson and Kim Hedge. You have both been consistent, reliable pillars during my time as a graduate student with answers to the most important questions.

I would like to thank the friends that supported me. You have all contributed to the completion of this degree in some way. You may have acted as my sounding board when I needed feedback, guidance counselor when I had absolutely no idea what I was doing or felt close to quitting, or babysitter when I was in a pinch. Thank you to Margaret Appleby, Haseeb Chaudhry, Stacey Clifton, Connor Donahue, Chelsea Manning (the original), and Hannah Spennacchio-Parker.

Thank you to my partner Jason Martinez. Your support during the last two years is not something I take lightly. You have greatly eased the burden that comes with being a single parent in graduate school. You've taken on the role of pandemic home school educator, child-care provider, master chef, crisis counselor, and motivational coach. This entire process was so much more manageable with your support.

To my daughter Charlotte I depart the most gratitude. She is my motivation and my joy. Watching her growth throughout this process has been the best reward. This is all for her.

Finally, my deepest thanks go to the people at Victims of Pan Am Flight 103, Inc. who funded this research. The fact that you believe in this research means the world to me. I am deeply appreciative to have met so many of you, to have heard your stories of unbearable loss, and to have learned about your pursuit of justice. I dedicate this research to you, your families, and the ones that you lost on December 21, 1988. It is my sincere hope that research such as this can explore new methods toward understanding and preventing such extreme, devastating acts of violence.

ABBREVIATIONS

CVE	Countering violent extremism
DION	Detroit Interfaith Outreach Network
FBO	Faith based organization
HFHS	Henry Ford Health System
IFLC	InterFaith Leadership Council of Metro Detroit
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
SDT	Social disorganization theory
SEM	Social ecological model
US	United States
WISDOM	Women's Interfaith Solutions for Dialogue and Outreach in Metro Detroit

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

On September 11th, 2001 tragedy struck the United States (US) when multiple planes hit the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and a field outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania. These attacks resulted in the deaths of nearly 3,000 innocent men, women, and children and countless others in subsequent wars waged in the name of fighting terrorism. The attacks had a profound impact on U.S. domestic and foreign policy and also shaped academic research on terrorism and violent extremism significantly.

Although terrorism was not a new phenomenon, the events of September 11th (9/11) caused a spike in the number of researchers, across disciplines, who desired to further the study of the phenomenon and related topics. Despite the fact that terrorism preexisted 9/11, more work on terrorism was published in the 10 years following 9/11 than had been published in all of the years prior to the attack combined (Jackson, 2012). This dissertation sought to wed research from sociology, criminology, political science, and public health to further the understanding on violence prevention and intervention broadly, but also how it could be applicable to violent extremism. In other words, this research aimed to expand the study of violent extremism beyond its traditional borders and apply it within the broader context of violence prevention and intervention as well as violence that occurs at the community level.

Risk factors can be understood as social forces that increases the likelihood that a specific outcome will occur, while also understanding that an exposure or experience to a risk factor does not determine the given outcome for every individual (Smith, 2018). For example, having been involved with a gang or delinquent peers is an identified risk factor for engaging or attempting to engage in terrorism (Smith, 2018). However, this does not mean that every individual that has been involved in a gang will engage with terrorist activity. Risk factors for serious and violent

delinquency are typically organized into five levels: individual, family, school, peer group, and community (Howell & Egley, 2005). Risk and protective factors in each domain also function as predictors of juvenile delinquency, violence, and gang membership during different stages of social development and are affected by the timing of each sphere of influence (Howell & Egley, 2005; Loeber & Farrington, 1999; Thornberry et al., 2003). This research focused on the understudied role of faith-based organizations, specifically those involved with interfaith activism and dialogue, as a potential protective factor for violence as well its potential for violence intervention. Though my interest was in violent extremism, considering a wider context of violence, such as gang violence, will create a better understanding on how faith-based organizations and interfaith activism and dialogue can play a role in addressing community violence.

Metro Detroit as a Case Study for Faith Based Organizations and Violence Prevention

This research focused on Metro Detroit broadly, but the InterFaith Leadership Council of Metro Detroit (IFLC) and those networked with the organization specifically. Throughout this research, Metro Detroit refers to the greater metro area and includes Detroit, whereas Detroit refers to the city of Detroit as a standalone entity. Metro Detroit serves as a useful case study sit given its history of gang violence combined with a lack of significant prevalence of instances of violent extremism in the broader community. Violence throughout Metro Detroit will be discussed in a later chapter, but the city of Detroit is consistently cited as the most violent city in Michigan and one of the most violent cities in America (*The Most Dangerous Cities In The US*, n.d.). By focusing on Metro Detroit, an analysis on the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs), and particularly those involved with IFLC, will create a better understanding on the role of FBOs and interfaith dialogue in preventing community violence.

It is important to acknowledge early on that this is research is a narrow representation of the efforts to prevent violence and the interfaith community in Metro Detroit. This research is a social science analysis that takes predictions about methods of violence prevention through exploring how faith groups may engage in practices and programs that may contribute towards mitigating community violence. There is no one solution for successful community violence prevention, and as a researcher I want to acknowledge this early on. Correlation does not equal causation in this research, meaning that while interfaith activism *might* contribute to preventing community violence, it is certainly not the *only* community mechanism responsible for doing so. Even if the evidence presented in this research substantiates the importance of interfaith activism in community violence prevention, it does not exist as the only cause for preventing community violence.

In selecting Metro Detroit and IFLC as a focal point for a case study, I acknowledge the strengths in weaknesses of doing so. Metro Detroit has complicated circumstances, which begin with its history and center on the complex issues such as urban decay, violence, and gentrification it experiences today. However, focusing on IFLC came with the understanding that doing *something* is better than doing *nothing.* As a researcher, I wanted to shed light on the efforts of this small but strong organization that is comprised of valued community leaders who seek genuine change. Despite the limitations of the evidence presented in this research, I believe it exists as a precursor to further research that can demonstrate how interfaith activism works to build collective efficacy and bridging social capital while shifting communal norms surrounding violence. The informants that took part in this research are undoubtedly some of the most experienced community leaders in Metro Detroit. It became clear that they have the respect of the faith

community and the communities they engage in. Furthermore, the informants were generally positive yet grounded and realistic in expressing their mission and its attainability.

The role of religion in American life is widespread, maintains a multifaceted presence, and has the ability to influence individual and community well-being through various strategic pathways in ecological contexts (Maton & Wells, 1995; Pargament & Maton, 2000). Religious institutions are often an integral part of community infrastructure and due to this they have been involved in countless initiatives pertaining to primary violence prevention efforts. Such efforts include, but are not limited to, disease prevention (Allicock et al., 2013), suicide prevention (Bazley & Pakenham, 2019), and the prevention of bullying and youth violence (Groce, 2019).

Pargament and Maton argue that an ecological perspective provides a framework that creates an understanding of the intricate nature of religious life in the US (Pargament & Maton, 2000). They state that from ecological perspective:

> local religious institutions represent evolving organizational niches embedded in dynamic, changing environments. The nature of a specific religious institution is influenced by a multiplicity of factors, including member characteristics, member needs, community locale, the relationship to local community institutions and power structures, the cultural and religious tradition of both members and the larger denomination, and societal trends and forces. However, religious systems are not simply reactive. As they are being shaped by their broader milieu, they are also shaping it
> (Pargament & Maton, 2000, pg. 499).

Though Pargament and Maton are calling this framework an ecological perspective, it is much like a social ecological model. What matters is religion as an institution within the community, the reciprocal relationship between that institution and the broader community and social policies, and the impact this persistent set of ties has on members of religious organizations or institutions.

Maton and Wells aptly point out that religion has positive and negative potential to influence the well-being of an individual or a community (Maton & Wells, 1995). They note that some religious principles and values may lead to “inappropriate guilt and anxiety, or a limited

view of the nature of emotional problems" and that organized religion "can be used to subjugate and disempower rather than empower groups such as women and racial minorities" (Maton & Wells, 1995, pg. 189). The criticisms raised by Maton and Wells are valid and that is why this research will focus on an interfaith organization that is working with other religious institutions or organizations that aim to promote positive interactions among a diverse group of individuals in order to build community. By focusing on a prominent and active interfaith organization and its network, it is the goal of the research to alleviate or avoid the criticisms raised by Maton and Wells.

Definitions of Key Terms

There are several key terms that require a definition before proceeding. Several of the key terms have no agreed upon definition within academia and policymaking. The following section will introduce key concepts and define them as the researcher interprets them based on other academic definitions. Doing this will create a clear understanding on the topic at hand.

This research focuses on the question of how interfaith dialogue and activism in Metro Detroit acts as a prevention or intervention method to community violence, particularly gang violence and violent extremism. Community violence is a major global health concern and research surrounding this issue is vast, especially pertaining to links between exposure to community violence and child development (Cuartas & Leventhal, 2020). Community violence can be defined as "violence between community members who may or may not know each other that generally takes place in public spaces" (Tung et al., 2019, pg. 1671). Community violence is typically defined as being experienced at two levels: direct (victimization or witnessing an incident) and indirect (exposure to violent environments) (Cuartas & Leventhal, 2020; Tung et al., 2019).

There is no definition of a gang that is universally agreed upon in the US (*What Is a Gang?*, 2011). The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) states that the terms youth gang, street gang, and gang are widely used and often interchangeably (*What Is a Gang?*, 2011). The NIJ states that federal definitions of gang used by the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have five common criteria. First, a gang is defined as an association of three or more individuals and second, those individuals collectively identify through a group identity that creates an atmosphere of fear or intimidation. (*What Is a Gang?*, 2011). Third, their purpose is partially to engage in criminal activity through the use of violence to further criminal objectives and fourth, members engage in criminal activity or acts of juvenile delinquency (*What Is a Gang?*, 2011). Finally, the NIJ states that the gang may possess several of the following characteristics: members may employ rules for joining and operating with the gang, members may meet regularly, the gang may provide physical protection for its members, the gang may seek to exercise control over a particular geographic location, and the gang may have a formal or identifiable structure (*What Is a Gang?*, 2011).

Raby and Jones define a gang as "any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity" (Raby & Jones, 2016, pg. 601). Along with this sentiment, Huff defines a gang as "a well-defined group of youths between 10 and 22 years old" (Huff, 1998, pg. 1). Both definitions leave much to be desired as they systematically ignore any person involved in a gang not defined as a "youth." This approach would only be useful when studying youth gangs specifically.

When reviewing the literature and government related reports on gangs, common characteristics arise. According to Howell, common characteristics that tend to appear in definitions are 1) a formal organizational structure; 2) leadership that is identifiable; 3) territory

that is identified; 4) recurrent interaction; 5) engagement with violent behavior (*Gang Prevention: Literature Review*, 2014; Howell, 1994). For the sake of this research, these characteristics are most applicable in the continuing discussion on gangs and gang violence.

The second concept that requires a definition is violent extremism. Windisch et al. state that studies over the past several decades pertaining to violent extremism have emerged in fields such as sociology, psychology, criminology, organizational psychology, IT innovation, and political science (Windisch et al., 2017). This increased interest has also led to increased research on how to prevent violent extremism and Stephens et al. state that this rapid growth has led to a rich body of literature that is fragmented across multiple disciplines (Stephens et al., 2019). This becomes further problematized when considering Borum's argument that the concepts of radicalism (and therefore radicalization into violent extremism) and terrorism are sometimes conflated (Borum, 2011).

With the discussion of violent extremism taking place across multiple disciplines as well as various levels and offices of governments across the globe, it is no surprise that there is no universally agreed upon definition of the phenomena. For example, USAID defines violent extremism as "advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives" (Brown, 2011). The FBI defines violent extremism as "encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economic goal" (*What Is Violent Extremism?*, n.d.). These definitions are broad and can arguably apply to a wide array of individuals who may nor may not be actual violent extremists. Borum's distinction of radicalization into violent extremism as a process is useful in distinguishing the difference. He states that "most people who harbor radical ideas and violent justifications do not engage in

terrorism, just as many known terrorists…are not especially pious and have only a cursory understanding of the radical religious ideology they claim to represent" (Borum, 2011, pg. 30). Therefore, there can exist a clear difference in what USAID and the FBI states is *supporting* or *encouraging* versus actually engaging in violent behavior. This distinction is important to remember throughout the remainder of this research, especially given the focus on violence prevention.

The literature on gang violence does not seem to distinguish between nonviolent gang members and violent gang members as clearly as Borum argues in his research. Addressing this concern comprehensively is beyond the scope of this research, but it does seem intuitive to infer that not every gang member engages in violent behavior throughout the course of their membership in a gang. This could be a topic of inquiry for future research.

The field of study on violence broadly and violence prevention and intervention specifically have received a significant amount of attention across multiple disciplines. The prevalence of violence in society can partially explain the demand for such a heavy focus on violence within the literature. There are millions of men, women, and children across the US that experience physical consequences stemming from violence every year, which can range from minor injuries such as cuts and bruises to injuries that lead to death. Violence became a public health issue in 1979 when the Surgeon General's report *Healthy People: The Surgeon General's report on health promotion and disease prevention* identified violence as one of 15 priority areas of focus that would require national attention during the next decade (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009). Studies that focus on violence topically consider several broad issues, including but not limited to child maltreatment, youth violence, suicidal behavior, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, elder maltreatment, unintentional injury, and prevention and intervention programs. Furthermore,

classifying injury creates an epidemiological point of tension given that injuries can be classified by the nature of an injury, the mechanism of the injury, or by intent (Sattin & Corso, 2007).

Discussing gang violence and radicalization within the context of violence in a community is important because the study of gangs and radicalized groups have much in common (Decker & Pyrooz, 2015). This is so because gangs and radicalized extremists engage with extreme forms of violence that have the ability to create serious social and political problems that have very few effective solutions (Pyrooz et al., 2018).

The field of study surrounding preventing and countering violent extremism has grown exponentially following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11th, 2001. Research across the world and across disciplines has focused on terrorism and counterterrorism, and within that a subset of research focuses specifically on countering and preventing violent extremism (PVE and CVE). CVE takes different forms all over the world, but in the United States (US) it is mainly in the form of various programs that receive federal government funding. These programs are supposed to establish community-based approaches to counter violent extremism given that communities are viewed to be best equipped to "identify violent extremist messages and to prevent individuals from falling victim to their influence" (McCaul, 2015).

Efforts to prevent and counter various forms of violent extremism have a long-rooted history in the US. For example, in 1964 the FBI launched COINTELPRO-WHITE HATE with the goal of exposing, disrupting, and neutralizing Ku Klux Klan groups across the US (Drabble, 2008). Such efforts have shifted and changed throughout the history of the US as new forms of violent extremism have called for new approaches. Today, P/CVE exists as a policy that was implemented under the White House *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (SIP) in 2011 and was subsequently updated in 2016

(Weine et al., 2017; Mirahmadi, 2016; Selim, 2016). The 21-page document aimed to create a plan to counter violent extremism in the US, but ultimately it provided a very broad framework that lacked specific methods for doing so. The plan acknowledged that communities should play a role in collaborating with law enforcement, but it lacked specificity on how to establish such relationships (Mirahmadi, 2016). For example, the SIP states that:

> Partnerships are vital to address a range of challenges and must have as their foundation a genuine commitment on the part of law enforcement and government to address community needs and concerns, including protecting rights and public safety. In our efforts to counter violent extremism, we will rely on existing partnerships that communities have forged with Federal, State, and local government agencies (*Strategic Implementation Plan*, 2011).

Further on, the SIP states that "traditional national security or law enforcement agencies such as DHS, DOJ, and the FBI will execute many of the programs and activities outlined in the SIP" (*Strategic Implementation Plan*, 2011). It seems counterproductive to delegate such a substantial amount of power to traditional security agencies when attempting to build community-based partnerships given that research indicates a skepticism of such agencies (Eddington, 2016).

When it came to the actual people allegedly involved with radicalization, the SIP lacked guidelines addressing how law enforcement agencies should refer radicalized community members to interventions, or even how community groups should conduct interventions with those at risk of radicalization or already radicalized (Mirahmadi, 2016). This is perhaps one of the most significant flaws with the SIP as it lacked the ability to show an understanding that a community may not cooperate with programs without having an understanding of what would happen to community members involved in any form of radicalization. The SIP failed to define the key terms it was discussing, such as radicalization, violent extremism, and resilience. It did clearly state that although the SIP was to be applied to all forms of violent extremism, the priority is "preventing violent extremism and terrorism that is inspired by al-Qaida and its affiliates and adherents"

(*Strategic Implementation Plan*, 2011). This lack of objective clarity made the SIP and subsequent CVE efforts difficult to implement.

Since its implementation, there have been mixed results on the programs as an entirety, with ample concern from academics, practitioners, and community members surrounding the targeting of what can best be defined as 'suspect communities'. Breen-Smyth defines suspect communities as "a community created in and by the securitized imagination and enacted in a process of 'othering' through a range of security practices of counter-terrorism" (Breen-Smyth, 2014, p. 223). CVE programs have unfairly targeted Muslim communities throughout the US which has framed these communities as susceptible to terrorism and causes them to be treated as 'suspect communities' (Patel et al., 2018). Following September 11th in particular, the American public began to express "lingering resentment and reservations about Muslims and Arabs" (Panagopoulos, 2006, p. 613). A slippery-slope is created when attempting to implement federally funded programs and policies at a community-based level, especially when a significant amount of strategy focuses on Muslim-American communities (Bjelopera, 2014). Federal involvement also rightly causes skepticism when that involvement comes in the form of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) informants in Muslim-American communities (Eddington, 2016).

The election of Donald Trump brought a new wave of hateful rhetoric surrounding and effectively further "othering" certain demographics in the United States, particularly Muslim and Arab Americans and immigrants. Blatant Islamophobic, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant policies have been proposed and passed under the Trump administration (Butt & Khalid, 2018). These types of policies combined with openly xenophobic promises made during Trump's 2016 presidential campaign brought the skepticism and concerns of P/CVE programs and policies to the forefront of thought for many, confirming that their long-held discomfort and outrage with such

efforts were legitimate. Early in his presidency, Trump proposed changing P/CVE to focus solely on Islam with a rebranding called "Countering Islamic Extremism" or "Countering Radical Islamic Extremism" (Houry, 2017; Aziz, 2017). This hypothetical rebranding combined with the hateful rhetoric witnessed during Donald Trump's presidential campaign was enough for some nonprofits to reject federal grants they had won under the Obama administration and were scheduled to receive under the Trump administration (Wang, 2017). This rebranding ultimately did not come to fruition and the current P/CVE programs under the Trump administration remain much the same as they were under Obama, although with significant budget cuts (Hughes & Ingram, 2019).

There are many foundational aspects and concepts of P/CVE that go into developing policies or programs. The key issues that arise from the policy and program implementation relate to community-building and the role of law enforcement. As previously stated, P/CVE lacked guidelines that addressed *how* to build community and what role law enforcement should play when it comes to addressing at-risk or already radicalized community members. Further convoluting the issue of law enforcement in P/CVE is the divide between homeland security and community policing.

Policing: Homeland Security and Community Policing

Policing in the modern-day has become complicated, thoroughly debated, and oftentimes controversial, especially given the most recent era of Homeland Security based policing following the events of September 11th, 2001 (Chappell & Gibson, 2009; Oliver, 2006). There has been ongoing discussion among scholards regarding how best to implement a Homeland Security style of policing, its relevance, and its effectiveness. There has also been a question on the relationship between a community policing style approach and a Homeland Security style approach and whether the two approaches are compatible (Chappell & Gibson, 2009).

With the emergence of the new era of homeland security policing following 9/11 there were many structural changes in how to carry out policing. The era of homeland security policing would create a more centralized organizational control, especially in regard to information that came from enhanced intergovernmental relations and information sharing as well as a centralized shift to decision making (Oliver, 2006). However, the actual execution of homeland security policing entailed a decentralized and flexible approach where internal information sharing would feed centralized decision making (Oliver, 2006). Homeland security policing also involved a more concentrated effort of using resources for crime control, enforcement of criminal law, traffic law, etc. so that potential threats would be exposed and there would be more intelligence gathered (Oliver, 2006). One of the most visible changes with this era of policing was the new role of anti-terrorism by police officers who focused on various passive measures that allegedly reduce vulnerabilities of their respective communities to acts of violent extremism (Oliver, 2006). Furthermore, in addition to anti-terrorism, policing began to focus on counterterrorism, which is an offensive measure that is taken to respond to terrorist acts by processes such as preparedness training, creating emergency operation centers, large-scale crisis intervention, and special reaction team training (Oliver, 2006).

The community policing model, often called community-oriented policing (COP), preceded homeland security policing. Community policing is primarily focused on building community partnerships as a method of and to help with the process of crime prevention (MacDonald, 2002; Oliver, 2006). Community policing was created as a broad and flexible concept that was of particular relevance to culturally and religiously diverse societies (Pickering et al., 2008). Community policing programs decentralize decision making in police structures and seek to enhance police-public partnerships (MacDonald, 2002). Community policing reorders

police priorities on the basis of a broadened definition of 'police work', an increased emphasis on community cooperation and its importance to effective policing, and a reconfiguring of police work to include social objectives that exceed the traditional focus on law and order (Pickering et al., 2008). Advocates for this style of policing argued that police functions needed to be reranked to address the 'root causes' of crime, such as social disorder and inequality (Vaughn Lee, 2010).

The relationship between the recent era of homeland security policing and old era of community policing has been a source of tension both in academic research and in practice. For example, there has been a marked increase on funding for homeland security with a simultaneous reduction in funding for community policing (Chappell & Gibson, 2009; Oliver, 2006; Vaughn Lee, 2010). Another source of tension is the ongoing discussion concerning whether community policing and homeland security policing are compatible. Chappell and Gibson state that there are aspects of community policing that can be utilized in homeland security efforts: "members of the community may have knowledge of terrorist activities but without the strong relationship between the police and the community, that information will not be brought forward to the authorities" (Chappell & Gibson, 2009, p. 329).

One case study examined the Dearborn Police Department and discussed an approach of community policing called community protection functions of homeland security (Thacher, 2005). That analysis questioned the role of local police in homeland security efforts and argued that the community protection function of homeland security led officers to avoid offender search functions (or investigative efforts to locate those who have or intend to commit acts of terrorism) and instead to pursue community protection (specifically emergency response and protective security for potential targets) (Thacher, 2005). Thacher's case study concluded that local governments are "well-situation[ed] to administer community protection functions but poorly

situated to administer offender search—a conclusion that challenges the opportunistic view of the local role in homeland security" (Thacher, 2005, p. 637). This case study calls into question the role that both local government and police can have in homeland security and whether or not they are actually successful with comingling.

Regardless of the ongoing debate concerning the relationship between homeland security and community policing, one thing is clear for both approaches: social cohesion is a necessary building block of community-building that is key in preventing and countering violence (Banout & Henderson, 2018). There are several different definitions and interpretations of social cohesion throughout the literature that the literature review of this dissertation will address. However, a useful definition of social cohesion is "a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations" (Chan et al., 2006, p. 290). Community cooperation occurs when there is social cohesion, or rather social cohesion refers to the willingness of members of a community or society to cooperate with one another in order to survive and prosper (Stanley, 2003). Therefore, social cohesion is a vital aspect of community-building to increase resilience to violence in order to prevent or counter it more effectively. However, it is important to acknowledge that social cohesion among groups can also lead to a group committing violence. For example, when considering social cohesion and sexual violence among gang members, Quinn et al. state that "central group norms often supersede individual beliefs and morality and violent or misogynistic sexual attitudes, and behaviors in the gang may be reflective of collective attitudes and behaviors that increase cohesion among its members" (Quinn et al., 2019, pg. 153). In other words, social

cohesion among groups may contribute to central group norms that countenance violence as an acceptable, or even desired, behavioral trait of the individuals and groups.

There are many different aspects of a community that lead or may lead to increased levels of social cohesion. For example, research indicates that aspects of a community such as urban green space (Jennings & Bamkole, 2019), community gardening (Veen et al., 2016), and the presence of schools, libraries, and health clubs (Wickes et al., 2019) can affect the perception or levels of social cohesion within communities. Veen et al. have observed that community gardening fosters social cohesion due to the fact that during gardening, people are getting to know one another and mutual help is widespread (Veen et al., 2016). In an effort to create a typology of neighborhood social conduits, Wickes et al. concluded that *anchoring conduits* such as schools, libraries, and health clubs may influence place attachment and perceptions of the community due to the fact that the likely form some part of the broader identity (Wickes et al., 2019). They also concluded that *anchoring conduits* "encourage frequent interactions likely to lead to the development of social ties and perceptions of social cohesion and trust in neighborhoods" (Wickes et al., 2019, p. 230). Arguably, religious institutions are an *anchoring conduit* as they contribute to creating the identity of a community and provide a space for frequent interaction for their members.

Despite the high level of interest in such mechanisms to cultivate social cohesion, faith-based organizations (FBOs) remain understudied. Particularly understudied is the role of interfaith organizations and the networks in which they operate in multicultural cities in cultivating social cohesion. Banout and Henderson, in their analysis of resilience among global cities, argued that increasing religious diversity is consistently understudied within resilience literature despite the fact that increasing religious diversity is the root of many divisive culture wars and that it is implicated in spasmodic and sustained violence across the world (Banout & Henderson, 2018).

They further argue that "fostering and sustaining a society in which people can come together around shared values, hobbies, and commitments vastly improves civic peace. It lessens the likelihood that during the inevitable times of disagreement and conflict, cities and societies descend into violent clashes" (Banout & Henderson, 2018, p. 95). Relevant to this argument is the differences between bonding and bridging cohesion and their relationship to social capital. The literature review chapter of this dissertation will address this relationship.

Statement of the Problem and Conceptual Framework

When considering how to prevent or counter gang or extremism violence in a community, whether it is gang violence or extremist violence, it is useful to take an interdisciplinary approach to doing so. An interdisciplinary approach in relation to this research will consider efforts violence prevention and broadly use aspects of public health, sociology, and criminology. This will create a framework that provides a new approach to understanding and acting on violence prevention and intervention. Beginning with public health is a useful departure point given that the field has been actively involved in violence prevention and intervention since the 1970s when violence officially became a public health issue. Furthermore, public health approaches to societal issues are inherently interdisciplinary and often draws upon knowledge from medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, and criminology to name a few (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). An integrated conceptual framework for studying this issue could generate new approaches in both practice and academic research. This research sought to do just that.

When applying the field of public health to the study of violence prevention, the social ecological model (SEM) is a useful starting point. Utilizing the SEM allows researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to gain deeper insight into how the relationships between different levels of the social world influence the behaviors of the individuals in it. The SEM is used by the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization as a framework for violence prevention, and in this regard, it is also applicable to better understanding the mechanisms of countering gang violence and violent extremism (Eisenman & Flavahan, 2017). The SEM model is as follows:

(*Social and Behavioral Theories*, n.d.)

Within the SEM, the five levels of analysis are useful in establishing a better understanding of the risk and prevention factors as they broadly relate for violence. The five levels are:

Individual: biological and historical factors that increase likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator. These include age, education, income, substance use, history of abuse
Interpersonal/Relationship: close relationships that may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. These include social circles, partners, and family members
Organizational: settings where social relationships occur. These include churches, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods
Community: setting which dictates/should dictate appropriate/acceptable cultural values and norms
Public policy/Societal: broad factors which may contribute to a climate where violence is either encouraged or inhibited. These include health, educational, social, and economic policies that help to maintain or diminish inequalities between groups as well as social and/or cultural norms that either support or prohibit violence as an acceptable method of conflict resolution

Information adapted from (*Social and Behavioral Theories*, n.d.; *The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Violence Prevention*, n.d.)

The SEM is based on previous study evidence that found no single factor that explains why an individual or group is at a higher risk for interpersonal violence while other individuals or

groups are protected from it (Eisenman & Flavahan, 2017). The model posits that interpersonal violence is the result of interactions and relationships among the differing levels (Eisenman & Flavahan, 2017). It is necessary to note that though Eisenman and Flavahan utilize a SEM with four levels, this research is based on the viewpoint that the five-level approach is comprehensive. As a framework, the SEM is useful in constructing a deeper understanding on how the social world and the lived experience of individuals and the groups or communities that the belong to put them at risk for violent behavior or protects them from it.

Research on violence prevention has suggested that prevention efforts need to target multiple levels of an individual's social ecological environment in order to be successful and yield significant effects (Nation et al., 2003; Whitaker & Savage, 2014). In their study on teen dating violence, Whitaker and Savage argued that the SEM provides a guiding framework for prevention as it addresses risk factors that an individual may be exposed to by the relationship, community, and societal levels (Whitaker & Savage, 2014). Though their study focuses on teen dating violence, it has been argued that incorporating violent extremism into existing violence prevention programs will use existing resources and result in a broader population approach (Eisenman & Flavahan, 2017).

This research aligns most closely with the examining the organizational level of the SEM. IFLC is a community-based organization that operates throughout the region of Metro Detroit. While this research is not attempting to present a unified theory, it is exploring how the combining different theoretical perspectives and public health concepts can create a different approach to understanding complex social problems. This research makes an empirical contribution to the broader literature regarding community violence. As the research will indicate, it is clear that IFLC and their work builds cohesion, but I cannot claim that their work prevents community violence.

Future research can address direct linkages between community violence prevention and interfaith activism in greater detail.

Departing from the SEM and transitioning to integrating social disorganization theory (SDT) allows us to better understand how structural conditions within a community can play a significant role in the well-being of that community. Applying SDT creates a better understanding what is happening in a community in relation to crime. The structural conditions in which individuals live can influence their behavior. Scholars within the Chicago School believed that in order to understand crime (in this case violence), it was necessary to examine structural conditions that could predispose individuals towards delinquency (Hallsworth & Young, 2010). Social disorganization is a theory that explores how delinquency can be explained by a breakdown of institutional and community-based controls (Shoemaker, 2018).

Structural conditions are an important factor in determining health outcomes within a community. When there are weak institutions or a lack of community controls, delinquency can become a prevalent feature of that community. Shaw and McKay are credited with concluding that juvenile delinquency is most common in poor, inner city areas and that this delinquency decreased as one moves outward towards more affluent areas (Shaw & McKay, 1942). In their study, Shaw and McKay found that urban areas had high rates of poverty and unemployment, residential mobility, and low levels of civic participation in community organizations (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Shaw and McKay state that:

> in the areas of low rates of delinquents there is more or less uniformity, consistency, and universality of conventional values and attitudes with respect to childcare, conformity to law, and related matters; whereas in the high-rate areas systems of competing and conflicting moral values have developed. Even though in the latter situation conventional traditions and institutions are dominant, delinquency has developed as a powerful competing way of life (Shaw & McKay, 1942, pg. 170).

Shaw and McKay's work argued that a crucial dimension of SDT is the extent to which residents hold similar attitudes and values towards social control. They state that in areas of low economic status where rates of delinquency are high, there is a wide diversity in norms and standards of behavior (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Furthermore, moral values in such areas or communities range from strictly conventional to those in direct opposition to conventional values that are symbolized by family, the church, and other common institutions found throughout society (Shaw & McKay, 1942). The conflicting moral values that may exist within differentially organized communities can make it difficult for community organizations to forge consensus on the nature and possible solutions to local issues. This conflict can also have a negative influence on other institutions that aim to preserve social control. For example, Shaw and McKay argue that in areas of high delinquency, the family is affected by "conflicting systems of values and the problems of survival and conformity with which it is confronted. Family organization in high-rate areas is affected in several ways by the divergent systems of values…it may be made practically impotent by the existing interrelationships between the two systems" (Shaw & McKay, 1942, pg. 183). Thus, Shaw and McKay's work highlighted the importance of interrelationships found throughout a community and how those ties could affect the behavior of the people within them. Applying this concept to the SEM allows for a clearer picture to emerge, as individuals experience relationships at different levels of a society (individual, community, and societal).

The impact of living in a differentially organized environment on an individual and the community is important to consider. One assumption of SDT is that the individuals living in communities are not themselves disoriented, rather they are responding to the environment around them (Shoemaker, 2018). Of notable interest is that situations where community-based organizations and institutions become less effective at controlling behavior often occurs during

periods of rapid industrialization, urbanization, and when there is a flux in immigration (Shoemaker, 2018). This often occurs in urban areas, which is a central focus for issues relating to gang violence and violent extremism. Using SDT within the context of the SEM explains that each level of analysis matters in how an individual exists within society, and how a society may influence the behavior of individuals. Social disorganization is especially applicable to Metro Detroit given its sustained history of gang violence following institutional and economic collapses. However, limited research on how religious institutions can serve as a protective factor against community violence in a historically disorganized community exists. The role of religious institutions as sources of community resilience and social cohesion in a disorganized community is especially interesting given the ongoing discussion on the role religion plays in violent extremism or terrorism where religion is traditionally seen as a driver of extremism (Al-Khattar, 2003; Hoffman, 1995).

Under this approach, an emphasis is placed on the importance of a community network that is responsible for socialization of community members (Reid & Pell, 2015). The social fabric of a community is formed by networks, organizations, and social control and when these break down it contributes to social disorganization (Reid & Pell, 2015). Reid and Pell argue that social fabric structures communities in three key ways: formal social networks (such as schools or churches), participation in local organizations, and the ability to exert positive or negative social control within a community (Reid & Pell, 2015). This research is concerned with all three aspects but focuses on formal social networks as products generated by local organizations/institutions that can then act to influence or exert control over a specific community. The literature review will expand on SDT and its relationship to violence within a community. It will also discuss community

building and organizing, collective efficacy and community capacity, social capital, and social cohesion and resilience within the context of the SEM and SDT.

In conclusion, applying the SEM as a model to any community (Metro Detroit in this case) and utilizing SDT can explain the prevalence of crime and violence within that community. In other words, SEM sensitizes researchers to the need for a scalar analysis and SDT provides a theoretical foundation to explore the ways that relationships among the levels of SEM can impact behavior, particularly looking at understudied FBO organizations at the organizational level. A crucial component of the SEM is the relationships that exist between and amongst each level and applying SDT here can be a mechanism for explaining certain relationships across a community by beginning with an FBO and expanding outward towards the other levels of analysis. This research will use Metro Detroit as a case study for violence and violent extremism in a broad sense through a framework that applies the SEM as an overarching model and SDT to explain how the community developed over time. Institutional support mechanisms are a crucial aspect of SDT (Reid & Pell, 2015). This research primarily focused on the InterFaith Leadership Council of Metro Detroit (IFLC) and various people and faith-based organizations (FBOs) within that entity's social network.

Research Questions

There are several different research questions that guided this line of inquiry.

Overarching question:

1. Using Metro Detroit as a case study, how can faith-based organizations contribute to community violence prevention and intervention? Furthermore, by using an integrated approach focused on SEM and SDT, how can faith-based organizations serve as protective factors against risks associated with community violence?

Supplemental questions:

2. What does the study of gang violence and violent extremism within a broad context of crime have in common? What is different?
3. What from the field of violence prevention and intervention in relation to gangs is applicable to violent extremism?
4. Are the SEM and SDT compatible? If so, what can this integrated approach tell us about violence prevention and intervention?

Dissertation Structure

This study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter one has offered an introduction and overview of the topic of violence prevention and intervention from an interdisciplinary perspective. It has described an integrated approach to studying violence within a community by using the SEM and SDT. Chapter two will be a literature review that begins by providing an in-depth history of Metro Detroit. The literature review will then discuss IFLC as an established institution. It will also examine how and why the social determinants of health matter in this context. It will then carefully detail the following topics: the SEM and SDT, social cohesion, collective efficacy, resilience, and social capital. Chapter three will present the research methodology and design. Chapter four will detail data collection and analysis. Finally, chapter five will discuss the limitations of the research, conclusions, and areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

This literature review will address the key topics and concepts that are relevant to the dissertation. A knowledge base on these topics is essential in order to understand the research. Discussing the key terms and concepts as they are defined in the relevant academic literature will allow readers to understand how the researcher conceptualized the topics at hand. To begin, this review will address the history of Metro Detroit, countering and preventing violent extremism and gang violence as forms of community violence, and interfaith activism and dialogue. This review will also address the relationship between religion and crime. Within that context, addressing education and its role in increasing community and social cohesion to prevent violence is necessary. This chapter will elucidate the SEM and SDT as they relate to community building and organizing, social cohesion, collective efficacy, resilience, and social capital. A key point surrounding many of the terms and concepts is that there is a lack of consensus regarding a single definition for each. This makes addressing definitions from across the literature a necessary step in the research process.

An Analysis of the History and Modern-Day Metro Detroit

The history of Metro Detroit is long, complex, and complicated. It is not possible to fully address every complexity and complication in this literature review. However, it is possible to discuss key events, especially those that are most relevant to this research in terms of how they shaped the area. This review will also discuss the demographics of Metro Detroit; how they historically were and how they are today. Historical events in Metro Detroit have undoubtedly shaped the metropolis into what it is today. Reviewing key events and statistics also establishes an understanding that Metro Detroit has its own set of issues; there are many societal problems such as racial segregation, health disparities, poverty, and crime.

The key historical issues discussed below can understood through the lens of social and economic justice. First, a discussion on race relations, especially pertaining to the presence of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and issues surrounding the infamous riots of 1943 and 1963 will provide a background on how racism and racial segregation shaped Detroit. Second, a discussion on the declaration of bankruptcy in 2013 will provide the information necessary to create an understanding of where Detroit is today. Each event or issue uniquely shaped the development of Detroit into what it is today. Therefore, this section will also discuss current important issues of Detroit, such as gentrification, disparities, and the unemployment in the city. Delving into the history of Detroit, Metro Detroit, and the current climate will create a better understanding on how community violence occurs and what religious institutions, particularly IFLC, have sought to do to increase community cohesion.

The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Metro Detroit: 1920s Onward

There is limited research focusing on the rise and subsequent presence of the Ku Klux Klan in Metro Detroit. As Enders points out, historians (and other academics or journalists alike) have limited opportunities to analyze Klan organizations due to the fact that membership lists or cards rarely exist, preventing the raw data necessary for research studies (Enders, 1988). This combined with the fact that primary data collection through the avenue of qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, or participant observation are both notoriously dangerous and difficult to gain access to when the focus is an organization such as the KKK. Nevertheless, few studies carefully examining how the KKK gained power in Michigan do exist, though they focus heavily on western Michigan and intermittently on Metro Detroit (Enders, 1988; Vinyard, 2011).

In the early 1920s, Michigan had more Klansmen living across the state than any southern state and of the seventy thousand Michigan Klansmen, roughly half were located in the Detroit area (Enders, 1988). During this time, Michigan had 83 counties but had 97 chartered Klans and

an unknown number of others with provisional status (Vinyard, 2011). The basis of the platform that the KKK had adopted in Detroit was straightforward; anti-Catholicism and white superiority (Widick, 1989). The KKK was able to infiltrate several critical social and political institutions ranging from law enforcement to nearly electing a Klansman as the Mayor of Detroit in 1924 (Fehr, 2019; Vinyard, 2011). The police force in Detroit was divided about the Klan presence despite the fact that it was uniformly white because many of its members were Catholic with immigrant backgrounds (Vinyard, 2011). However, there was obvious racism and bigotry towards Black residents, especially given that shortages in law enforcement led officials to actively recruit people who were eager to migrate to the north (Vinyard, 2011). There was active support for the Klan among some, with the Wayne County jail serving as a primary example. In this jail, the chaplain and staffers were known regularly to express sympathy with the Klan (Vinyard, 2011). The Wayne County deputy sheriff was also alleged to be one of the two chief organizers of the Michigan Klan and for that he received a salary from the Klan headquarters in Atlanta (Vinyard, 2011). The deputy sheriff defended his actions by claiming that if he had connections to the Klan, it had no impact on his duties as the deputy sheriff (Vinyard, 2011).

By the mid-1920s, the KKK could be viewed as not only a mass movement, but also as a political mass movement (Fehr, 2019). In 1924, Charles Bowles became a main contender for the mayoral race in Detroit almost exclusively due to his support for the Klan (Fehr, 2019). Bowles lost the election by only thousands of votes, and the fact that the City Election Commission threw out thousands of votes on dubious grounds made it so that the true winner of the election would never be known (Fehr, 2019). This specific instance of a near mayoral win for the Klan demonstrates the not only the political capabilities the Klan had in that period, but also the level of support that they had from, at the very least, eligible voters.

It is worth noting that the danger of a Klan political movement taking over the city was so serious that *The Detroit Free Press* (DFP) published the first major demonstration of interfaith work in the history of Detroit (Begg, 2019). Leading up to the 1925 election, the DFP utilized its front page to publish warnings from key religious leaders; Rabbi Leo Franklin and Reverend Reinhold Niebuhr (Begg, 2019). Both religious leaders condemned the growing hatred being perpetuated by the KKK.

Race Riots in 1943 and 1967

Detroit has experienced two distinct and separate 'race riots', in its history; one in 1943 and one in 1967, although the riot of 1967 is more frequently discussed. Kapell states that the civil disturbances and riots that have taken place throughout the history of Detroit have been overshadowed by the riots of 1967 (Kapell, 2009). The race riots experienced in Detroit are not isolated events, but rather serve as an example of a breaking point regarding the ongoing racial inequality that was persistent in Detroit at the time. Race riots are fueled by "inequalities experienced through intricate relations of poverty and racism" (Shantz, 2007, pg. 76).

Shantz argued that the rapid social and economic changes that were experienced in the industrial centers and specifically defense centers, Detroit being one of them, during periods of wartime production often heightened existing tensions related to class and racial inequality (Shantz, 2007). The World War II (WWII) period saw several race riots and the Detroit riot of 1943 was very significant. As the home of the automotive industry, Detroit was the largest and most significant defense center during WWII, which greatly influenced the demographics and infrastructure of the city (Shantz, 2007). According to Shantz, the "great and rapid influx of people seeking work in Detroit's expanding defense economy…stretched thin the city's already inadequate social services and worsened already difficult living situations" (Shantz, 2007, pg. 77). Furthermore, while analyzing the narratives perpetuated by the press at the time that declared

Detroit to be a "City of Destiny" Kapell has written that "the 'housing problem' was *not* being met for the city's ever-growing African-American population, and…Detroit was in no way the "Number One city of America" (Kapell, 2009, pg. 219).

Population demographics were rapidly changing starting in the early 1900s in Detroit. Kapell states that the African-American population exploded in the 1920s, during and after World War I, resulting in more than 40,000 African-Americans residing in Detroit (Kapell, 2009). The population of Detroit saw another dramatic shift as a result of WWII; it was 1.6 million at the start of WWII, 150,000 of those residents being African American, and by the riots of 1943 the population had grown to two million people (Shantz, 2007). The rapid and dramatic population changes in the early 1900s-40s in Detroit resulted in the blatant neglect in addressing the African American community's housing shortage. Racism was so unconcealed that in 1940 a Detroit developer who was originally denied Federal Housing Administration insurance constructed a half-mile concrete wall that was six feet high and a foot thick, separating a Black neighborhood from the proposed development (Rothstein, 2017). The loan for the development was subsequently approved following the wall's construction (Rothstein, 2017). Furthermore, despite the fact that the housing crisis was drastically and disproportionately affecting the African American community, the first wave of 1930s Depression-era public housing was not placed in any African American neighborhood (Kapell, 2009).

The public housing project named the Sojourner Truth was completed in 1942 with the purpose of housing Black defense workers (Swan, 1971). However, when prospective tenants attempted to move into the housing project, they were met with white civilian protesters under police protection (Swan, 1971). The project adjoined a white residential area and local residents sought to pressure City Hall and Congress to make the Sojourner Truth project exclusively for

white residents (Swan, 1971). It took two months before the first Black residents were able to move into the housing project under the protection of 1,750 city and state police officers (Swan, 1971). The issue of housing and housing shortages came to a head again a year later with the anticipated completion of a 3,000 unit project called Willow Lodge (Swan, 1971). The National Housing Agency ruled against bi-racial occupancy, and though both Black and white citizens appealed to the Detroit Housing Commission to make housing available to qualified tenants on a first-come, first-served basis, then Mayor Jeffries upheld the ruling and stated that the 'racial characteristics' of Detroit neighborhoods could not be violated (Swan, 1971). What happened in relation to the Sojourner Truth and Willow Lodge housing projects in Detroit truly exemplifies the seriousness not only of the housing crisis, but also of the blatant racism afoot during a time when the US was engaged in a World War on the premise of upholding democracy based on the concept that every person was created equally.

There were other cases of social and economic injustice occurring in Detroit outside of the housing crisis. For example, there was significant racism present within the employment industry. In September 1941, Packard Motor Car Company promoted two African American workers to defense work and as a result approximately 250 white workers participated in a 45 minute sit-down strike (Swan, 1971). Another example came in May 1943 when twenty-thousand Packard Company workers walked off the job in order to protest the promotion of three African American workers to the aircraft division, resulting in nearly a week of war production lost (Swan, 1971).

Police brutality was also a serious issue in Detroit during this time. Darden and Thomas have argued that "if African Americans in Detroit between 1925 and 1945 were to name the worst racial abuses they had to encounter, without a moment's hesitation they would have said 'white police brutality'" (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 29). There are many personal and historical

narratives that provide harrowing details of instances of police brutality against the African American population in Detroit during the pre-WWII years. The vast majority of Detroit police officers were white; in 1920 only 15 of the City's 3,000 police officers were Black and despite a 25 percent population increase of Black residents in the 1930s only sixteen additional Black officers were hired (Darden & Thomas, 2013). The expectation for the Black police officers was that they were to "keep their people in line" even though the disproportionate breakdown of racial representation in the police department meant that white officers were primarily tasked with combating crime in Black neighborhoods (Darden & Thomas, 2013). The policing that occurred in Black neighborhoods resulted in indiscriminate beatings, repeated harassment, and an occasional killing of Black individuals at the hands of white police officers (Darden & Thomas, 2013). One example of the latter occurred in June 1935 when a white officer shot and killed a sixteen year old boy for allegedly shoplifting a sweater from a store (Darden & Thomas, 2013).

Understanding what was happening to Detroit's African American population creates a clear understanding on why the racial tension was building. Therefore, the 1943 riot cannot be considered a standalone event but rather the result of years of mistreatment of the African American community in Detroit. It began on Belle Isle on June 20th. Swan has suggested that "the most basic and most general cause of the 1943 riots was the discrepancy between the promises of American democracy and the realities of Black life" (Swan, 1971, pg. 77). At the time, Belle Isle was the largest recreation area in the city and it served as a popular weekend destination for working-class families (Shantz, 2007).

Scholars have offered different reasons for the cause of the actual riot. For example, Shantz has contended that it broke out when "white and Black youths, who confronted each other over an act of racist violence that had been directed against Blacks in another part of this city" (Shantz,

2007, pg. 84). On the other hand, Swan has argued that the riot began as a fight between two people, one Black and one white, on the Belle Isle Bridge around 10 p.m. and within an hour and a half inflammatory rumors had spread across the city, essentially causing the fight to escalate into a riot (Swan, 1971). Discrepancies concerning the actual flashpoint aside, the riot spread throughout the city and had devasting effects. There were more than 100,000 people on Belle Isle at the time of the outbreak of the riot, and the disruption spread quickly into the African-American and white neighborhoods located in the city of Detroit (Kapell, 2009). Swan has described the riot:

> During the early hours of Monday, large groups of Blacks began to loot and destroy white property in the Black ghetto. Looting and destruction of white property by Blacks had continued throughout the day. Whites who were caught in Black areas were beaten, stabbed and sometimes murdered. By noon white crowds had gathered on Woodward Avenue, and some of their number were hunting down and killing Blacks who ventured out from the ghetto. In the afternoon ten thousand whites mobbed the City Hall area, pulling Black victims from busses and trolleys (Swan, 1971, pg. 84).

The riot lasted more than 30 hours and resulted in more than two million dollars (in 1943) of damage, but more importantly it took the lives of 34 people (Kapell, 2009). The victims of the riot were thirty-four individuals—nine white and twenty-five Black—and 675 injured, including 75 police officers (Swan, 1971). The National Guard was called in sixteen hours after the start of the riot, and with their heavily armed presence, "order" to the city was established within hours (Kapell, 2009).

The aftermath of facing what happened during the riot and coming to an understanding of the behavior that took place was "never more than half-hearted" (Swan, 1971, pg. 85). Swan has suggested that the desire of the city to return to "business as usual" prevented the people of Detroit from confronting the reality of their situation (Swan, 1971, pg. 85). Then Governor Harry Kelly appointed a special fact-finding committee and tasked it with investigating the riots and on June

25 their first report declared that there was “no evidence of subversive activities in connection with the riot” (Swan, 1971, pg. 85). The committee released its final report in August, which concluded that militant Black leaders, the Black press, and the actions of young Black men referred to as “hoodlums” were responsible for the event (Swan, 1971, 85). After releasing the final report, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began its own investigation of the riot. The NAACP was critical of the Detroit Police Department and claimed its members were sympathetic to the white mob of rioters. They emphasized that of the twenty-five Black individuals killed, seventeen were killed by police, and furthermore that no white person was killed by police during the crisis (Swan, 1971). The lack of a transparent and just investigation coupled with the inability truly to face what had occurred meant addressing the extreme injustice taking place in Detroit was not a priority. Swan has observed that radical social reconstruction was what was needed (Swan, 1971).

What should have served as a time for economic and social justice to prevail in Detroit during a period of healing in reality became a prime historical example of when city officials neglected to take responsibility, adequately state facts, and work to address the racial tension through a lens of social justice. Failing to handle the fallout of the Detroit riot in 1943 through processes of reconciliation and radical social reconstruction was perhaps a precursor for what was to come. Racial tension, segregation, and inequality did not end following the riot and still persists today.

The inequality and racism that existed prior to the 1943 riot continued in Detroit. Several key examples highlight how the housing industry actively discriminated against Black residents in Detroit following the riot. Between 1943 and 1965, “white homeowners, real estate agents, or developers organized 192 associates to preserve racial exclusion” (Rothstein, 2017, pg. 80). In

1950 Detroit came close to another riot when the Detroit Common Council held a public meeting to propose building a cooperative housing project in Northwest Detroit—an area that was a "stronghold of white resistance" (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 4). White individuals vehemently opposed the housing project because three of the fifty-four families that would be housed there were Black and this lead to the mayor of Detroit firing a key Black community leader and stakeholder (Darden & Thomas, 2013). Tension continued to exist during 1954-1956 when the city saw and increase in white resistance groups that actively demonstrated in front of homes of Black residents who had moved into 'white' neighborhoods (Darden & Thomas, 2013).

The suburbs of Metro Detroit were also no place of refuge for African American residents during these years. Darden and Thomas have argued that "they were squeezed on all sides by resistance from hostile white neighborhoods on the borders of Black ghettos and equally hostile suburbs; and policed by what many Blacks considered to be 'a white occupying army'" (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 5). Countless examples of individual level racism exist, especially when white individuals threatened and demonstrated against Black individuals who moved into white neighborhoods. A prominent example of systemic racism emerged in Hamtramck's 1959 city master plan that called for a program of "population loss" that was understood to refer to the intentional relocation of the small number of African Americans residing there (Rothstein, 2017, pg 128). Following this program, in 1962 and with urban renewal funds, Hamtramck began demolishing the African American neighborhoods within its city limits (Rothstein, 2017). Federal funds were used to raze homes to construct I-75, resulting in the displacement of about 4,000 families of which 87 percent were African American despite the fact that HUD officials were aware that highway construction would disproportionately affect those families (Rothstein, 2017). According to Darden and Thomas, the "suburban ring of racism was constructed and maintained

by suburban officials…who promised to keep Blacks out of white suburbs (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 5).

The Detroit riot in July 1967 was the "bloodiest urban disorder and the costliest property damage in US history" (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 1). At the end of the riot forty-three people had lost their lives—thirty-three Black and ten white—and there were more than one thousand injured, 3,800 arrested, 5,000 left homeless, and more than 1,000 buildings were burnt to the ground (Darden & Thomas, 2013). The physical and economic damages that were caused by the riot came in various forms, such as numerous destroyed, looted, or burned stores, homes that were lost to fire, the loss of wages for workers, and the loss of profit for local businesses (Darden & Thomas, 2013).

The incident that occurred at the Algiers Motel in Detroit on the night of July 25 and into the morning of July 26 is undoubtedly one of the most horrific displays of police brutality in US history. The Algiers Motel was known to police prior to this incident for issues relating to prostitution, drugs, and other criminal behavior (Fine, 2007). This was day three of the riot, and reports of sniping in the area had brought Detroit police, State police, Guardsmen, and paratroopers to the site (Fine, 2007). The motel was also occupied by others, but the primary actors in the incident were six young African Americans, five members of a rock band, a Black veteran from Kentucky, and two white females (Fine, 2007). Of the law enforcement and military personnel present at the Algiers Motel, three policemen were central to the "nightmarish events that were soon to follow"; Ronald August, Robert Paille, and David Senak (Fine, 2007, pg. 273).

The exact timeline of what occurred in the Algiers Motel is complicated and debated. Detailing it is beyond the scope of this literature review, however detailed accounts can be found in *Violence in the Model City* by Sidney Fine as well as *The Algiers Motel Incident* by John Hersey

(Fine, 2007; Hersey, 1998). What is clear is that at the end of the incident, three Black men had been killed at the hands of white officers and two of them had been shot white lying or kneeling (Darden & Thomas, 2013; Sauter & Hines, 1968; Widick, 1989). Sauter and Hines summed up the incident in one haunting paragraph:

> The events of the next hour left a stain on the Detroit police department that will not be erased for decades. Pollard, Cooper and Temple—unarmed and outnumbered—were shotgunned to death. Each was shot more than once at a range of fifteen feet or less by twelve-gauge double 0 buckshot. Temple and Pollard were apparently shot while lying or kneeling. The two girls were mauled and beaten. The others were threatened and terrorized, and a few beaten up (Sauter & Hines, 1968, pg. 163).

What happened at the Algiers Motel is more than just a case of police brutality against Black men. Darden and Thomas detail the treatment of the two white females at the hotel and state that "the behavior of the patrolmen in the annex lobby was undoubtedly also affected by their reaction to white prostitutes consorting with Black males" (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 278). According to one witness police officer Senak pulled down the dress of one girl and made the other pull her dress off while verbally assaulting both females, saying things such as "we're going to get rid of all you pimps and whores" (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 278). Darden and Thomas detail accounts of severe beatings, often with rifles, and mental torment those involved had to endure. One excerpt truly highlights the depravity of the officers' actions:

> The police began to remove those against the wall, one by one, for questioning in one of the first floor rooms of the annex. The questioning was accompanied by further beatings and then in some instances by the firing of shots in the interrogation room designed to convince those still on the line that their comrades had been executed for not revealing where the gun or guns were and that they would all be killed if they did not talk (Darden & Thomas, 2013, pg. 280).

The handling of the Algiers Motel incident during the days that follow continue to highlight the corruption and racism present in the Detroit police department during that time. As a policy, police officers were strictly required to file a preliminary complaint report when they fired a

weapon, even if no individual was shot, and not one of the officers in the Algiers Motel did so (Darden & Thomas, 2013). Furthermore, no officer even reported being present at the Algiers Motel on that day (Darden & Thomas, 2013). The police department was not even made aware of the incident by any officer who participated. Indeed, Department officials were first notified of the deaths when the Wayne County Morgue phoned a detective in the Homicide Bureau (Darden & Thomas, 2013). Furthermore, the mishandling of the Algiers Motel incident meant that all three officers were able to continue working for a time and as a result, police officer Senak shot and killed another man on July 28 when he believed the man was drawing a gun, although no weapon was found on the victim (Darden & Thomas, 2013). After lengthy trials for the officers involved, none were convicted and two of the three officers were reinstated in 1971 (Darden & Thomas, 2013).

Detroit Declares Bankruptcy: How History Led to the Financial Ruin of Detroit

In July 2013, Detroit became the largest municipality to declare bankruptcy US history (Farley, 2015). The reasons for this turn were complex and not uniformly agreed upon as some suggested it came as a result of mismanagement by elected officials and others placed the blame on the racist practices of corporations, banks and realtors (Presbey, 2015). Furthermore, deciding to declare bankruptcy was viewed as a controversial act due to the fact that it was done by an appointed emergency manager instead of elected officials (Schindler, 2016). When assessing what led to the financial crisis in Detroit in 2013 requires an analysis of the historical implications that may have influenced it.

Presbey has argued that the problems facing Detroit were long in the making and highlighted institutionalized racism and the globalization of the auto industry as key contributing factors (Presbey, 2015). Schindler detailed that although the cause for the decades of decline in Detroit are multifaceted and complex, the main driver has been the collapse of the city's

manufacturing base (Schindler, 2016). Finally, Thompson identified that "it was when Detroit lost its white population, tax base, and political support that its future was doomed" (Thompson, 1999, pg. 164). It is clear that there were many reasons for Detroit's financial crisis. Institutionalized racism, the globalization of the auto industry and its subsequent collapse in Detroit, population and tax base erosion, and loss of political support are interdependent concepts. As Detroit continued with the institutionalized racism highlighted in the above sections as well as the loss of significant portions of the auto industry, white residents began leaving Detroit for suburbs where they enjoyed unfettered political control. White Detroiters also wanted to distance themselves from the Black population that they incorrectly viewed as a "lazy" as dependence on government assistance was growing (Thompson, 1999, pg. 175). Thompson aptly states that "white Detroiters who came to hold this view of Blacks in the city rarely evaluated their own complicity in the creation of economic distress in the Black community" (Thompson, 1999, pg. 175). Departing whites took a substantial portion of the tax base with them and Detroit began its steady decline into urban decay.

Historically, Detroit was widely known for its jobs within the auto industry where workers had better pay, better working hours, and safer working conditions (Presbey, 2015). This caused mass migration to the city in the early 1900s and created a substantial economic base for Detroit. Despite the fact that during the 1940s Detroit was providing some of the highest wages available to blue collar workers in the nation, the population began to shrink rapidly beginning in the 1950s (Presbey, 2015). According to Presbey, at its height Detroit had around 2 million people living in the city, but by 2014 the city's population had declined to 700,000 (Presbey, 2015).

Thompson argues that whites did not *totally* abandon Detroit as a result of the demographic changes in the 1940s, the battles over housing in the 1950s, the welfare and crime in the 1960s, or

even as a direct result of the 1967 riot (Thompson, 1999). Instead she posits that after the 1967 riot a series of battles began over "equality and control, respectively, in neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, courtrooms, and most important, vis-à-vis law enforcement" (Thompson, 1999, pg. 168). The most high profile of these battles for equality and control occurred during the 1973 mayoral election that resulted in Coleman Young winning and becoming the first African American mayor of Detroit. According to Thompson, the white residents left in Detroit took this win as the loss of their full political control and large numbers decided to withdraw from Detroit for good (Thompson, 1999). By 1980, white people had mostly abandoned the city of Detroit and this created stark demographic shifts; between 1970-1980 the percentage of Black people in Detroit rose from 43.7 to 67.1 (Thompson, 1999).

Farley has attributed the 2013 declaration of bankruptcy to the collapse of the tax base that occurred following WWII, the dysfunctional Michigan's local government structure, and the misjudgments and corruption of Detroit leaders (Farley, 2015). While acknowledging that racial issues in Detroit certainly played a role, he has pointed to several statistical trends to support this argument:

- From 1950 to 2013, the population fell by 63 percent
- From 1950 to 2013, the number of occupied homes and apartments fell by 49 percent
- From 1950 to 2013, the number of Detroit residents holding a job declined by 74 percent
- From 1947 to 2012, the number of manufacturing firms in the city fell by 88 percent
- From 1947 to 2012, the number of manufacturing workers employed in the city fell by 95 percent
- From 1947 to 2007, the number of retail stores fell by 88 percent
- From 1947 to 2007, the number of wholesale businesses fell by 88 percent (Farley, 2015, pg. 122)

These figures represent the stark reality that Detroit began to decline beginning in the mid-1900s. Furthermore, Farley highlighted the importance of the economic recession in 2008 and how

it affected Detroit. Between 2007 and 2013, per capita income in Detroit dropped from 13 percent, the number of employed residents decreased by 18 percent, and the value of residential property decreased by 47 percent (Farley, 2015). Feeley states that even seven years after the recession, there are still 10,000 occupied homes that were slated for sale in tax foreclosure auctions (Feeley, 2016).

The level of political corruption and poor choices of those who were supposed to be leading Detroit were also contributing factors to what caused Detroit to declare bankruptcy. There are many instances of events that would qualify as political corruption or misguidance on behalf of leaders during the decline of Detroit and addressing every single one is outside the scope of this research. Farley states that as leaders recognized the disappearing tax base, they initiated new taxes while simultaneously raising traditional ones which made Detroit a less appealing place to live or conduct business (Farley, 2015). Detroit was also the first municipality in Michigan to have an income tax and it also has a 5 percent tax on utilities (Farley, 2015). Furthermore, property taxes in Detroit were raised to the maximum level permitted under state law (Farley, 2015). Knowing that taxes were increasing while unemployment was increasing creates a clear picture for how difficult living in Detroit must have been financially.

There were significant issues with leadership outside the scope of taxation as well. These issues include the fact that from 1977 to 2013 federal judges superintended the water and sewage system; the Department of Justice supervised the police department for 14 years after 2000 due to civil rights violations; the federal government took control of the Housing Commission in 2005 due to mismanagement of finances; the state of Michigan controlled the public school system intermittently from 1999 to 2008 (Farley, 2015). Finally, there are several cases of where top leaders in political institutions across Detroit participated in highly illegal and corrupt actions at

the expense of the people in Detroit. Most notably, 2003-2008 Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick briefly benefited from a "Pay to Play" scheme that resulted in a 28-year prison sentence (Farley, 2015). Police Chief Phillip Hart who served under mayor Coleman Young was also convicted and sentenced to 10 years for his role in stealing city funds (Farley, 2015). Farley does state that the bankruptcy was not a direct result of this level of corruption and financial mismanagement, but these actions did contribute to the image that Detroit leadership was not capable of financial management while perpetuating the narrative that state and federal funds flowing to Detroit were often being misspent (Farley, 2015).

A historical analysis creates a clear understanding in regard to the social and political factors that contributed to the declaration of bankruptcy in 2013. There is no one single reason that scholars can agree on as causing the decline and subsequent bankruptcy of Detroit. Rather, the racially charged history of Detroit combined with the loss of the automotive industry created serious problems for Detroiters. With those problems came the further issues that really made Detroit eventually spiral out of control until its eventual failure in 2013. This history and financial failure shaped Detroit into what it has become today.

Detroit Today: Disparities and Community Violence

Today, it is common to discuss Detroit through the lens of two opposing discourses: the 'dead Detroit discourse' and the 'rebirth of Detroit' discourse. Tabb refers to the "dead Detroit discourse" in order to explain the trope that became commonplace across media sources and scholarly research suggesting that the city of Detroit had died, primarily leading up to and following the declaration of bankruptcy (Tabb, 2015, pg. 1). On the opposing side, media has also been full of stories that are celebrating the "rebirth of Detroit" in recent years, sometimes similarly referred to as the Comeback, especially as Detroit moved out of bankruptcy (Feeley, 2016; Klinefelter, 2018). As Detroit moved out of bankruptcy and began to regain financial stability,

Feeley states that the rebirth narrative is ignoring the fact that life in Detroit is still precarious for the majority of its citizens—82 percent of them being African American (Feeley, 2016).

Though most of the preceding sections focused on the migration of African Americans from the south to the northern Detroit, it is important to mention that immigration to Detroit expanded outside of the African American community. A discussion on immigration creates an understanding regarding the demographics of Metro Detroit is today. There were two ethnic waves of immigration beginning in 1896 and 1929, the first wave being European (Russia, Hungary, Italy, Finland, Bohemia, Poland, Germany, and Ireland) and the second wave being Americans from the south (Dilworth, 2011). Throughout the twentieth century, Arab immigrants maintained a presence in Detroit. However, Arab immigrants began arriving at a higher volume in the 1970s and by the 1990s there were approximately 100,000 Arab immigrants, most of them being Chaldean, Syrian, or Lebanese (Dilworth, 2011). Today, estimates of Arab immigrants in Metro Detroit range from 125,000-475,000 (Baker & Shryock, 2009). The most visible Arab communities in Metro Detroit today are Dearborn and Hamtramck. Dearborn is home to mostly Yemenis, Iraqis, and Palestinians while Hamtramck is home to a more concentrated population of Yemenis (Baker & Shryock, 2009).

There are many disparities present in Metro Detroit and Detroit today, despite the narrative that Detroit has been reborn. Many of the forces driving this narrative have to do with the 'revitalization' of areas such as Midtown and Corktown. However, the narrative that Detroit has made a complete comeback ultimately exists on the basis that it is ignoring the continued existence of disparities and community violence. Examining instances of disparities and community violence throughout Metro Detroit will accurately address the level of comeback the city has actually succeeded in obtaining.

Modern day Metro Detroit is one of the most socially divided regions in the US, with its north-western suburbs being some of the wealthiest in the nation and the urban city still struggling with the post-industrial revolution that occurred in the US (Baker & Shryock, 2009). Metro Detroit has also consistently been ranked as one of the most racially segregated metropolitans in the US, comprised of Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties (Roberts, 2017). In the 1990 census in comparing Detroit with the 77 other cities of over 200,000 residents, Detroit ranked first in poverty, had the highest percentage of households receiving some form of public assistance, and was at the bottom in regard to the median value of owner-occupied homes (Tabb, 2015). Detroit is often finds itself at the top of the list of the most dangerous cities in America (Tabb, 2015; Wu & Wareham, 2017).

There are many troubling statistics about Detroit that showcase the extreme disparities that exist between the city of Detroit and Metro Detroit as a whole. One of the most notable issues within Detroit is access to employment. Unemployment in Detroit is high, with a rate of 10% in 2015 that placed the city at twice that of the state average (Feeley, 2016). Feeley states that a map of Metro Detroit that pinpoints where jobs are reveals the troubles faced by Detroiters; seventy-seven percent of jobs are located at least 10 miles from the central business district (Feeley, 2016). One quarter of residents in Detroit do not have access to a vehicle and poor public transportation services can add hours to daily commutes of residents (Feeley, 2016). In all, only 28% of people living in Detroit city are employed within the city and of those that work in the suburbs of Metro Detroit, 42 percent of them earn less than $15,000 a year (Feeley, 2016).

There is a significant problem with gentrification in Detroit as the city has begun to steadily recover from declaring bankruptcy in 2013. Though the city spans 140 miles, new investments are concentrated downtown and as a result many African-American owned businesses have been

closed and low-income seniors have been displaced (Feeley, 2016). Feeley states that "Detroit, however, is a city of neighborhoods, so gentrification has been accomplished by starving communities where the vast majority of Detroiters live" (Feeley, 2016, pg. 301). There are former derelict buildings downtown that have recently been transformed into "elegant hotels, apartments, offices and restaurants" (Feeley, 2016, pg. 301). Feeley retells the horrific story of how a former building, The Griswold, was bought by new owners and renamed The Albert, a building now composed of 127 luxury apartments after $8 million in renovations (Feeley, 2016). At the time of purchase, the building was low-income housing in which several residents had a disability, each of whom was given a one year notice to vacate with the promise of retaining 10-20 units for low-income housing (Feeley, 2016). However, when both federal and state agencies declined the willingness to negotiate a higher voucher rate for those low income units, all residents were forced to relocate and those low-income units never came to fruition (Feeley, 2016). This story, though not entirely unique, highlights the nature of greed and corruption that has plagued Detroit throughout its history.

Crime and its relationship to community violence has been a persistent issue within Detroit for decades. This is particularly relevant when considering the historical development of organized crime, specifically gangs, in Detroit as well as the prevalence of gang violence in Detroit today. As mentioned above, the industrial boom beginning in the 1900s brought thousands of immigrants to Detroit from all over the globe, created neighborhoods that were established along ethnic lines (Bynum & Varano, 2002). The first gangs present in Detroit can be traced to the dynamics of these ethnic neighborhoods where groups of youth "banded together to 'protect' local merchants and neighborhood residents from outsiders" (Bynum & Varano, 2002, pg. 215). The most notable example is the Purple Gang, which was composed of mainly Jewish members that were active in

bootlegging during the Prohibition era beginning in 1920 (Rockaway, 2001).

During the early 1970s, there were several simultaneous social changes occurring in Detroit that created a society where the proliferation of street gangs in Detroit was possible (Bynum & Varano, 2002). The decline of the auto industry during this time contributed to the steady rise in unemployment. Around the same period of time, heroin began making its way into the drug markets throughout Detroit (Bynum & Varano, 2002). In 1971 through 1975, loosely affiliated youth groups began identifying themselves with street names (Bynum & Varano, 2002). However, this loose affiliation and organization did not last for long and in 1975 organized gangs began to operate around Detroit (Bynum & Varano, 2002). The most notable gangs of this time period was the Young Boys Incorporated (YBI) and this gang eventually ruled the heroin and cocaine industry in Detroit (Bynum & Varano, 2002).

The National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) was created by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and it provides telling data regarding gang statistics from various locations across the nation. From 1996 to 1998 officials reported that there were an average of 125 gangs operating in Detroit (Bynum & Varano, 2002). Today, the number of gangs in Detroit still reaches into the hundreds (Kiertzner, 2019). Though it is difficult to tell how violent crime in Detroit correlates with gang violence, the statistics for violent crime are serious. In 2019, Detroit had 272 homicides and over 750 nonfatal shootings (Hunter, 2020). It is worth noting that gang-related homicides account for 20-50 percent of all homicides in cities such as Detroit (Papachristos et al., 2013).

Discussing the prevalence of gang violence in Detroit is important given that it is a form of community violence. Prevalence estimates that 50 to 96 percent of children and adolescents residing in urban areas are exposed to a form of violence in their neighborhood (Fowler et al.,

2009; Stein et al., 2003). Longitudinal studies that have been previously conducted indicate that exposure to violence is constant across years, meaning that youth who are exposed at young ages are often unable to escape such violence (Fowler et al., 2009). There is an extensive body of research that examines the effects of pervasive exposure to violence, indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between violence exposure and psychological symptoms, including post-traumatic stress disorder and behavioral change (Fowler et al., 2009).

Community Violence: Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism and Gang Violence

There is no single agreed upon definition of CVE or PVE, and the terms are often used interchangeably (Pistone et al., 2019). Nasser-Eddine et al. aptly states that given the basis of CVE as government policy, the notion of it is often rarely defined or conceptualized and often stands as a phenomenon that is self-evident and taken for granted (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). Aziz points to the disagreements that take place between proponents and opponents of CVE and its strengths and weaknesses as a reason for the lack of clear definition (Aziz, 2017). In order to attempt to understand what P/CVE is, it is first necessary to review the history and development of it specific to the US.

As previously noted, P/CVE in its most current application began in 2011 under the *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* plan, which outlined an approach to CVE that aimed to make the prevention of radicalization the responsibility of local community partners rather than the responsibility of the government (Mirahmadi, 2016; Selim, 2016; Weine et al., 2017). In 2015, following the attack against the staff of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, the policy towards CVE took a dramatic shift in terms of priority and an emphasis for more action on the side of prevention became clear (Selim, 2016). Though it seemed that the election of Donald Trump might essentially derail CVE efforts given that the suggested rebranding

of the program to focus specifically on Islamist extremism received significant pushback, CVE in its current form today resembles Obama era CVE with significantly less funding (Hughes & Ingram, 2019).

CVE is defined by the Countering Violent Extremism Task Force in the Department of Homeland Security defined as "proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence" (*Countering Violent Extremism Task Force*, n.d.). Weine, borrowing from Khan, defines CVE as the use of "non-coercive means to dissuade individuals or groups from mobilizing towards violence and to mitigate recruitment, support, facilitation or engagement in ideologically motivated terrorism by non-state actors in the furtherance of political objectives" (Khan, 2015; Weine et al., 2017, p. 208). George Selim previously served as the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) first Director of the Office for Community Partnerships lead the Countering Violent Extremism Task Force. He states that "CVE counters the ideological recruitment, focusing on the root causes of many terrorist motivations, and working to prevent those causes, or provide 'off-ramps' for individuals who may have taken steps toward embracing ideologically motivated violence" (Selim, 2016, p. 95). He also notes that though there are many definitions of CVE, they typically note that CVE is a collection of noncoercive, non-kinetic, and voluntary activities that prevent and intervene in the radicalization into violence process (Selim, 2016).

Pistone et al. argue that CVE is often used to refer to counter-narratives that are aimed at identifying and deterring those who may be at risk or possibly even radicalized, while PVE refers to the foundations such as building resilience across a broad range of people (Pistone et al., 2019). Aziz furthers this argument that there are generally two definitions of CVE that influence stakeholders; the first being the soft-arm of counterterrorism and supports anti-terrorism

surveillance, prosecution, and convictions and the second definition being more rooted in the provision of long-term social services complementary to counterterrorism (Aziz, 2017).

Approaching the literature by viewing it in a series of chronologically published articles allows us to see how the definitions of preventing and countering violent extremism have changed over time. Though the definitions often have similar elements, such as a focus on countering recruitment efforts, they nonetheless also have different elements as well that tend to ultimately separate P/CVE into hard and soft-power approaches. The use of the terms interchangeably also is problematic because the meanings are conceptually different. Stephens et al. states that the recent development in the literature has been an attempt to bring together preventing and countering violent extremism as P/CVE under a single banner (Stephens et al., 2019). However, discourse surrounding PVE tends to focus on approaches outside of a security framework while subsequently criticizing the CVE approaches which have stigmatized Muslim communities (Stephens et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the literature regarding the study, policy, and implementation of P/CVE lacks cohesive agreement. A lack of an agreed upon definition for CVE has led to the assertion that PVE and CVE are interchangeable terms, though the two approaches encompass different elements of implementation and tend to represent different stances regarding how to best counter or prevent violent extremism. The research for this dissertation is through the lens of PVE.

Religion and Crime

The relationship between religion and crime is at the heart of this research, making addressing it critical. To put it in the simplest terms is to borrow from Johnson when he writes "faith-motivated individuals, faith-based organizations, and the transformative power of faith itself are proven keys in reducing crime and improving the effectiveness of our criminal justice system" (Johnson, 2011, pg. XI). Violence is legally defined as a serious crime (Henry & Bracy, 2012). In

considering community violence as a part of the broader framework of crime and criminal justice, exploring religious activities as a method of prevention is justifiable.

Addressing the relationship between religion and crime within the literature, particularly within sociology and criminology, remains controversial (Sumter et al., 2018). What emerges when reviewing the literature are two distinct schools of thought; the first being that the relationship between religion and crime is an inverse one and the second being that the relationship between religion and crime is spurious (Sumter et al., 2018). A discussion on each school of thought will help to clarify the positionality of the research conducted for this dissertation.

The first school of thought appears to be the most robustly supported and is based on over forty years of empirical evidence which suggests that religion decreases the propensity for criminal behavior (Adamczyk et al., 2017; B. Johnson & Jang, 2010; Salas-Wright et al., 2014; Sumter et al., 2018). Adamczyk et al. conducted a mixed-methods systematic review of publications between 2004 and 2014 and found that research is often broadly separated into three categories; the relationship between religion and crime, substance abuse, and faith-based programming (Adamczyk et al., 2017). According to Adamczyk et al., recent research on the relationship between religion and crime indicate that religion is associated with less crime (Adamczyk et al., 2017; Baier & Wright, 2001; Johnson et al., 2000). Furthermore, in a systematic review of the literature conducted by Johnson, he found that among the studies with the most sophisticated research designs an increased likelihood that higher levels of religiosity lead to lower levels of delinquency were established (Johnson, 2011). Baier and Wright reach a similar conclusion within their own systematic review focusing on 60 different studies; there exists a statistically significant relationship on the relationship between religiosity and deterring delinquent behavior (Baier & Wright, 2001).

The second school of thought that appears within the literature that focuses on the relationship between religion and crime argues that the relationship is either spurious or not significant. This argument originated from the seminal text "Hellfire and Delinquency" by Hirschi and Stark. Hirschi and Stark's work examined the relationship between church attendance among youth and levels of delinquency, concluding that religious commitment was not related to levels of delinquency (Hirschi & Stark, 1969). This work sparked contentious debate that is still present within the literature today. Johnson discusses how attempts to replicate the research conducted by Hirschi and Stark concluded with scholarship which both supported and refuted the findings of Hirschi and Stark (Johnson, 2011). More than a decade after Hirschi and Stark's findings and the subsequent debates that followed, Stark would return to the same line of questioning in order to address the contradictory findings within the body of research. Writing in 1982, Stark et al. conclude that "religion does seem to constrain delinquency, but only where the religious convictions of the individual are reinforced by their social environment. Where religious conviction is primarily a private matter, it loses its capacity to sanction the normative system" (Stark et al., 1982, pg. 21). Within this research, Stark et al. utilized a hypothesis based on a "moral community" in which a community integrates shared religious beliefs in order to sustain conformity (Stark et al., 1982). The prediction in this work was that religion would serve as a deterrent for delinquency in moral communities, but not in secular communities (Stark et al., 1982).

Also within the second school of thought emerges an important point to consider; much of the research affirming the first school of thoughts findings is based on Christian respondents located within the United States (Brauer et al., 2013). Brauer et al. conducted research on Muslims in Dhaka, Bangladesh and Christians (mostly Catholics) in Lviv, Ukraine. They find that

religiosity-crime relationships in such contexts are substantially diminished when controlling for exogenous variables that measured respondents sociodemographic situations and childhood social circumstances, this being especially true in Bangladesh (Brauer et al., 2013). The work by Brauer et al. calls for a more comparative approach to assessing the relationship between religion in crime through data collection that is not solely in a Western, Christian context.

Cochran et al. argues that there are two claims found within the literature that argues that the relationship between religion and crime is spurious. First, arousal theory is used to argue that individuals have varying degrees of arousal and those who require higher levels of stimulation are bored by church and aroused by delinquency (Cochran et al., 1994). On the other hand, those who require lower levels of stimulation are comforted by church and they will be less likely to exhibit delinquency (Cochran et al., 1994). The second claim is that the negative effect of religiosity on delinquency is the result of a natural by-product of social control and if other proximate measures of social control be included in such research, the impact of religiosity would be less significant (Cochran et al., 1994). Cochran et al. utilized self-report data from 1,600 high school students aged 15-21 in grades 9 through 12 throughout Oklahoma and found that there was strong support for both claims of a spurious relationship between religion and crime (Cochran et al., 1994).

In an attempt to shed more light on the ongoing debate regarding the relationship between crime and religion, Johnson and Jang undertook the most comprehensive systematic literature review to date. This review considered 272 studies on religion and crime from 1944 to 2010 and considered type of study, sampling method, number of subjects per study, population, location, religious variables included in the study, controls, and findings (B. Johnson, 2011; B. Johnson & Jang, 2010). This systematic review provides a clear indicator that there is an inverse relationship between religion and crime. Johnson found that 90 percent of the studies reported an inverse

relationship between religion and a measure of delinquency, 9 percent found no association or mixed findings regarding the relationship, and only 2 out of the 272 studies reported that religion was associated with harmful outcomes (B. Johnson, 2011; B. Johnson & Jang, 2010). Johnson states that "increasing religiosity is consistently linked with decreases in various measures of crime or delinquency" (Johnson, 2011, pg. 79). The systematic literature review conducted by Johnson and Jang provided a convincing argument that there is a link between religion and crime. However, Adamczyk et al. points out that Johnson and Jang's systematic literature review does not provide the search engines and terms used to conduct the review, inclusion criteria, or how categories were coded (Adamczyk et al., 2017).

Though it is likely that this debate will continue within the literature for some time, the research overwhelmingly indicates that there is an inverse relationship between religiosity and crime. It is worth noting that in the same study, Johnson and Jang identified two areas of research that are significantly lacking in this field. First, there is a lack of a developmental approach in studying the relationship between religion and crime across the life-course (Johnson & Jang, 2010). Johnson and Jang use the example of how little is known in regard to the long-term influence of childhood religious involvement has on adolescent and adult criminality (Johnson & Jang, 2010). The second area of research that is lacking is on the subject of resiliency and the potential links between resilient and prosocial behavior (Johnson & Jang, 2010). In providing an example, Johnson and Jang highlight the fact that we know youth who live in disorganized communities are at risk for numerous problem behaviors that include crime, but we also know youth who live in disorganized communities and participate in religious activities are going to be less likely to be involved in acts of deviance (Johnson & Jang, 2010). However, there is not

sufficient research that examines *why* religious youth might be resilient to the potential negative consequences of living in such communities (Johnson & Jang, 2010).

The question of *why* religion serves as a protective factor against crime is important to ask. Johnson states that despite the number of scholars who acknowledge this relationship, most tend to provide a vague explanation as to why this might be (Johnson, 2011). One thing Johnson points out as a potential explanation is social networks created through attending church. Johnson states that "whether through classes, retreats, small groups, mission trips, church-sponsored work, or any number of related group functions, these activities connect people to multiple networks of social support that have the potential to be meaningful" (Johnson, 2011, pg. 176). Establishing social networks can lead to the creation of social capital. Putnam states that:

> Houses of worship build and sustain more social capital – and social capital of more varied forms – than any other type of institution in America. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship provide a vibrant institutional base for civic good works and a training ground for civic entrepreneurs. Roughly speaking, nearly half of America's stock of social capital is religious or religiously affiliated…Regular religious services attenders meet many more people weekly than do non-worshippers, making religious institutions a prime forum for informal social capital building…Faith gives meaning to community service and good will, forging a spiritual connection between individual impulses and great public issues. That is, religion helps people to internalize an orientation to the public good. Because faith has such power to transform lives, faith-based programs can enjoy success where secular programs have failed (Putnam, 2001, pg. 65).

If social capital is a potential explaining factor of the relationship between religiosity and crime, that level of social capital would certainly increase within an interfaith context. The potential for social capital among interfaith partnerships is significant and requires more research. Furthermore, interfaith partnerships generate a form of bridging social capital.

Research that focuses on the relationship between religiosity and violence is limited (Nonnemaker et al., 2003). Johnson states that "youth exposure to religious and spiritual activities is a powerful inhibitor of juvenile delinquency and youth violence" (Johnson, 2011, pg. 174).

However, there is a need for additional research that assesses the role of religion in violence *prevention*. Much of the available research considers forms of violence such as intimate partner violence or teen dating violence (La Ferle & Muralidharan, 2019; Raymond et al., 2016; Renzetti et al., 2017). While this research can inform the broader topic of the relationship between religion, crime, and crime prevention, there is still a lack of focus on how religion can be a tool or mechanism for violence prevention.

Additional research explores the role religion may have in buffering the relationship between violence *exposure* and the potential consequences it may have on youth. One study found that there was limited support that intrinsic and/or institutional spirituality/religiosity acted as a buffer for the relationship between exposure to community violence and mental health problems among youth in juvenile detention facilities in São Paulo, Brazil (Huculak & McLennan, 2010). Jocson et al. explored the potential relationship between religion and spirituality among Latino adolescents exposed to community violence and discovered several meaningful links between religion/spirituality and psychological well-being after violence exposure. The study found that personal victimization and witnessing violence were associated with higher levels of PTSD and depressive symptoms among youth with low and average levels of spirituality, but not among youth with high levels of spirituality (Jocson et al., 2018). Furthermore, the study determined that witnessing violence was associated with higher levels of depressive and PTSD symptoms among those with low and average levels of religious importance at home, but not among those with high levels of religious importance at home (Jocson et al., 2018).

Additionally, another study found that a range of religious factors (such as church attendance, prayer, and self-ranked religiousness) were associated with lower levels of concurrent levels of conduct problems among youth exposed to violence (Pearce et al., 2003). However,

within this study, bivariate correlations and hierarchical regression analysis revealed that it was only the engagement in private religion (such as praying, watching religion TV shows, or reading religious based literature) that was associated with a decrease in conduct problems over time (Pearce et al., 2003). In an alternative study, Nonnemaker et al. found that public and private religiosity were protective factors for engaging in violence (Nonnemaker et al., 2003).

Other research has focused on exploring links between substance abuse, crime, and violence. One qualitative study focused on the role of religion and health among African Americans and found that there was a linkage between drug-laden street life and violence and suggested that church attendance provided structure for youth to the opposing violence found in street life (Marks et al., 2005). This study also emphasized the linkage between drug use and crime, robbery, and/or violence and included telling testimony from interview data. One participant explained that religious people [in their community] lived longer because they stayed away from things that could hurt them, and those not attending church had the risk of being shot and killed for not staying away from harmful things (Marks et al., 2005). Another participant stressed a "no-church-to-crime connection" and stated that those not attending church were committing crimes and dying at a young age (Marks et al., 2005, pg. 457).

Additional research on religion and violence prevention should expand to include other forms of community violence, such as violent extremism or gang violence, and also expand past the categorical constraint of 'youth violence'. As Johnson and Jang point out, research examining the relationship between religion and crime across the life-course is extremely limited (B. Johnson & Jang, 2010). A categorical expansion is even more important given that some research has indicated that minors who engage in non-violent or non-criminal offenses (such as starting a fight or lying) and exhibit minor antisocial behavior are more likely to participate in more serious

antisocial behavior, including violence, later in life (Lahey et al., 1999; Pearce et al., 2003). Following youth, religious and non-religious, across a life-course in relation to criminal acts could provide telling data that would further illuminate the relationship between religion and crime.

Examining the role interfaith partnerships and activism can have on violence prevention and crime reduction is necessary. Research focusing on interfaith partnerships and activism and violence prevention is virtually nonexistent. Similarly, additional research should focus on interfaith partnerships and activism in relation to social capital. Limited research has indicated that such partnerships and activism are linked to an increase or the creation of bridging social capital (MacLean et al., 2016; Todd et al., 2015). Given that it appears interfaith partnerships are capable of cultivating high levels of social capital, such research could hold promising insights into alternative approaches to violence prevention.

Education: A Mechanism for Preventing Community Violence?

As stated above, Johnson has highlighted that research often neglects explaining *why* the relationship between religion and crime is an inverse one (B. Johnson, 2011). This section will discuss the role of education and religious literacy as potential vectors for preventing community violence. IFLC has many different programs aimed at increasing religious literacy among Metro Detroit youth and adults. Addressing these programs will occur in more detail in the following chapters. It is most important to note the role of education and religious literacy in potential violence prevention efforts as an increased and accurate knowledge base of those in a community may work to increase social and community cohesion.

Institutional reports focusing on community violence in the form of gang violence or violent extremism emphasize the importance of education and partnerships in prevention efforts. For example, a joint report by the CDC and NIJ stresses the importance of community partnerships in gang prevention and states that partnerships need to be composed of youth, families, law

enforcement, public health workers, schools, faith-based organizations, and groups offering recreational programs, employment, or job-training skills (Simon et al., 2013). The same report details a Chicago violence prevention program called the CeaseFire project that relies on local faith leaders to perform in the role of "violence interrupters" in order to intervene in conflicts and promote alternative strategies to violence (Simon et al., 2013, pg. 41-42). An additional report highlighting the CeaseFire program states that the program sponsors a strong public education campaign that aims to instill messages that violence is unacceptable and in doing so the program works to change community norms in relation to violence (Howell, 2010).

In another report aimed at preventing violent extremism, the United Nations (UN) identified global, national, and regional plans of action as well as seven priority areas to take action in (*Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, 2016). One step under the 'Dialogue and Conflict Prevention' area is to "engage religious leaders to provide a platform for intra-and interfaith dialogue and discussions through which to promote tolerance and understanding between communities, and voice their rejection of violent doctrines by emphasizing the peaceful and humanitarian values inherent in their ideologies" (*Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, 2016, pg. 4). The report also states that religious leaders have a responsibility to seek such an understanding and claims that tolerance is not passive but rather it demands an active choice to reach out on a basis of mutual understanding, but especially when there is some type of disagreement (*Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, 2016). The UN plan also details the importance of education in preventing violent extremism. One step of the plan calls for implementing education programs which promote the concept of 'global citizenship' (*Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, 2016).

Literature on community violence prevention consistently indicates that education is a key aspect of the foundation required to prevent violence. Education is capable of being a powerful instrument in a community in reducing violence and improving human rights in broader society (Salmi, 2006). However, in North America the role of education in countering violent extremism has largely been ignored (Ghosh et al., 2017). Ghosh et al. state that education should be at the heart of anti-radicalization plans and that emphasis should be placed on the education of children in regard to developing life-long values, skills, and behaviors which would be conducive to economic, social, and personal security through the development of resiliency (Ghosh et al., 2017). Ghosh et al. also state that such education needs to be a long-term approach that is shaped by curriculum content and teaching methodology that will foster critical thinking skills and ethical behavioral development among students (Ghosh et al., 2017). In this type of educational setting, students should also be able to see and understand the relevance of what they are learning in order to help develop said critical thinking skills (Ghosh et al., 2017). Ghosh et al. argue that implementing this approach to education will help to alleviate the push and pull factors association with radicalization (Ghosh et al., 2017).

Greaney stated that "education is a key vehicle for forming individuals attitudes about other groups, both domestically and in other countries; education also helps shape a student's fundamental attitudes toward society" (Greaney, 2006). Furthermore, Greaney notes how history textbooks contain materials that may promote versions of history or specific views that actually have the potential to undermine social cohesion (Greaney, 2006). Hudley and Taylor argue that cultural competence is of particular importance when conducting youth violence prevention programs (Hudley & Taylor, 2006). They state that "in the increasingly multicultural US society, culturally competent violence prevention programming can facilitate interpersonal connections

across cultural divides, increasing the potential for prosocial interaction while reducing the possibility of violent conflict" (Hudley & Taylor, 2006, pg. 255). It is possible to teach foundations of cultural competence through multicultural and interfaith religious teaching, as IFLC does with both youth and adults across Metro Detroit. In this regard, the educational programs provided by IFLC do not focus specifically on violence prevention, but violence prevention may be a byproduct of such educational pursuits.

Faith Based Organizations and Interfaith Activism and Dialogue in Community Building

The study of faith-based organizations (FBOs) is intimately related to the study of religion. According to Eck, in the past several decades there have been two main challenges within the study of religion: religious extremism and religious pluralism (Eck, 2007). Religious extremism, the first great challenge, has reshaped the field with its "increasing visibility and violence of many radical religious and political-religious movements around the globe" (Eck, 2007, pg. 744). The religious extremism challenge has created immense polarization, turbulence, and instability followed by belligerent rhetoric and extreme acts of violence (Eck, 2007). The second great challenge, religious pluralism, becomes a necessary component of civil life with the increasing societal ties brought on by globalization, mass migration, and business and technology developments. Eck argues that scholars of religion likely know far more about religious extremism today than the know about the progress of religious pluralism (Eck, 2007). She further points out that the news media is more drawn to stories of violence versus cooperation and extremist voices versus moderate ones (Eck, 2007). Eck states that "we are far more aware of the forces of violence that tear communities apart than we are of those practices and movements that knit them together…we have a hard time maintaining steady focus on the ways people have maintained vibrant connections across religious, cultural, and ethnic differences" (Eck, 2007, pg. 745). If interfaith dialogue and activism are a form of religious pluralism, the research in this dissertation

can contribute to the lack of focus on religious pluralism in relation to how that can counter, prevent, or be an intervention strategy for managing or reducing community violence.

The role of FBOs and interfaith dialogue and activism in regard to community building is increasingly important given the prevalence of religion in societies around the world. A Pew Research Center study conducted in 2017 found that religiously unaffiliated people account for only 16 percent of the global population (*The Changing Global Religious Landscape*, 2017). With this statistic in mind, it is necessary to acknowledge the role that religion plays in the personal and social lives of a large percentage of the global population. Interfaith activism and dialogue is especially important given the increasing religious diversity in the US and the potential for such engagement (Todd et al., 2017). Religion, often viewed as a contributing factor in cases of violence and extremism, needs instead be as part of the solution. Religion and the associated cultural values are identified as important social factors capable of influencing governance, social practices, and beliefs around raising children (McGuire, 2008; McLeigh & Taylor, 2019). Across the globe, religious institutions are often an integral component in the communities in which they exist. They also often do much more for a community beyond the provision of moral guidance. Religious institutions often address larger community needs, such as the provision of schools, health clinics, food banks, children's activities, and support groups (McLeigh & Taylor, 2019).

There is a robust body of literature spanning disciplines that focuses on the role of FBOs in communities. Thus, defining a FBO and further situating that within an interfaith context is necessary. Clarke identified five types of FBOs:

1. *faith-based representative organizations or apex bodies* which rule on doctrinal matters, govern the faithful and represent them through engagement with the state and other actors;
2. *faith-based charitable or development organizations* which mobilize the faithful in support of the poor and other social groups, and which fund or manage programmes which tackle poverty and social exclusion;

3. *faith-based socio-political organisations* which interpret and deploy faith as a political construct, organizing and mobilizing social groups on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives or, alternatively, promote faith as a socio-cultural construct, as a means of uniting disparate social groups on the basis of faith-based cultural identities;
4. *faith-based missionary organizations* which spread key faith messages beyond the faithful, by actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it, or by supporting and engaging with other faith communities on the basis of key faith principles; and finally,
5. *faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organizations* which promote radical or militant forms of faith identity, engage in illegal practices on the basis of faith beliefs or engage in armed struggle or violent acts justified on the grounds of faith.

(Clarke, 2008, pg. 25)

Clarke acknowledged that these categories were malleable and that FBOs can belong to more than one (Clarke, 2008). With this typology in mind, Kemper and Adkins have suggested that FBOs are situated within and among organizations that can be considered "neutral" or "negative" on a faith dimension (Kemper & Adkins, 2005). On a spectrum, an organization is either neutral or negative on its relationship with faith, meaning that some organizations are neither for or against a stance on faith (neutral) or they may embrace a strong opposition to being based on any faith (negative) (Adkins et al., 2010). Kemper and Adkins also state that an FBO should be examined based on whether its engagement within a community is positive, neutral, or negative and to what extent (Kemper & Adkins, 2005).

Grassroots religious partnerships that cross faith boundaries are of particular interest in this research. Ample research on the subject of grassroots religious partnerships and the work that such partnerships can achieve exists. Todd (Todd et al., 2015) cites several case studies that explore faith based grassroots partnerships and various community building topics, such as addressing the environment (Moseley & Feldman, 2003), health disparities (Kaplan et al., 2009), or multiple issues simultaneously (McCormack, 2013). In much of the research on FBOs and their grassroots partnerships, the groups themselves become interfaith in their very nature given that they work

across religious tradition with the goals of promoting religious understanding and community change (Todd et al., 2015).

Interfaith relationships have the potential to encourage community change and subsequently contribute towards community building. Interfaith groups or organizations may share organizational resources with and among other community-based organizations that focus on local change initiatives (Todd et al., 2015). Interfaith groups may also share resources with both religious and non-religious community-based organizations which highlights their ability to contribute to local change (Todd et al., 2015). Another way that interfaith groups may contribute to community change and community building is through informal and formal networking. Interfaith groups may have the capability of providing connections to key resources for community change such as political leaders, volunteers, and local experts (Todd et al., 2015).

Interfaith dialogue is a critical component in the underpinning of what constitutes interfaith relationships as those opportunities inform and create long term trust and ties. Banchoff states that interreligious (or interfaith) dialogue refers to:

> communication and interaction with other religious traditions in a cooperative spirit. Dialogue…is not solely or even primarily about theological matters. It involves members of different religious communities speaking out of their own traditions in an effort to better understand and more effectively navigate inevitable cultural, ethical, and political differences…its primary aims are not to prevail over the other but to reduce conflict and promote understanding and cooperation across issues of common concern (Banchoff, 2012, pg. 205).

Admirand examines forms and models of interfaith dialogue: intrapersonal dialogue, the dialogue of life, social justice oriented dialogue, dialogue at the level of theological or philosophical expertise or deep practitioners, and intermonastic dialogue in which those of one faith tradition study, meditate, or reflect on the sacred practice or setting of another (Admirand, 2016, 2019). These forms and models of interfaith dialogue will determine how an interfaith

organization creates and sustains relationships within its community and also will play a significant role in the character and depth of those relationships. Admirand states that these types of dialogues or interactions may also overlap, but each one is characterized by "openness to the other, deep listening, mutual respect, and transparency" (Admirand, 2019, pg. 6).

The Social Determinants of Health

The field of public health has taken a recent turn towards studying violent extremism, often within the context of prevention/intervention with the hopes of presenting public health approaches as a more useful approach to P/CVE than the traditional securitized approach. This undertaking of studying violent extremism within the context of public health is often in conversation with gang violence prevention. When considering public health approaches to community violence prevention, there are two main avenues to explore: the social ecological model and religion as a social determinant of health.

The social determinants of health create a better understanding on what influences population health. Ratcliff defines social determinants as:

> (1) *conditions of life* people are exposed to because of the way their society is built—how we live, how we work, how we move from place to place, and what we eat and drink; and (2) the *causes or triggers of those conditions of life*—such as government policies, social structure, and the actions of powerful actors and organizations (Ratcliff, 2017, p. 11).

Though social determinants of health researched widely, their application to the field of violence prevention is under researched. Furthermore, violence is widely regarded to be a public health problem but data available that aids in creating an understanding of the links between violence and health are limited (Egerter et al., 2011). When trying to understand violence, it should be remembered that violence is not randomly distributed and the same social factors which influence health also are linked strongly to violence (Egerter et al., 2011). Exploring the social determinants of health as they link to violence is important for population health in the medical sense, but it is

also important for population health in a more holistic sense. Strong social networks and cohesion within a community might help to contribute to the construction of community norms that support healthy individual behavior while simultaneously discouraging violence (Egerter et al., 2011).

The social determinants of health can help to better understand the social advantages and disadvantages individuals and communities have. These social advantages and disadvantages are the relatively favorable or unfavorable conditions which people experience in relation to the differences in social and economic opportunities (Egerter et al., 2011). Greater social disadvantages will increase the likelihood that a person experiences violence, either directly or indirectly (Egerter et al., 2011). Violence research typically distinguishes violence experienced as *direct exposure* which is being a victim of violence, or *indirect exposure* which is personally witnessing violence, hearing about violence, or knowing a victim of violence (Egerter et al., 2011). There is a desperate need for more research that explores the links between *direct and/or indirect exposure* to violence and the histories of those who engage in violent extremism. One study that examined the histories of 119 'lone-actor terrorists' found that 37.8% percent had previously engaged in violence and 14.3% had been victims of verbal or physical assault (Gill et al., 2014). It is also established that patterns of violence across a lifecycle may recur given that victims of violence and trauma in childhood are at an increased risk of violent behavior later in life (Butchart et al., 2008; Eisenman & Flavahan, 2017). With these factors in mind, the field of public health becomes increasingly important. Butchart et al. state:

> public health approaches to prevent violence concentrate on identifying ways to keep people from committing acts of violence. Interventions may eliminate or reduce the underlying risk factors and reinforce protective factors. Prevention strategies are conceived and implemented with reference to the interaction of risk factors among people at different stages of the life cycle and in relation to causes at the levels of the individual, family, community, and society (Butchart et al., 2008, p. 16).

Within the field of criminology, religion as a variable influencing research has been referred to as a forgotten factor (B. R. Johnson et al., 2000). In framing religion as a forgotten factor, it makes sense that it is a forgotten factor outside of criminology. Research does not typically consider religion to be a social determinant of health. The research considering religion as a social determinant of health is not a new field of inquiry, but it is extremely limited. Maselko et al. state that as a social determinant of health, religion is not well understood—despite the fact that 30-40% of Americans report weekly engagement with religious communities and over 87% of the global population affiliates with some form of religious tradition (Maselko et al., 2011). There is a growing interest in the relationship between religious service attendance and protective factors, especially among socially disadvantaged groups (Maselko et al., 2011). There have been various mechanisms proposed to explain the potential relationship, including frequent religious service attendance increasing access to social networks, the encouragement of positive health behaviors, promoting coping mechanisms, and the encouragement of volunteering (Maselko et al., 2011).

There is a lack of literature examining the role of religion as a social determinant of health. Of particular interest is the role of religion as a social determinant of health and how that relates to community violence. Criminology and sociology have long questioned the relationship between religion and crime (and by default, violence as a form of crime). Utilizing such approaches would be useful to the research based in public health that is attempting to consider the role of religion as a social determinant of health. As mentioned above, much of the research has determined that religion is a protective factor for criminal behavior, suggesting that religion is a social determinant of health and relevant to other health outcomes.

Applying this concept through an interfaith approach would be of particular use in determining the role of interfaith activism and dialogue on community cohesion when asking whether it has the power to counter violence before it happens. Another area of useful inquiry would be to compare the religiosity of an individual or group with violent beliefs and behaviors. Are recent religious converts more susceptible to easy manipulation? Have they been long time religious service attendees who somehow morphed the religion into a violent ideology? Using these kinds of questions as starting points when tied to religion as a social determinant of health within a social ecological model could provide useful insights.

Community violence has also received growing recognition as a potential social determinant of health in vulnerable populations (Tung et al., 2018). Tung et al. state that persistent exposure to community violence has been associated with deleterious health effects for both mental and physical health (Tung et al., 2019). Within the literature that examines the impact of community violence on health, most pertinent to this research is the relationship between community violence and poor social cohesion (Ruijsbroek et al., 2015; Robert J. Sampson et al., 1997). Living in unsafe neighborhoods may be a key risk factor in determining levels of social isolation or loneliness (Tung et al., 2019). Along with this, exposure to community violence may be a direct physical barrier to leaving home which in turn creates a barrier to neighborhood cohesion (Tung et al., 2018). Within the context of community violence and the decreased level of social cohesion it may create, identifying ways to counter that loss of cohesion is of extreme importance.

To restate what is detailed above, the social determinants of health are the *conditions of life* and the *causes or triggers of those conditions* (Ratcliff, 2017). Social determinants of health are influenced by social capital, income inequality, residential and economic segregation,

intergenerational social mobility, and other additional factors (Kim, 2019). This section advocates that religion should also begin to play a more prevalent role when considering the social determinants of health. This is substantiated by the religion-crime inverse relationship indicating that increased religiosity is associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in crime (Johnson & Jang, 2010).

The social determinants of health matter primarily because of their relationship to neighborhood organization or disorganization and the way they interact with the different levels of the social ecological model. If we understand the social determinants of health to be the *conditions of life* and the *causes or triggers of those conditions*, then it is fair to say that place matters quite a great deal. The neighborhood or community in which an individual lives can have a considerable influence on the health outcomes for that individual. For example, Goldberg states that if an individual belongs to a group that tends to experience low socioeconomic status, that individual is also more like to experience low educational attainment, substandard or hazardous living conditions, and increased exposure to violence (Goldberg, 2017). Thus, lower socioeconomic status (SES) as a determinant of health can be a predictor for whether a person is more likely experience violence due to the association of low SES and violence exposure. This is not to say that all people with a lower SES will be violent or experience violence exposure. Also, given that the social determinants of health play an essential role in public health, their relationship to policy development is quite significant. Goldberg argued that policy related to the social determinants of health is a top priority (Goldberg, 2017). With this in mind, it is easy to understand how the social determinants of health fit in with the social ecological model, especially given that policy and society are at the top level of the social ecological model. The following section will detail concepts related to the social ecological model and social disorganization theory. The

chapter will then conclude with a discussion on how these concepts (social determinants of health, SEM, and SDT) interplay.

SEM & SDT: Related Concepts

There are several independent yet interrelated, key concepts that require definition as they relate to SEM and SDT. These are useful in explaining how SDT complements SEM in creating an integrated theoretical approached to understanding how interfaith dialogue and activism can counter, prevent, or intervene in community violence. The following sections will address community building and organizing, collective efficacy and capacity building, social capital, bridging and bonding, and social cohesion and resilience.

Community Building and Organizing

Community building and community organizing are fundamental aspects to understand in the creation of an integrated approach that incorporates SDT and SEM. Community can be understood as dynamic/multidimensional entity, or system, where relationships exist as a critical element (Walter & Hyde, 2012). Community is not only engagement with such relationships, but also it reflects on the quality of relationships (Walter & Hyde, 2012). Selznick argues that "a framework of shared beliefs, interests, and commitments unites a set of varied groups and activities. Some are central, others peripheral, but all are connected by bonds that establish a common faith or fate, a personal identity, a sense of belonging, and a supportive structure of activities and relationships. The more pathways are provided for participation in diverse ways and touching multiple interests . . . the richer is the experience of community" (Selznick, 1992, pg. 358-359). Pathways for participation in diverse ways create avenues for the formation of new relationships. Minkler and Wallerstein identify five key concepts of community organizing and community building: empowerment, critical consciousness, community capacity, issue selection, and participation and relevance (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2012).

Understanding a community from a multidimensional perspective requires involving individuals and organizations at "many levels, consciousness, actions, and context, allows us to model greater complexity. By perceiving community as a complex whole, we develop our ability to perceive and work with the actual complexity that exists" (Walter & Hyde, 2012, pg. 84). This is of particular importance when considering a community such as Metro Detroit given the complexity of race, class, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion and so on of individuals who coexist within that space. Walter and Hyde state that when considering community

> as a dynamic and emergent whole embodying varying degrees of communityness that is continually being built or created, then the building of community will be one of the central concerns and activities of community practice. Community is created or built, or not, with each of our actions; with our consciousness concerning ourselves, others, and the issues; and with our relationships, whatever the task (Walter & Hyde, 2012, pg. 84).

This research largely approaches community building and organizing from a public health perspective as it views community violence as a community health issue. PVE/CVE and gang violence are forms of community violence, thus making them a community health issue. Minkler argues that the "fraying social fabric" and feelings surrounding the lack of embeddedness in families and communities create a public health *and* social hazard, pointing to the dangers associated with a lack of feeling a sense of connection among others (Minkler, 2012). She further states that "neighborhoods and broader environments and policies that fail to nurture residents and their communities, physically, socially, and emotionally or spiritually, are a major contributor to many of the problems faced in the early twenty-first century America" (Minkler, 2012, pg. 8). Relationships existing within a community are the bridge between the five levels of the SEM: individual, intrapersonal/relationship, organizational, community, public policy/societal. Beginning with the individual level as the most foundational unit of analysis it becomes apparent that the relationships between an individual and the remaining levels have the propensity to be in

a constant state of change, especially given the complexities that exist within a given community. Relationships therefore are not concrete or solidified, but rather are tangible aspects of daily social life. Positive or negative influences of community attributes external to the individual impact the relationship.

Community organizing serves as a mechanism to create and maintain relationships while simultaneously working on community building. Community organizing "enables people to break their crippling isolation from each other, to reshape their mutual values and expectations and rediscover the possibilities of acting collaboratively" (Obama, 2012, pg. 29). Given that social isolation is an established key predictor of mortality in the US and that such isolation may be heightened in communities prone to violence (Tung et al., 2019), community organizing serves as one important potential pathway to get individuals to break that pattern of isolation. Community organizing may serve as one method to increase social cohesion and disrupt the patter of isolation present in communities experiencing community violence.

Community organizing may provide one way to merge already present strategies of neighborhood empowerment (Obama, 2012). Obama states that:

> Organizing begins with the premise that (1) the problems facing inner-city communities do not result from a lack of effective solutions, but from a lack of power to implement these solutions; (2) that the only way for communities to build long-term power is by organizing people and money around a common vision; and (3) that a viable organization can only be achieved if a broadly based indigenous leadership—and not one or two charismatic leaders— can knit together the diverse interests of their local institutions (Obama, 2012, pg. 29).

Thus, the key to organizing is local leadership who can cultivate collective power by organizing people and money to implement solutions in regard to their common vision. The exodus of financial resources, institutions, role models, and jobs within the inner city can make this challenging (Obama, 2012). However, Metro Detroit and IFLC then becomes a valuable case study

in community organizing given that the leadership spans all of Metro Detroit, making the resources, institutions, and role models from the suburbs available to the city of Detroit as well. IFLC is a vast network led by local leaders from different areas within the region, meaning they collectively bring their resources to the table and continuously work on solutions toward common goals.

Within the context of the SEM, community organizing and building come full circle and have the potential to impact the highest level: public policy. Community builders and organizers are increasingly recognizing their potential to make impact at the policy level and continue to turn towards policy approaches that may be the most effective in improving the well-being of their communities (Glover Blackwell et al., 2012). Policymaking has the potential to become a part of the process for serious community builders as they have the ability to be involved at every step; from identifying and framing issues, to interpreting data and discussing options, and to advocating for the adoption of policy changes (Glover Blackwell et al., 2012).

Collective Efficacy and Community Capacity

A discussion on collective efficacy must begin with the concept of self-efficacy. Bandura states that efficacy in dealing with the environment an individual is in is not a fixed act or as simple a matter of knowing what to do; rather it is a generative capability where cognitive, social, and behavioral skills must be organized into a course of action that will serve multiple purposes (Bandura, 1982). Therefore, self-efficacy is the judgement that one has regarding how well they can "execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (Bandura, 1982, pg. 122). A personal held belief that one is capable of dealing with prospective situations is key in community organizing and building given that individuals need to hold the belief that they are capable of handling situations in order to handle them. Ohmer, referencing Bandura, states that residents who hold strong beliefs in their abilities and capabilities will approach stressors with the

assertion that they will be able to exercise control over them, especially as it relates to problems found in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Bandura, 1989; Ohmer, 2016).

With the foundational understanding of self-efficacy, turning towards collective efficacy becomes more important within the context of community organizing and building. Collective efficacy can be conceptualized as process for both the neighborhood and an organization (Ohmer, 2016). *Neighborhood* collective efficacy can be defined as the connection between mutual trust and social cohesion with the shared expectation that intervention in support of neighborhood social control will occur (Ohmer, 2016; Robert J. Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). Trust is critical here given that residents will be less likely to take action where mistrust is persistent and neighborhood rules are unclear (Ohmer, 2016; Robert J. Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). Ohmer states that citizen participation is one potential mechanism that can facilitate neighborhood collective efficacy as it can help to develop trusting relationships where foundations for shared expectations and behaviors can be developed (Ohmer, 2016).

Organizational collective efficacy can be defined as an organization's or group's perception of its ability to problem solve and its ability to improve the life of the members involved (Ohmer, 2016; Pecukonis & Wencour, 1994). Citizen participation can also influence organizational collective efficacy by creating opportunities for organizational volunteers to develop collective problem-solving skills while working together (Ohmer, 2016). It is important to consider the crossover that can occur between *neighborhood* and *organizational* collective efficacy in terms of community building. For example, if one individual with a strong level of self-efficacy is involved with an *organization* that also has a strong level of collective efficacy, that individual may take that belief in his or herself home with them to their respective neighborhood.

It seems likely that such a person would be a viable neighborhood leader or community organizer, working to cultivate a sense of *neighborhood* collective efficacy within their own neighborhood.

Self and collective efficacy, especially contextualized within a neighborhood or organizational setting, have the ability to impact community capacity. Community capacity can best be defined as "the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social and public health problems" (Goodman et al., 1998, pg. 259). Central to the construct of community capacity are ten dimensions: participation and leadership, skills, resources, social and interorganizational networks, sense of community, understanding of community history, community power, community values, and critical reflection (Goodman, 2009; Goodman et al., 1998). In its application, community capacity occurs when community members are actively participating in community life through leadership, social networks, and access to power (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2012). Therefore, self and collective efficacy are critical components to the foundation of community capacity.

One additional way to create community capacity is through community involvement in policymaking. Blackwell et al. state that "community involvement in the policymaking process can enhance community capacity building and contribute to a more engaged populace" (Glover Blackwell et al., 2012, pg. 382). Again, policymaking comes to the forefront within the context of its positionality in the SEM. Engaging a populace through involvement in policymaking is likely also going to increase levels of self and collective efficacy. This example highlights the importance of relationships as they move through the levels of the SEM; beginning with local individuals who have high self-efficacy and involve their community in the policymaking process which in turn increases collective efficacy.

Social Capital

Social capital is sometimes characterized as being similar to the concept of collective efficacy (Saegert & Winkel, 2004). It is worth noting that though the concepts may overlap, they do not represent the same meaning and therefore are not interchangeable. Rather, the concepts may complement one another in the sense that the social capital an individual or group has may influence self or collective efficacy. Social capital is also a concept that has a lack of consensus regarding its definition, especially within the field of public health (Kawachi et al., 2008).

Kawachi et al. proposes viewing social capital through two distinct schools of thought or conceptions. The first is referred to as 'the social cohesion' school of social capital (Kawachi et al., 2008). Under this conceptualization, social capital is conceptualized as the resources—such as trust, norms, exercise of sanctions—which are available to members of a social group (Kawachi et al., 2008). A social group can be embodied in many different forms, such as a close knit community or voluntary organization (Kawachi et al., 2008).

The second conceptualization is referred to as the "network" theory of social capital, where social capital is defined by resources such as social support, information channels, and social credentials (Kawachi et al., 2008). This approach, in contrast to the social cohesion approach, views social capital as both an attribute of individuals and the collective group (Kawachi et al., 2008). It is this point of whether social capital can be applied to an individual as well as a group that causes one of the main points of tension across the literature when defining the term (Kawachi et al., 2008). For the sake of this research, social capital applicable to an individual as well as a group. Furthermore, contextualizing social capital within a school of social cohesion further muddies the understanding of the term due to the fact that social capital and social cohesion and distinctively different concepts. Much like collective efficacy, social capital can have similar

impact and influence on the level of social cohesion found within a given community, group, organization, and so on.

With this distinction in mind, it is clear that social capital is a multidimensional concept. Within this dissertation, social capital is understood as a distinct concept which is grounded in trust, civic involvement, social engagement, and reciprocity or exchange (Goodman, 2009; Putnam, 1995). Barnes-Mauthe et al. also include norms and networks of interpersonal relationships into their conceptualization of social capital (Barnes-Mauthe et al., 2015). Social capital can be viewed as an "inherent property" to social relationships, which reside between individuals and communities (Barnes-Mauthe et al., 2015; Lakon et al., 2008).

Within the literature regarding social capital, there is agreement on the importance of *bridging* and *bonding* social capital. *Linking* social capital also appears throughout the literature though it appears to be slightly less common. Bridging social capital refers to the "ties among people with diverse backgrounds, where ties are weaker and are reflected by group membership in organizations" (Daoud et al., 2017, pg. 648). Bridging is also referred to as the building of new relationships (Walter & Hyde, 2012) or as the resources that are accessed within social groups composed of similar members through connections and relationships that cross class, race/ethnicity, and other forms of social identity (Kawachi et al., 2008). Linking social capital refers to the relationships and participation in group activities, institutions, or with people of authority in order to help communities gain leverage or access to important resources (Daoud et al., 2017). Bridging and linking social capital represent a similar concept which is the importance of relationships that cross boundaries of social identities. Bonding social capital has been defined as resources that are accessed within social groups with a membership body of individuals who are alike or as strengthening existing relationships (Kawachi et al., 2008; Walter & Hyde, 2012).

Within the context of community violence, intensive bonding without simultaneous bridging can be the cause of intense violence. Since bonding capital is referring to the relationships of individuals or group members who are similar (racially, ethnically, etc.) then the bridging is necessary in order to establish relationships outside of that group. Interfaith dialogue and activism are one way that bridging can occur within a diverse or multicultural community.

Social Cohesion and Resilience

Social cohesion has several different definitions and interpretations throughout the literature. Friedkin states that the literature on social cohesion has become difficult to reconcile due to the increased interest on the topic and the proliferation of definitions (Friedkin, 2004). Chan et al. point out that despite the concepts ubiquity, it remains an ill-defined term (Chan et al., 2006). The definitional issue becomes even more perplexing when considering that there are generally two main approaches to understanding social cohesion: one that is academic and rooted in sociology and social psychology and another that is developed by policymakers and policy-oriented analysts (Bottoni, 2018; Chan et al., 2006). An important limitation with the academic approach is that it has not developed many methods of operationalizing social cohesion into something that can be measured (Bottoni, 2018). A limitation with the policy driven approach is that social cohesion has a tendency to be contingent only on issues a government must deal with, making it a problem-driven approach (Bottoni, 2018; Chan et al., 2006). These two delineations of conceptualizing social cohesion convoluted in research such as mine, or rather research that is academic in response to the problem-driven policy of P/CVE.

There have been several attempts to bring clarity to the issue of defining social cohesion. Thoroughly assessing the numerous journal articles that are literature reviews on the concept of social cohesion is beyond the scope of this literature review, but utilizing their final definitions is useful. Chan et al., after reviewing definitions in academic literature and the world of

policymaking, conclude that social cohesion is "a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations" (Chan et al., 2006, p. 290).

Schiefer and van der Noll, based on an analysis of both academic and policy-oriented publications, identified that there were six core definitions of social cohesion in the literature: social relations, identification, orientation towards the common good, shared values, equality/inequality, and subjective/objective qualities of life (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). They further argued that (in)equality, quality of life, and shared values represented antecedents and consequences of social cohesion versus constitutive elements (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). They go on to further identify three essential features of social cohesion: (1) quality of social relations (2) identifying with the social entity and (3) orientation towards the common good (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). Most importantly from their literature perhaps is their conclusion that in the majority of approaches to social cohesion within the literature there is more overlap in terms of the definitions and conceptualizations than most literature reviews assume (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017).

There does exist concern over the methodology used to create socially cohesive societies. Keddie et al. make a compelling argument when they state that:

> social cohesion as a concept …tends to propose intangibles such as a sense of belonging and acceptance. Such intangibles can…act as vehicles of exclusion rather than cohesion. Efforts to create a climate of belonging and acceptance through, for example, cohering multiple or diverse groups around a common notion of the 'social good' can be exclusionary and oppressive in failing to adequately recognize cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity (Keddie et al., 2019, p. 3).

This apprehension towards using intangibles such as a sense of belonging and acceptance to create social cohesion are important when devising programs and policies, especially in

multicultural settings. Though Keddie et al. are writing within the context of Australian policy and program development, their argument is also transferable to the US. They discuss how policies developed to drive social cohesion often masks "white supremacist order that fosters the illusion of inclusiveness without substantially disrupting racialized patterns of power and privilege" (Keddie et al., 2019, p. 3). This criticism is accurate and reflects the fact that working towards increasing social cohesion needs to occur at a local, community-based level with diverse partners present at the table giving direction. Keddie et al. discuss multi-faith education and point to it as a key policy and/or program that can be useful. They argue that:

> A multi-faith education that seeks to broaden critical and reflective understandings of different religious and non-religious views can, it is argued, counter some of the ignorance that leads to racialized and religious-based denigration, disrespect and demonization that 'greatly undermines social cohesion and places our common security at risk' (Keddie et al., 2019, p. 4).

This argument supports the fact that interfaith (or multi-faith) education is a critical component of increasing social cohesion.

Another definition of social cohesion comes from Dragolov et al., where they define it as "the quality of social cooperation and togetherness of a collective, defined in geopolitical terms, that is expressed in the attitudes and behaviors of its members" (Dragolov et al., 2016, p. 6). Their work looks at social cohesion in terms of the European Union and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, making the term *geopolitical* highly relevant to their overall analysis and conceptualization of the term. This approach represents how social cohesion through the lens of international relations, which is much broader than that of this dissertation, but nevertheless it highlights the level of applicability the term has. Dragolov et al. also state that "a cohesive society is characterized by resilient social relations, a positive emotional

connectedness between its members and the community, and a pronounced focus on the common good" (Dragolov et al., 2016, p. 6).

This argument by Dragolov et al. brings about the importance of resilience, which also presents itself often as a necessary factor within the P/CVE literature. Aall and Crocker argue that:

> conflict resilience—the ability to resist or recover from conflict—supports social cohesion by preserving institutions, relationships and patterns of behavior that form the foundation of cohesion. The relationship is reciprocal: the presence of social cohesion in a community or society also reinforces resilience by encouraging relationships and areas of cooperation across potential fracture lines. Building resilience can build social cohesion which in turn helps to strengthen the ability to resist and recover from conflict (Aall & Crocker, 2019, p. 70).

This viewpoint of resilience and social cohesion creates the foundation for understanding how the two concepts work together; building resilience builds social cohesion which contributes to the ability to resist conflict, which in this case is community violence.

The Interplay Between the Social Determinants of Health, the Social Ecological Model, and Social Disorganization Theory

There is limited research exploring the potential relationship between the social determinants of health (SDH), social ecological model (SEM), and social disorganization theory (SDT). However, in an increasingly interconnected and complex world, interdisciplinary research is necessary in order to address complex social problems. A justification for an interdisciplinary approach is next, followed by an explanation of how SDH, SEM, and SDT interact with one another. Marmot states that "research on the social, economic, cultural, and psychological determinants of health and the biological pathways by which they operate has to be interdisciplinary" (Marmot, 2008, pg. 292). This statement is important because it acknowledges not only the importance of interdisciplinary approaches, but also the fact that the determinants of health are social, economic, cultural, and psychological.

Henry and Bracy, applying the work of Funke (Funke, 1991), identify five characteristics that define what a complex problem is: "(1) multiple variables and decisions (complexity), that (2) interact and interrelate in nonlinear, even chaotic and dynamic ways (connectivity), that (3) achieve multiple goals or outcome states (polytely), that (4) lack clarity of content and meaning (opacity), and that (5) change over time (variable temporal dynamics), being unpredictable (temporal sensitivity) and yet occurring in waves (patterned clusters of events)" (Henry & Bracy, 2012, pg. 12). In their analysis on violence (primarily school violence), Henry and Bracy identify violence as a complex problem that meets all five criteria (Henry & Bracy, 2012). They point to the fact that violence produces unwanted outcomes that affects both perpetrators and victims, the community, and wider society as meeting the requirement for being a social problem composed of multiple and variable negative outcomes (Henry & Bracy, 2012). Though their argument assesses violence/school violence, applying community forms of violence (gang or violent extremism) is applicable to the production of outcomes which are relatively unpredictable in both timing and impact (Henry & Bracy, 2012). Henry and Bracy also state that violence is "constituted through multiple causal relationships, operative on micro-, meso-, or macro-levels of society, from individuals through interactive group level, institutional and community levels, to societal, cultural, and even global levels" (Henry & Bracy, 2012, pg. 13).

With the work of Henry and Bracy, it is clear that violence is a complex social problem. Barak further solidifies this notion by discussing the multiple forms of violence. He wrote:

> since violence takes many forms—individual, interpersonal, family, group, mass, collective, organizational, bureaucratic, institutional, regional, national, international, and structural—in makes sense to study the interrelations and interactions between those. Most analyses of violence, however, tend to focus on one particular form of violence without much, if any, reflection on the other forms. In turn, these fragmented and isolated analyses seek to explain the workings of a given form of violence without trying to understand the common threads or roots that may link various forms of violence together (Barak, 2003).

The fact that violence does take so many forms makes it even more important to approach the study of violence through an interdisciplinary lens. Furthermore, separating violence into different typologies can be difficult. For example, gang violence could categorically relate to gun violence *or* violent extremism and clearly delineating from one form to the next may ultimately overlook the root causes linking the violence. Thus, these types of complex problems require an interdisciplinary approach to address methods of prevention and intervention. Barak argues that the causes of violence range across spheres of interpersonal, institutional, and structural relations and also across domains of family, subculture, and culture which are cumulative and mutually reinforcing and inversely related (Barak, 2003).

The following figure depicts how the social determinants of health, social ecological model, and social disorganization theory interact as well as the key concepts defined above.

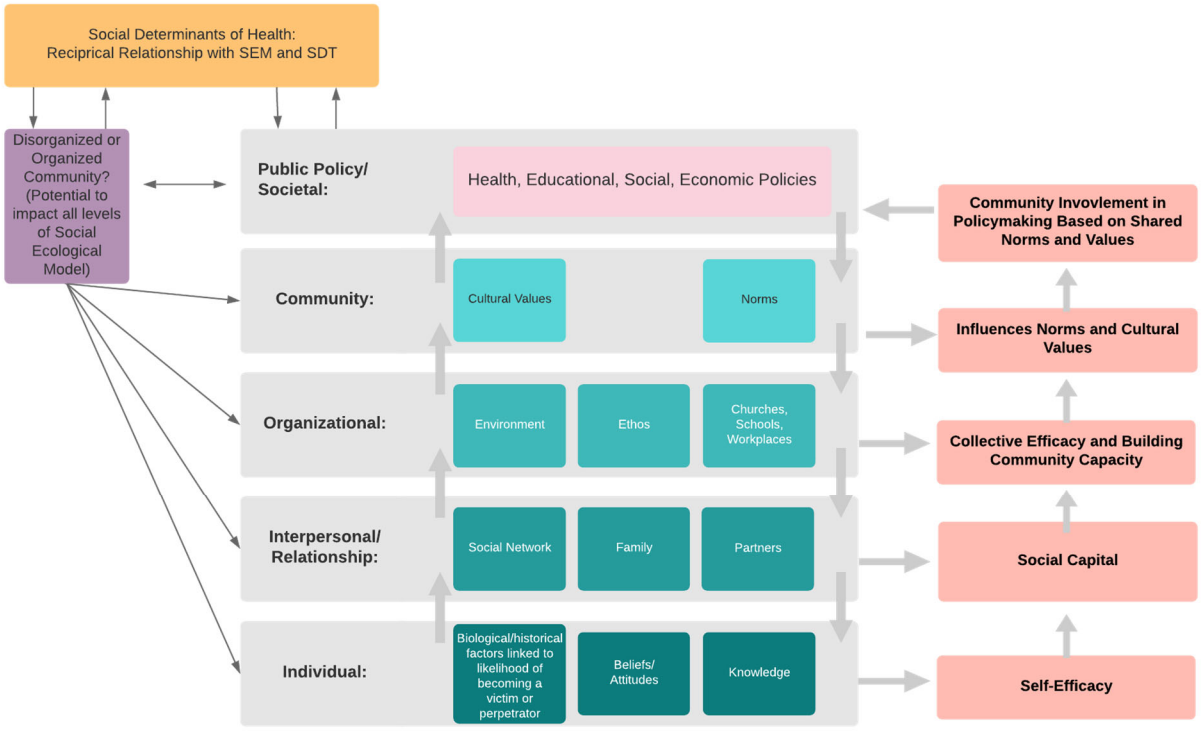


Figure 1: *Combined Model of the Social Determinants of Health, Social Ecological Model, and Social Disorganization Theory*

In conclusion, the study of a social phenomenon such as community violence requires an interdisciplinary perspective. If violence prevention and intervention are to be successful, addressing the myriad of complex interacting variables is necessary. For example, in the case of Detroit, the history of the city matters a great deal in understanding how some forms of violence came to flourish. It also matters in creating an understanding on how such violence interacts with perceptions of the city and whether or not a disorganized community created a space for gang violence or whether gang violence contributed to creating a disorganized community. Understanding how the social determinants of health are linked to community violence exposure and health outcomes within a social ecological perspective is also a complex process that is best approached from an interdisciplinary perspective. Marmot discusses the original resistance to such research and points to the fact that research which addresses social inequalities in health historically had the propensity to be politically threatening and was therefore broken into smaller chunks of nonthreatening research (Marmot, 2008). It is clear from the research that there is a trend towards advocating for interdisciplinary research, but due to the resistance Marmot discusses such efforts are only just beginning.

Summary: Tying it all together

Understanding each key term that relates to SDT and the SEM is necessary to understand the research. Table 1 below is a reference for each of the terms discussed in the literature review.

Concept	Definition	Applicability
Community building/organizing	Five key concepts of community organizing and community building: empowerment, critical consciousness, community capacity, issue selection, and participation and relevance (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2012).	• Individuals/organizations work to organize and build community • A well-organized community contributes to increasing collective efficacy and community capacity

	"Community is created or built, or not, with each of our actions; with our consciousness concerning ourselves, others, and the issues; and with our relationships, whatever the task" (Walter & Hyde, 2012, pg. 84).	• A well-organized community can provide invaluable resources within an otherwise disorganized community
Collective efficacy	*Neighborhood* collective efficacy can be defined as the connection between mutual trust and social cohesion with the shared expectation that intervention in support of neighborhood social control will occur (Ohmer, 2016; Robert J. Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). *Organizational* collective efficacy can be defined as an organization's or group's perception of its ability to problem solve and its ability to improve the life of the members involved (Ohmer, 2016; Pecukonis & Wencour, 1994).	• Necessary to induce meaningful impact/change within the SEM at organizational, community, and public policy levels • Can help to alleviate or mitigate complex social problems, such as community violence
Community capacity	"the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social and public health problems" (Goodman et al., 1998, pg. 259).	• Required to address complex social problems that exist at all levels of the SEM • Community building/organizing likely increases community capacity
Social capital	distinct concept which is grounded in trust, civic involvement, social engagement, and reciprocity or exchange (Goodman, 2009; Putnam, 1995). Norms and networks of interpersonal relationships into their conceptualization of social capital (Barnes-Mauthe et al., 2015). "Inherent property" to social relationships, which reside in between individuals and	• Required to induce meaningful change • Organizations (such as FBOs) with ample social capital can use this capital to spread their norms and values with the broader community • *Can be negative* if norms and values are rooted in principles of exclusion • Bridging social capital required to establish vital relationships in multicultural communities

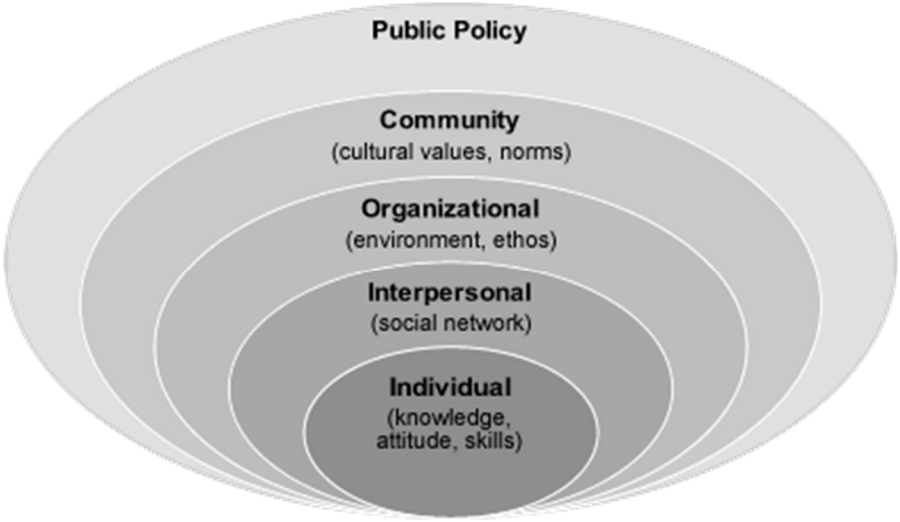
	communities (Barnes-Mauthe et al., 2015; Lakon et al., 2008). Three types: *Bridging*- "ties among people with diverse backgrounds, where ties are weaker and are reflected by group membership in organizations" (Daoud et al., 2017, pg. 648). *Linking*- the relationships and participation in group activities, institutions, or with people of authority in order to help communities gain leverage or access to important resources (Daoud et al., 2017). *Bonding*- resources that are accessed within social groups with a membership body of individuals who are alike or as strengthening existing relationships (Kawachi et al., 2008; Walter & Hyde, 2012).	
Social cohesion	"a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations" (Chan et al., 2006, p. 290) Six core definitions of social cohesion in the literature: social relations, identification, orientation towards the common good, shared values, equality/inequality, and subjective/objective qualities of life (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017).	• Socially cohesive communities theoretically are more resilient to community violence • Principle that members feel like they belong to a cohesive community, so they will not want to harm that community • Established through community building/organizing • Within the SEM, the organizational and community levels are vital in building social cohesion
Resilience	"conflict resilience—the ability to resist or recover from conflict—supports social cohesion by preserving	• Key is *resisting* conflict—cohesive communities theoretically should be less

	institutions, relationships and patterns of behavior that form the foundation of cohesion. The relationship is reciprocal: the presence of social cohesion in a community or society also reinforces resilience by encouraging relationships and areas of cooperation across potential fracture lines. Building resilience can build social cohesion which in turn helps to strengthen the ability to resist and recover from conflict" (Aall & Crocker, 2019, p. 70).	prone to community violence

Table 1: *Key Concepts and their application*

Returning to the SEM will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the integrated approach to emerge. This summary will explain each level of the SEM as it relates to the concepts discussed throughout this literature review. This literature review aims to establish that community attributes such as collective efficacy, social capital, and community cohesion are necessary for forms of social control to exist. Shared norms establish grounds for collective action, and as it relates to collective efficacy, this collective action enacts varying levels of social control.

To reiterate, the SEM is the following:



(*Social and Behavioral Theories*, n.d.)

At the individual level of the SEM, self-efficacy is the most important concept. Individuals must hold the belief that they can successfully respond to a given situation or enact change. Community leaders are going to have a high level of self-efficacy that allows them to engage in community issues. Self-efficacy is the knowledge, attitude, and skills required to respond to social issues, which in this is case indirect violence prevention through cultivation of shared norms and value systems.

The interpersonal level are the social networks that an individual creates in his or her personal and professional life. Here, relationships are *key*. Essentially, relationships act as the gateway into the remaining levels of the SEM. The interpersonal level includes family, friends, and social circles as well as professional working relationships.

The organizational level is where the social relationships occur, including institutions such as churches, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Collective efficacy is an important concept at this level, given that the collective efficacy of an institution will play a role in dictating the actions of that institution. For example, a school with a high level of collective efficacy may believe in its ability to successfully educate children. Building community capacity can also begin at this level.

The community level is the setting that dictates appropriate or acceptable cultural values and norms. At this level, collective efficacy remains important, but social cohesion and community capacity exist as important community attributes as well. Shared norms and values work to cultivate social cohesion and community capacity. It is important to note that this is not always positive, and shared norms and values can actually work on the principle of exclusion. For example, a white nationalist group at either the organizational or community level is going to work

towards dictating norms and values of excluding any non-white member. This can lead to extreme acts of violence.

Finally, the public policy or societal level are health, educational, social, and economic policies that either maintain or diminish inequalities between groups. At this level, social or cultural norms will support or prohibit social phenomenon such as community violence. Here, social cohesion, collective efficacy, and community capacity are key. A high level of collective efficacy will ideally lead to social cohesion, which will ideally create a high level of community capacity.

IFLC as an institution exists at the organizational level, given that it is a community-based organization where relationships occur. However, the work IFLC does extend to the community as they attempt to establish shared norms and values that dictate social control. Theoretically, programs such as their religious literacy training spread norms and values of inclusion and pluralism at the individual level throughout the community of Metro Detroit. Their interpersonal relationships may also occasionally reach the public policy level, as they choose to support or endorse community leaders based on that person's values. Additional research on the influence of community organizations, such as IFLC, and individual support for public policies could provide useful data on how much the *influence* of said relationships matter.

In conclusion, this research uses an integrated and interdisciplinary framework to approach the social phenomenon of community violence prevention. By applying SDT to SEM, we can explore how disorganized communities operate at one level of the SEM to work towards building community capacity and collective efficacy. When applied to Metro Detroit, this is especially interesting as different suburbs across Metro Detroit are disorganized or organized. Organizations that operate across Metro Detroit such as IFLC can use their social capital to ameliorate issues

within disorganized communities. For example, data from this research indicates that IFLC and other FBOs have had varying levels of outreach to Detroit Public Schools in an effort to provide resources such as mentorship. Developing an integrated and interdisciplinary framework allows for a better understanding of complex social issues. This is especially true for community violence prevention given that violence prevention has the propensity to impact all levels of the SEM.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Design and Methods

Case Studies in Qualitative Research

Case study research has a complicated history within the field of qualitative research. Flyvbjerg highlights this best when he references a definition from the 1984 edition of the *Dictionary of Sociology*:

> *Case Study*. The detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a larger number of cases (Abercrombie et al., 1984; Flyvbjerg, 2011, pg. 100).

Using this understanding as a departing point, Flyvbjerg goes on to state that the definition, "if not directly wrong, is so oversimplified as to be grossly misleading" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, pg. 100). Flyvbjerg substantiates his argument by stating that it is not true that a case study does not provide reliable information about a broader class *and* it is misleading on the grounds that a case study is not just a pilot method to be used prior to conducting larger surveys, systematic hypothesis testing, and theory building (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Most importantly in his analysis, Flyvbjerg highlights five misunderstandings about case study research:

> *Misunderstanding 1*: General, theoretical (context-independent) know- ledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.
> *Misunderstanding 2*: One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development.
> *Misunderstanding 3*: The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, in the first stage of a total research process, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building.
> *Misunderstanding 4*: The case study contains a bias toward verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions.
> *Misunderstanding 5*: It is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2011, pg. 101).

There are multiple definitions in the literature that further highlight the disagreements concerning how to define such analyses. Bloomberg and Volpe define a case study as "an intensive description and analysis of a bounded social phenomenon (or multiple bounded phenomena), be

this a social unit or a system such as a program, and institution, or a process" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, pg. 31). Stake is clear in his statement that a "case study is also not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. By whatever methods, we choose to study the case" (Stake, 2000, pg. 435). Thus, Stake is primarily concerned with the unit of analysis or study—which is the case. Stake goes on to define three different types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. An *intrinsic* case study is undertaken because the researcher wants to better understand the case; *instrumental* case studies are when a particular case is examined to provide insight into the issue or to redraw a generalization; and a *collective* case study is when a researcher jointly studies a number of cases to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition (Stake, 2000). Stake also acknowledges that reports and authors do not usually fit neatly into these categories and they therefore should be viewed as heuristic more so than determinative (Stake, 2000). Yin defines a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, pg. 16). Finally, Creswell defines a case study research as "qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audio- visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes" (Creswell, 2013, pg. 97).

Debating which definition most closely encapsulates what a case study actually is lies beyond the scope of this research. However, for the sake of this research the Yin and Creswell interpretations are the most relevant. The case presented here is one interfaith organization and its network within the context of Metro Detroit. It is important to acknowledge the awareness that

case studies have such a heavily debated history within qualitative research due to the issues of theory, reliability, and validity. Flyvbjerg states that when it comes to the aforementioned five misunderstandings regarding case study research it is "theory, reliability, and validity that are at issue; in other words, the very status of the case study as a scientific method" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, pg. 101). It is also accurate to add the issue of generalizability into the concepts brought forth by Flyvbjerg.

Theory, reliability, validity, and generalizability all have a relationship with what Denzin terms *the politics of evidence*. Denzin states that "evidence in a countable or measurable sense is not something that all qualitative researchers attend to…[few] think in a language of evidence, they think instead about experience, emotions, events, processes, performances, narratives, poetics, and the politics of possibility" (Denzin, 2009, pg. 142). This research is far more concerned with the politics of possibility than it is with the politics of evidence. The politics of possibility are applicable here as this research focuses on interpretations of the lived experience of participants. This interpretation is based on participant emotion, organizational events, the common narratives or stories used among leadership, and so on.

As a social science case study, this research is about *perceptions* of the reality participants live in. The participants in this research have a similar communitarian value set, otherwise they would not be leaders in the interfaith community. The work that participants engage in does not necessarily cause less violence in Metro Detroit, rather it works to build relationships and establish shared norms and values. Additional research can establish just how much of an impact interfaith activism has on community violence prevention.

Metro Detroit is the site for this research for a number of reasons. First, Metro Detroit was conveniently accessible to me during the research given that I typically spend summers in

Michigan. Beyond that, Metro Detroit as a whole is incredibly diverse, while still heavily segregated. The history of Metro Detroit combined with its modern-day issues make it an ideal place to study complex social phenomena. Furthermore, IFLC as an organization is highly functional and has a long track record of success, supported by the fact that their Religious Diversity Journeys (RDJ) program has existed for over twenty years. The leadership appears to be effective and the programs receive ample local support, making it a logical choice for a case study.

Research Setting: The Historical Development of IFLC

Understanding the historical development of an organization can greatly contribute to the knowledge of where an organization is today. Seminal in recounting the history of IFLC are two memoirs from leaders during the original formation of the organization; *Our Muslim Neighbors: Achieving the American Dream an Immigrant's Memoir* by Victor Begg and *Peace Warrior: A Memoir from the Front* by Daniel Buttry. IFLC was founded in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks and was known as the Interfaith Partners during this time (*Our History*, 2018). This group of clergy and community leaders began meeting on September 12, 2001 in order to plan a joint prayer service (*Our History*, 2018). Monthly meetings became the norm and very early in their work the group chose to take interfaith initiatives to congregations instead of confining their ongoing dialogue among individuals (*Our History*, 2018). One reflection on the sentiments of that time is in the preface of a novel written by a Muslim community leader and activist that was involved in these early days. It reads: "if the terrorists were going to hijack our faiths for violence, we would do the hard organizing and community building to turn people back to our faiths' deeper roots of love, mercy, justice, and peace" (Begg, 2019, pg. XIV).

This specific interfaith partnership was born out of an instance of such raw emotion in the response to extreme violence and it is likely that this guided the movement to be what it is today. Begg writes:

> when compared to the rest of the nation in the weeks after 9/11, southeast Michigan was unusual in its scale of interfaith activity: more than 50 religious leaders from across the region headed to Dearborn to talk on September 12. I was surprised by the new alliances that were forming all around us…I was also surprised by the strength of the support from Jewish friends. During this time, I was reminded that my Jewish friends had been dealing with bigotry for decades…Jewish and Muslim communities are both in the crosshairs of hate groups. We were in this together after 9/11—and we are to this day (Begg, 2019, pg. 145-146).

However, it is worth noting that interfaith activity has maintained a strong presence throughout the history of Metro Detroit. Begg captures this best when he writes that "our religious communities have a significant advantage because of a long, shared history of interfaith responses to major crises. To put it simply: Interfaith support is in the DNA of Detroit's culture" (Begg, 2019, pg. 147). It is this shared history of interfaith responses to deeply serious conflict which has made the interfaith network so strong and prevalent in Metro Detroit today. History has carefully cultivated a shared understanding on the ramifications of demonizing religious groups. This is most salient in the rise of the KKK in Detroit, which among other things, rooted itself in anti-Catholicism and anti-Jewish ideology. The dangers of demonization is also found in the historical records of Henry Ford's open anti-Semitic sentiments as well as his fondness for Adolph Hitler (Begg, 2019).

In the beginning days of Interfaith Partners, the group initially lacked both Jewish and female representation. The leaders recognized this and actively sought to change it months into the organization's history. Begg acknowledged in his memoir that early in the planning process the expanding the vision began with including women. Begg recounts how some of the strongest and most active allies were women from the very beginning. In Begg's memoir, he quotes local interfaith activist Dan Buttry in saying:

> for quite a while, we didn't address the problem that we were mostly Christian and Muslim men meeting and trying to form a new interfaith organization. We had reached the point, in early 2002, of trying to get a grant to fund some of our ongoing work—and

> that's when we finally had to address our limitations. If we were really going to expand in a sincere way, we realized that we had to stop our planning and go back to square one, and include Jews in our planning circle…we decided, after months of meeting already, that we had to re-start our planning process with new Jewish partners joining us at the table. And that's what we did. And we got it right, this time (Begg, 2019, pg. 158).

Furthermore, the Interfaith Partner's recognized the challenges that would be inescapable when attempting to create an interfaith organization of Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Dan Buttry reflects on this in his memoir when acknowledging that Detroit was linked to conflicts in the Middle East and that progress in both the Middle East and in Detroit would not be possible without involving the Jewish community (Buttry, 2012). Buttry reflects that the inclusion of Jewish community leaders in the Interfaith Partners immediately made conversations more complex. He writes that:

> instead of just two communities facing each other with their histories, we now had three communities, each with complex histories with the other two. The work we had done, the assumptions agreed upon and vision shared, had to be undone so we could go right back to the beginning. The Jewish community couldn't simply be added to what we Christian and Muslim leaders had done. Rather we had to start fresh so that the Jewish leaders could struggle with us through the building of trust, the articulating of hopes, and the hammering out of assumptions and a group vision in terms we could all accept. The process was slow, but that very process was perhaps more important than the outcome (Buttry, 2012, pg. 187).

One of the most challenging issues during the early days of forming the Interfaith Partners, and likely still even today, was the difference in opinion when it came to Israel and Palestine. Conflict such as Israel and Palestine serve as the prime example of a regional issue that may serve as a tension point that impacts interfaith dialogue, especially between Muslims and Jews. Dan Buttry reflected that:

> we were determined to stick together to speak as one where we could, with the hop that as we continued dialogue we might be able to expand the circle of mutual understanding as to how our values of justice, peace, and respect for human dignity could be applied in the complexities of the deeply rooted conflict that profoundly involved our faiths (Buttry, 2012, pg 188).

Perhaps one of the most profound reflections in Dan Buttry's memoir is in regard to the concept of empathy and the Children of Abraham Project, for which the Interfaith Partners received notable recognition for. This project was developed for high school students from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths across Metro Detroit and led by local interfaith leader Brenda Rosenburg. Buttry reflected that the students "learned that they did not need to agree with someone in order to express empathy and validate feelings" (Buttry, 2012, pg. 189). The concept of empathy is important in interfaith work and was clearly relevant to this project. Sociologist Arlie Hochschild coined the term *empathy walls*, defined as "an obstacle to deep understanding of another person, one that can make us feel indifferent or even hostile to those who hold different beliefs or whose childhood is rooted in different circumstances" (Hochschild, 2018, pg. 5). It seems that the point of the Children of Abraham project was to dismantle the preexisting empathy walls that existed between youth in Metro Detroit according to religious background, culture, ethnicity, and so on. The goal of the project was to engage youth from different faiths with a four-step process of exploration and healing. Step one was to 'break bread', step two was to 'listen with compassion', step three was to 'be the other', and step four was to 'create something new together' (Buttry, 2012, pg 189). Each step was calculated with the intent of getting youth to engage with one another on issues such as being victims of hate and prejudice or how they grew up with various beliefs about their own religion and the religion of others (Buttry, 2012).

The Children of Abraham project resulted in the students working with a professional theater director and a professional playwright through the Mosaic Youth Theater. The students were tasked with writing a play that was based on the story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac (Buttry, 2012). Buttry reflects that "the play wove together the ancient story and the experiences of contemporary youth. It also wove in the current conflict in the Middle East. Topics

that adults were too cautious to handle were tackled by the youth with courage, openness, and astonishing creativity" (Buttry, 2012, pg. 191). The project was deemed a success, even receiving attention from a CBS special program that focused on the project (Begg, 2019; Buttry, 2012).

It is clear based on the memoirs of Begg and Buttry that the Children of Abraham project as well as Brenda Rosenberg's leadership during that time were paramount in strengthening the growing interfaith movement in Metro Detroit. This play utilized storytelling as a way to create a sense of collective empathy and understanding among a multicultural group, while also solidifying the fact that not every issue required agreeance upon in order to establish trusting partnerships and friendships.

Storytelling is still a method utilized by members of IFLC in order to recall what community efforts based on interfaith activism this organization has accomplished beyond that of the Children of Abraham Project. Storytelling is "a universal human activity and can be a powerful tool for developing multiculturalism and reconciliation" (Naidoo, 2019, pg. 2). Furthermore, it "is basic to being human because in telling our stories we bring meaning to our lives that is not a luxury but fundamental to the task of being human" (Naidoo, 2019, pg. 3). And perhaps most importantly, storytelling involves the carrying of personal and collective pasts into the present meaning that our stories are embedded in other's stories, reflecting the broader social, cultural, and political narratives that are pervasive in the lived experience (Naidoo, 2019; Polkinghorne, 1996).

Throughout the course of this research, it became apparent that storytelling was vital to maintaining the collective identity of this organization. The most commonly reiterated story involved the 2004 controversy regarding the city of Hamtramck's community tension over the call to prayer. The city of Hamtramck has a population of over 20,000 and spans just 2.1 square miles. Today, Hamtramck looks quite different from its historical roots as first home to German

immigrants, and then later as an established Polish-Catholic enclave. Today, Hamtramck is instead is known as the most diverse city in Michigan, with signs in the hamlet proclaiming the city to be "the World in Two Square Miles" (Adams, 2019). The city's most visible populations today are Bangladeshi, Yemeni, and Southeastern European (Adams, 2019), and what is now a sizeable and notable population of Muslim residents.

The controversy began when a mosque in Hamtramck had decided that it wanted to install speakers from its roof in order to broadcast daily calls to prayer and approached city council regarding passing an ordinance to do so (Begg, 2019; Buttry, 2012). Begg recounts how during this time, there were many remaining Polish-Catholic residents (and this is true today) who nostalgically viewed Hamtramck as *their* neighborhood and viewed the potential sounds of a call to prayer, or *adhan*, as a threat to "fond memories of older Catholic families in a particularly poignant way" (Begg, 2019, pg. 160). In other words, broadcasting the call to prayer would become a test of the city in a way that called into question the legitimacy of multicultural values, particularly religious freedom and tolerance, while simultaneously challenging the collective memory of the long-standing Polish-Catholic community. Much was at stake during this time for not only the city of Hamtramck, but also the movement the Interfaith Partners were attempting to continue and strengthen.

The desire to broadcast the call to prayer caused some residents to speak against it. Some went to city council, some picketed at the mosque, and eventually media reports on the opposition caused protestors to come from across Michigan (Begg, 2019). This became known as the call to prayer *crisis* in Detroit (Begg, 2019), with news going viral and leading to what Buttry referred to as "hysteria that Hamtramck's Polish Catholic heritage was being swamped by an influx of Muslims" (Buttry, 2012, pg. 192). Begg reflected on how the virality of this issue brought

extremists to Hamtramck—skinheads and white supremacists—from across the country as well as news crews from as far as Europe and Asia (Begg, 2019). One example of this was the arrival of "The Lord's Mighty Men"—a fundamentalist church from Ohio, who showed up to protest and argue on the grounds of religious liberty—"not that Muslims could exercise their religious liberty, but that the public call to prayer was an infringement on the religious liberty of others who would have to hear it" (Buttry, 2012, pg.192).

In addressing this issue, one irony surfaced that highlighted the hypocrisy of the situation. It turned out that in order to overturn the ordinance for the mosques call to prayer, the Christian churches ringing of the bells would also have to be banned (Buttry, 2012). Those who opposed the ordinance launched a petition to overturn it and this eventually led to putting the repeal to a special vote (Buttry, 2012). Hamtramck resident Rev. Sharon Buttry, the wife of Dan Buttry, became one of the most central figures in Hamtramck when it came to organizing community support for the ordinance. She was able to get public support from the local Catholic clergy, who argued that the call to prayer was similar to the traditional ringing of the bells marking time for Catholic times of worship (Begg, 2019). Rev. Buttry was so successful in her work with her Hamtramck neighbors and the Muslim and Catholic religious leaders that enough public support was gained and the Hamtramck City Council voted unanimously for the mosque to proceed (Begg, 2019).

In 2006, war broke out between Israel and Hezbollah. According to Buttry, during this time the Jewish and Muslim men in the Interfaith Partners broke of most of their communication (Buttry, 2012). This instance is important to note for two reasons; it highlights the way that international conflict can influence local community organizations and it emphasizes the role that women had in the interfaith community across Metro Detroit during this time. Buttry reflects that "the politics of the Middle East spilled over into our relationships in Detroit. However, the women

refused to be divided by the distant war that was touching our lives. Jewish, Muslim, and Christian friends formed WISDOM, the Women's Interfaith Solutions for Dialogue and Outreach in MetroDetroit" (Buttry, 2012, pg. 194). WISDOM is a Metro Detroit interfaith organization composed of women. Some members of WISDOM are also directly involved with IFLC. As a part of the research, it would be remiss to neglect acknowledging WISDOM in this dissertation. As Buttry points out, WISDOM came into existence during a time when the men of Metro Detroit's interfaith community were struggling to communicate and hold on to their shared vision. It is also necessary to acknowledge WISDOM within the context of IFLC given that so much of the official and unofficial leadership was intermingled between the two organizations, and this remains true today. WISDOM and IFLC reflects the nature of the interfaith community in Metro Detroit by showcasing the fact that interfaith leaders are often involved in more than one interfaith organization or initiative. To this extent, viewing the interfaith community in Metro Detroit as an expansive network of active leaders who are often engaged in more than one organization or initiative showcases the networking ability as well as the substantial power potential held by the interfaith community. Women have and continue to play an incredibly active role in network. In a book written by the women of WISDOM, co-founder Trish Harris states that "there is something distinctive about how women work together. We tend to take the time to build the relationships first, and then work on solving the problems" (The Women of Wisdom, 2017, pg. 2).

By 2010, the Interfaith Partners had become what they are known as today: InterFaith Leadership Council of Metro Detroit (Begg, 2019). In the spring of 2011, a new threat to the community of Metro Detroit served as a catalyst to reignite the interfaith community. Terry Jones, an internationally known anti-Islamic 'pastor' declared that he was planning a trip to the largest mosque in the US: the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn (Begg, 2019; Buttry, 2012). Jones

had gained recognition for his promises to burn the Qur'an. Prior to declaring his intent to do this in Dearborn, in early 2011 Jones did just that, provoking riots in Afghanistan that resulted in the deaths of a number of people (Buttry, 2012). With this knowledge, the interfaith community knew what was at stake with the arrival of Jones in Dearborn and likely deeply understood the potential for large scale community violence. However, under the banner of IFLC, local interfaith leaders and activists got to work in planning what became known as the "Vigil for the Beloved Community" (Begg, 2019). This vigil took place at the Islamic Center and resulted in the bringing together of over 1,500 faith leaders and members (Begg, 2019). In his memoir, Buttry reflects that "we had no idea how many people would come. I was hoping for a couple hundred. Instead we were stunned as the crowd grew to a thousand: Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Baha'is. More than one hundred Christian and Muslim clergy came, many dressed in their clerical robes" (Buttry, 2012, pg. 195). The vigil ended up effectively drowning out the presence of Terry Jones and his narrative of hate. Begg sums this up by writing that "we overwhelmed Jones's message in the news media: we avoided violence and we reminded everyone that religious diversity is part of what makes America a great place to live" (Begg, 2019).

Today, IFLC has fourteen board members that span multiple faiths: Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Latter-day Saints, and Christian. IFLC also has several active committees. The Education Committee focuses on improving religious literacy across Metro Detroit. IFLC's Health and Healthcare Committee links health systems and healthcare organizations with the diverse faith communities across Metro Detroit in order to increase cultural competencies. This committee has also worked on bringing interfaith competency opportunities to providers through a program first launched through Henry Ford Health System (HFHS). IFLC has a Development Committee which is responsible for fostering relationships with community partners. The Conciliation Committee of

IFLC works on strengthening capacity and capability for crisis engagement and it also trains communities in methods of conflict transformation approaches. This committee also facilitates training for community leaders and makes it possible for IFLC to have referrals available to practitioners who are capable of bringing mediation and conflict resolution strategies to communities who need such support. The Community Building Committee of IFLC works on building relationships through dialogue, partnership, and learning. Finally, the Communication Committee of IFLC tells the story of the local interfaith work by informing the broader community and local media of IFLC and community news or events. This committee also is involved with considering how government policy can implicate interfaith relations.

Though they are involved in multiple interfaith initiatives and partner with organizations across Metro Detroit, some of their most important work is the various programs they run. IFLC provides two adult education programs: 'Exploring Religious Landscapes' and "Ask a …" (*IFLC Programs*, 2020). Both programs provide a platform for multicultural education. *Exploring Religious Landscapes* allows adults to learn about specific religious beliefs and practices while *Ask a …* features individuals from several religious groups that answer audience questions about faith and customs (*IFLC Programs*, 2020). IFLC also has the Religious Leaders Forum, where senior faith leaders come together quarterly in order to "foster mutual respect and to seek ways that their collective influence might help the metropolitan Detroit community thrive and prosper" (*IFLC Programs*, 2020). Finally, IFLC has the World Sabbath of Religious Reconciliation, which is an interfaith service with music and prayers from many different faith denominations that has been going on for 21 years (*IFLC Programs*, 2020).

One of the most notable programs led by IFLC is the Religious Diversity Journeys (RDJ). This program focuses teaching cultural and religious literacy to 7th graders across Metro Detroit

as they engaged with their school curriculum of World Religion (*Religious Diversity Journeys*, 2020). RDJ takes students to Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Christian, and Hindu houses of worship across Metro Detroit. At each journey, students, parents, and teachers learn about the historical roots, stories of integration, important holidays, life-cycle celebrations, and are able to view religious objects (*Religious Diversity Journeys*, 2020). For example, at a mosque students are able to feel clay coins used during prayer and are taught how to wear a headscarf whereas at a Sikh temple students learn how to wrap a turban and about the selflessness involved in service to others (*Religious Diversity Journeys*, 2020). RDJ creates a much-needed space for hands-on multicultural education at a time when children are learning about world religion at school. Not only does it create a space for children to safely and openly communicate and ask questions, it also allows for the creation of a tangible understanding on world religions and cultures that may differ from their own. The program is incredibly popular, which is supported by the fact that in 2019-2020 there were 50 Metro Detroit schools partnered with IFLC to carry out the program for their students (*Religious Diversity Journeys*, 2020).

Researching Across Degrees and Completing an Internship

In order to ensure full transparency in regard to this research, it is necessary to discuss two realities: I completed this research across degrees and involved the completion of an unpaid internship for IFLC. The research for this project began as research for a master's degree thesis in 2016. Upon undergoing doctoral research, I made the conscious decision to continue the same course of research. However, to say that the research has been the same would be false. What began as a broad inquiry into how interfaith dialogue and activism as well as policing methods could do to counter violent extremism ends as this: an inquiry into one specific organization, its network, and the role that organization and its network may have in both preventing and

intervening on community violence. As a researcher, I believe the research process has continued to evolve. [1]

During my time as a doctoral student, I have also been working on a master's degree in public health (MPH). A requirement for the MPH degree was the completion of an internship with some form of organization that is engaged in work that is applicable to public health education. IFLC allowed me to intern for them during the summer of 2019, creating an opportunity to simultaneously collect data for my doctoral research. This position was unpaid and represents no conflict of interest. If anything, I was able to gain a more intimate understanding regarding the extent of the work IFLC is doing within the Metro Detroit community as well as where they would like to direct future efforts. During this time, I became most familiar with the innerworkings of RDJ.

Limitations of the Research

There are several limitations within this research. One of the most obvious limitations is that Metro Detroit has a very large population and I am interviewing a very small amount of people within that population. Due to this, it is accurate to assert that this research does not represent the thoughts and beliefs systems that are present throughout the entire population of Metro Detroit. In fact, the data from participant interviews has shown that there are many people living in the Metro Detroit region who deeply resent interfaith activism. This research does not include those viewpoints or opinions because including them would be beyond the scope of this study. Future research on the population within Metro Detroit that opposes multiculturalism and interfaith dialogue would provide valuable insights. It is also clear that the majority of the research

[1] Ethically, IRB approval has been continuous on the same application which began during the master's thesis up until now. With this acknowledgement, it is appropriate to say that data collection from the master's degree research informs this study, though data presented in the data analysis chapter will only be from data collected during the duration of the doctoral research, unless otherwise specified.

participants already have a belief system that supports multicultural community building, especially those participants who are active in the interfaith community. However, it is exactly these people that the research focuses on because they have a belief in multicultural community building and learning more about this process is critical to the development of research that focuses on preventing community violence.

Another limitation is the size of Metro Detroit. The sheer size of Metro Detroit makes it impossible to spend time in every individual town and community. I cannot immerse myself in every interfaith community organization. Metro Detroit spans three counties which have vastly different socioeconomic statuses, religious and cultural identities, and urban or rural landscapes. Given this, it is not accurate to say that the conclusions drawn from this research represent the entire population of Metro Detroit in a blanketed manner. Rather, the conclusions drawn from this research represent the views of the research participants, and to some extent possibly even the institutions that they lead. This research is a departure point for future lines of inquiry into the mechanisms of community building as it pertains to preventing community violence.

With these facts in mind, another limitation of this research is its generalizability. When attempting to translate the results revealed during a case study into another location, the differences between locations should be at the forefront of thought. Metro Detroit has a complex and unique history and given this the results from this research may not be generalizable. As stated above, the results from this research will provide a way to better inform the current prevention literature from a broad understanding of how those involved in community building in a multicultural location go about their practice.

In relation to the size of Metro Detroit and generalizability, Sinha and Rosenberg adequately discuss observational concerns with the US as a setting for research (Sinha &

Rosenberg, 2013). Sinha and Rosenberg acknowledge the fact that within US society there is a general pride in the fundamental separation of church and state, especially within the context of public and/or secular settings (Sinha & Rosenberg, 2013). The fact that IFLC conducts a religious literacy program that involves public school children attending multiple houses of worship is a seemingly rare program within the context of the US. Duplicating such a program in other settings across the US could potentially face severe criticism or resistance.

Another potential limitation was brought to light by Johnson when he states "a completely irreligious person, one not having a religious background at all, would seem to me to be at a methodological disadvantage. Without any experience to draw upon, he or she may not think to do the analysis in the most appropriate way, and may potentially miss what otherwise might have been an important finding" (Johnson, 2011, pg. 173). Johnson speaks from a place of having experienced serious religious discrimination as a scholar. However, suggesting that nonreligious scholars are at a methodological disadvantage when researching religion is absurd and inherently projects the discrimination he experiences as a deeply religious scholar against nonreligious scholars. Research of this nature is really about the integrity and self-awareness of the researcher and less about the religion of the researcher. Researchers engaging in reflexivity throughout the research process would be capable of conducting religious based research. On the contrary, claiming no religion when researching in an interfaith context has seemed to be useful. As a researcher, I find myself less concerned with the religion itself and more concerned with how interfaith activists use their religious principles to justify building social capital and community capacity in order to increase community cohesion.

Ethical Considerations

This research project received Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Completing the IRB process and receiving approval ensures that the research project is ethical.

However, the IRB is not always capable of covering the ethical dilemmas that field researchers may find themselves in and my own personal judgement and moral compass may have to be used in some cases (Bailey, 2018).

I obtained written informed consent prior to all interviews and necessary settings of participant observation. The research being conducted is confidential, meaning that I will know the identities of participants but will not reveal this in the research (Bailey, 2018). The exception to this is the naming of IFLC and I received permission to do this. Protecting the identities of participants is a necessary step to building trust and producing ethical research. Despite the size of the interfaith community in Metro Detroit, protecting the identities of participants could be difficult. Though the community is large, it is also well networked. There are key leaders who participated in this research and identifying them would not be difficult. In order to avoid this, referring to participants as just that—participants—is necessary.

A concern in regard to ethics and this research is the development of relationships. Given that an internship was simultaneous with the research, relationships are likely to develop with a few participants. Reciprocal relationships that develop during the research process can greatly affect the processes and outcomes of field research (Bailey, 2018; Sieber, 1982). In a close setting such as an internship, it is likely that participants will reveal more about their personal thoughts and lives which may lead to the development of an actual friendship or mentorship. Not causing harm to reciprocal relationships of this nature creates a moral and ethical decision making process that many researchers must navigate and is often easier to discuss than it is to apply in the field (Bailey, 2018; Sieber, 1982). In the case of my research, it has happened periodically where participants have said things outside of an interview setting which are important to informing the research, but the participant would likely prefer these things left out. Given that participants sign

informed consent forms, these types of situations have the capacity to create serious ethical dilemmas. I deal with such situations on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the implications of sharing such information.

Research Methods

I gathered the data for this dissertation through conducting semi-structured interviews, through participant observation, through and document analysis. Identifying initial interfaith organizations throughout Metro Detroit occurred through search engines, and subsequent contact with appropriate representatives was the next step. During the course of the research beginning with the pursuance of a master's degree, IFLC emerged as the center of activity for interfaith issues throughout Metro Detroit, and due to this IFLC has considerable focus in the research process. Given the interconnected nature of the interfaith community in Metro Detroit, identifying additional interviewees occurred through word of mouth by other participants, often referred to as snowball sampling. It is not uncommon for participants to recommend other interfaith community members or community leaders to contact once they learn about the research project. This method of snowball sampling also indicates who the most trusted community and religious leaders are, given that it is most often the same people referred over and over again.

Semi-structured interviews have the ability to make better use of the knowledge-producing potential of dialogue due to the fact that the interviewee has much more leeway in following up on what is deemed important during the interview process (Brinkmann, 2014). A semi-structured interview also allows the interviewer to become visible as a knowledge-producing participant given that there is not a preset, rigid interview guide (Brinkmann, 2014). When attempting to gain a better understanding on community-building and community cohesion, a semi-structured approach to interviewing will allow for the interviewee to address topics important to them during the interview and the interviewer to follow up immediately as they reveal themselves.

Participant observation is a method that occurs when a researcher "takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Participant observation also requires recording these observations by taking field notes. Participant observation allows a researcher to gain an understanding of fundamental process of social life for the population that is being researched (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Though many research projects that utilize participant observation as method place the researcher as living among the population, that is not the case for this research. Ample time researching in Metro Detroit took place over the course of three years. Much of this project's participant observation occurred during the IFLC internship. Participant observations can occur in different ways while conducting fieldwork, but the primary question is whether a researcher participates in the setting, strictly observes, or does a little bit of both (Bailey, 2018). For this project, I did a little bit of both.

Document analysis is a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis as a method requires the analysis of documents as data to elicit meaning, gain an understanding, and to develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis for this research will focus on analysis of weekly newsletters sent by an interfaith organization via email, student feedback forms from religious diversity trainings, and program curriculum for a P/CVE program in Metro Detroit. The newsletters are accessible on IFLC's website. I received student feedback from the religious diversity training during the internship. All data from this is anonymous and informs the overall research regarding student sentiment to interfaith education and religious literacy training. Finally, I received the P/CVE material from a research participant during an interview. This material is essential in addressing the aspect of community involvement in prevention of violent extremism. This data is also publicly available.

Data triangulation is used to increase the validity and trustworthiness of research (Bailey, 2018). Data triangulation is defined by Denzin as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (N. K. Denzin, 1970). A qualitative researcher should draw on a minimum of two sources of evidence to seek convergence and corroboration through different methods and data sources (Bowen, 2009). Data triangulation also can be used to determine the consistency of results or to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the participants and their setting (Bailey, 2018). This research uses interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to ensure proper data triangulation. It also expands upon the capabilities of the interfaith community in Metro Detroit.

Data Collection and Analysis

For this project, I analyzed interview transcripts, archival documents in the form of IFLC newsletters, field notes, and material that research participants gave me during interviews. Many participants provided me with brochures or pamphlets, program descriptions or booklets, community reports, and documents various religious institutions shared with their congregation. This additional material allowed me to understand the values of religious institutions that IFLC partners or plans to partner with and the programs that both directly and indirectly relate to community violence prevention. Initial transcriptions used NVivo Transcript, and I would then relisten and edit automated transcripts to ensure accuracy.

I used Dedoose software to conduct the data analysis. Prior to beginning the process of coding the interview transcripts, I created a code tree within Dedoose. I began by coding interviews once utilizing the code tree that constructed prior to starting the data analysis. I developed he original code tree primarily by using relevant terms drawn from the integrated model of SDT and SEM. Then as it became apparent that there was little relevance to some codes and missing codes based on key themes, I adjusted the code tree appropriately. For example, my original code tree

did not have *religious conflict abroad*, but once it became apparent that this was a key theme adding it into the code tree was necessary. I also created child codes that allowed me to further apply specific excerpts to specific concepts. For example, a participant might discuss their activism in their own neighborhood that is not directly related to the activism of IFLC. In this case, an excerpt like this is coded as *neighborhood collective efficacy* rather than the general parent code of *community capacity and collective efficacy.* The final code tree is as follows:

Figure 2: Code Tree

In addition to analyzing documents, I interviewed a total of thirteen people from the primary population of significance—interfaith leaders/activists and one police officer. Four of the thirteen interviews occurred during a group interview. Additional information regarding the interviews is located in Appendix A. For the sake of protecting the identity of participants in the small, close knit community I will intentionally refer to interviewees as participants. Each interview lasted between one and one and a half hours and took place at a location chosen by the interviewee. Interview questions are located in Appendix E and are intentionally broad in order to conduct a semi-structured interview. As a researcher, I have found that structuring an interview with broad questions allows interviewees to provide information that can then emerge from more pointed and specific questions as the interview progresses.

The majority of the interfaith leaders/activists also have additional roles in the community. For example, many have formal employment, so they embody a dynamic participant able to pull from multiple experiences within Metro Detroit. Interviews took place at a location chosen by the participant, which most often was their home or place of work. Occasionally, interviews had to take place over Zoom. These were often due to the fact that I was not able to be in Detroit physically, or for the purpose of following up on previous interviews. Zoom interviews were recorded. Interviews lasted approximately one to one and a half hours.

I took field notes during my research during instances when I was a participant observer (such as a board meeting or community event). Bailey writes that data is "collected by observing and interacting, and *field notes are the written account of those experiences"* (Bailey, 2018). Field notes are an essential part of conducting ethnographic research because "memories of experiences become increasingly reliable over time" and field notes provide a way of recalling experiences in the field (Bailey, 2018, p. 126). The goal of taking field notes is to produce a coherent and focused

analysis of the social life which have been recorded and observed (Emerson et al., 2011). To analyze the fieldnotes that I developed, I conducted what Emerson et al. have referred to as *open coding*, or reading fieldnotes line by line in order to identify and formulate ideas, themes, or issues which they suggest (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 172).

There are many benefits of writing fieldnotes and using them as part of the data collection and analysis process. Emerson et al. identify three key benefits. First, a researcher will be able to perceive how relationships change over time with those in the field. Second, a researcher can gain fresh insights as understandings and interpretations of people and events change over time. Third, field notes allow for a researcher to take in, in a shorter period of time, what has been observed and recorded over a longer period of time (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 172). Furthermore, field notes allow a researcher to recall important details such as what happened, who was there, how the setting was, and emotions that were present. They create a more accurate depiction and serve as invaluable data for researchers conducting fieldwork.

I conducted document analysis on the aforementioned materials. I have archived weekly newsletters from IFLC and analyzed newsletters over the past six months. These are public documents that are also available on the organization's website. Newsletters allowed me to gain a more comprehensive insight into the happenings of the broader Metro Detroit interfaith community, assess what types of relationships exist with IFLC and partners, and to see what types of causes the organization is involved in. I obtained other documents, such as student feedback from the religious diversity program and, pamphlets, and community reports during the summer internship. Bowen states that though documents can provide rich data, their inclusion as data should be done cautiously and with a critical eye (Bowen, 2009). He argues that researchers should establish the meanings of documents and how they can contribute to the issues being explored as

opposed to having their words and passages lifted and thrown into research analysis (Bowen, 2009). In the case of this research material such as newsletters, student feedback forms, and community reports provide critical data that can be used to assess how an interfaith organization positions itself (newsletters), how it participates in the community, and what the community (students) perceive to be their benefits from that organization. In the case of the documents provided to the researcher in regard to the 'CVE program', document analysis critically analyzes how this program exists as in comparison to what the literature suggests and assess the importance of interfaith relationships or partnerships in preventing community violence.

Document analysis, particularly of the newsletters and student feedback forms, will occur in a systematic manner that will identify key themes to corroborate with alternative and primary methods of data collection. Bailey defines thematic analysis as a search for themes that emerge from the data and she identifies two types of themes: topical and overarching (Bailey, 2018). The most relevant to this research is overarching themes, which are used to identify overarching concepts, unifying threads, and underlying meanings which can capture the essence of a setting or of a group (Bailey, 2018, p. 190). Bowen defines thematic analysis as pattern recognition within data that identifies emerging themes which become the categories of analysis (Bowen, 2009).

During the collection and analysis process, I practiced reflexivity. Bailey points out that varied and complicated interpretations on reflexivity exist, but I agree with her assertation that reflexivity is the "researcher's active consideration of his or her place in the research" (Bailey, 2018, p. 136). Furthermore, reflexivity is "critically thinking about how your status characteristics, values, and history, as well as the numerous choices you have made during the research, affect the results" (Bailey, 2018, p. 136).

During the collection and analysis, reflexivity is necessary because of who I am as a researcher. Reflexivity is a "continued internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation" of a researcher's positionality and by engaging in this it acknowledges how the researcher's positionality can impact the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015, p. 221). With this in mind, it is important to continuously be aware throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data that I am white, female, and coming from a university. All of these traits, and likely many others, can have an impact on how participants perceive me and act around me during the data collection process. As a researcher, I am the instrument of the data collection, meaning that I analyze and interpret the data and I also write the final research project (Bailey, 2018). Thus, being self-aware of this and continually assessing how my own life experiences impact the outcome is an important part of the research process.

Along with the practice of reflexivity, it is necessary to acknowledge that interviewing is not a neutral exchange that occurs when researchers ask questions and receive answers (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Fontana and Frey argue that there is an active nature in the process of interviewing that leads to a "contextually bound and mutually created story" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 696). More importantly, Fontana and Frey depart from this to conclude that neutrality in an interview is not possible, nor desirable, and taking a stance is unavoidable (Fontana & Frey, 2005). They propose empathetic approaches to interviewing, which seeks to stop treating interviewees as a "clockwork orange" (in reference to looking for better techniques to squeeze answers out of participants) and instead take an ethical stance in favor of the population that is being studied (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 696). With empathetic interviewing, the researcher will becomes an partner in the study in hopes of being able to advocate for social policies in favor of the interviewee (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

From an epistemological stance, I approach research from a critical paradigm. According to Bailey, scholars who approach research using a critical paradigm "believe that the research is not independent from what is researched and that the findings of research are mediated through the researcher" (Bailey, 2018, pg. 68). Research from the critical paradigm produces subjective data, which is representative of this dissertation. This also means that acknowledging researcher bias and interpretation as a part of data collection occur and engaging in practices such as reflexivity can help to alleviate that.

In conclusion, this research uses the qualitative methods of semi-structured interviewing, one group interview, field notes, and document analysis in order to examine the research questions. The following chapter will present the findings of the data collection and analysis process.

CHAPTER FOUR: Research Findings and Discussion

Introduction: Community Violence in Metro Detroit

This chapter will present and discuss the thematic analysis of data, as described in the previous chapter. Data analyzed include interviews, IFLC newsletters and additional documents, and one specific violence prevention program that the Dearborn Police Department uses. I organized this chapter according to themes and subthemes that appeared most frequently in the data analysis, and which were most applicable to the research questions. The chapter is also organized in a categorical manner so that the first theme explains IFLC as an organization, the second theme focuses on how participants view community violence and how the threat of community violence comes to be a norm, the third theme focuses on practices and programs related to increasing religious literacy and tolerance, the fourth theme focuses on community capacity and collective efficacy, and the fifth and final theme focuses on whether interfaith activism and dialogue prevent community violence.

Theme: Organizational Mission, Values, and Challenges

Beginning this chapter with an analysis on how IFLC views and projects itself to the Metro Detroit community seems important to contextualize the rest of the analysis. Based on my observation as a researcher, IFLC as an organization is undoubtedly one of the strongest and most active interfaith organizations in Metro Detroit. The leaders of this organization are well respected and bring many different skills and abilities to the table. Furthermore, the leaders of IFLC are often affiliated with some other form of interfaith work, be it through another nonprofit or community-based organization or through their own congregation.

Throughout my time in Metro Detroit and working with IFLC, it seemed that IFLC was operating in some capacity as an overarching network for the interfaith community. Many of those involved with IFCL are also involved with other FBOs. IFLC also shares interfaith events

happening throughout Metro Detroit in their newsletters. During the interview with PARTICIPANT004, she stated that "IFLC wants to be kind of like an umbrella, right? Which I think is a great idea. So, I will support that." [2] However, during an internship meeting when I posed this question to an IFLC staff member, she was hesitant to use the term 'umbrella' or 'parent' organization to describe IFLC. [3] It seems that this differing viewpoint between leadership and staff, though minor, may represent the fact that IFLC is considering how this type of restructuring would look and whether or not they are going to do it. Regardless, IFLC has an extensive network that includes both large and well-established interfaith organizations and smaller, community-oriented interfaith organizations.

This section will address the organizational mission and values as well as the challenges IFLC faces. I identified these themes through extensive analysis of interviews and newsletters. IFLCs newsletters share IFLC official statements and updates as well as interfaith community events. Events advertised on this platform are both official IFLC events and other community events, highlighting the fact that IFLC has the capacity to share information that may not necessarily be part of what IFLC is directly working on.

Subtheme 1: Mission and Values

Document analysis of IFLC newsletters allowed for the most comprehensive understanding of the organization's missions and values. By uploading newsletters from the previous six months into Dedoose and coding them using the code tree, I was able to gain insight into the organization's missions and values. IFLC's mission statement is as follows:

> "Our metropolitan Detroit community is enriched by its many religious values and practices. Religious belief and expression are the most dynamic influences in our culture. The InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit brings people of many faiths together to work toward a harmonious community based on our highest and best values. We teach understanding which leads to deep respectful relationships among individuals

[2] Interview with PARTICIPANT004, July 2019, Metro Detroit.
[3] Field notes, July 15, Metro Detroit.

> and congregations of different faiths as well as those who do not have a religious affiliation. We advocate for resilience in the face of misunderstanding and bigotry." [4]

One of the most notable observations made from analyzing the newsletters is a chasm that appears in direct messaging from IFLC. In the September 19, 2019 newsletter, there are two distinct messages that seem to contradict themselves. First, the newsletter advertises the IFLC annual awards dinner with the tagline of "Local is Global: Interfaith work locally has global value and impact." [5] However, directly under that there is a message from IFLC stating that "IFLC often points out that it has no foreign policy. We focus on local issues. We try to model the lived values that we hope others will emulate. Nevertheless, we are aware that peace in the Middle East between the State of Israel and the Palestinians is a troubling concern locally for people of faith." [6] To further exemplify this, in IFLC's July 8, 2019 newsletter, they share an article from Michigan United, titled "Rep. Levin stands with faith leaders to oppose rush to war with Iran." [7] Sharing the article in an official newsletter implies that IFLC supported the stance of a policymaker engaged in an effort to oppose war with Iran. Though the measure is admirable, it implies that IFLC does have an *opinion* on some issues relating to foreign policy.

If IFLC is to have a policy that they have no foreign policy, the organization may want to reconsider the type of information they share in their newsletters, be it official or unofficially linked to the organization. A tagline on one of their main organizational events which states local is global and interfaith work at the local level can have global impact certainly creates a space for interpretation that there is a stance on what that global level impact might be. Or rather, such a tagline leaves room for criticism that the local work in Detroit is not having a global impact on the

[4] https://www.detroitinterfaithcouncil.com/about-us/
[5] IFLC Newsletter, September 19 2019: https://www.detroitinterfaithcouncil.com/newsletter-archive/
[6] Ibid.
[7] IFLC Newsletter, July 8 2019: https://www.detroitinterfaithcouncil.com/newsletter-archive/

aforementioned issue of Israel and Palestine. This is undoubtedly a difficult line to walk and IFLC consistently does its best to take a neutral stance where possible. The next section addresses the issues of religious conflict abroad and how they influence IFLC.

Subtheme 2: Organizational Challenges: Agendas, Resources, and Involvement

There are a number of organizational challenges that interviewees discussed during interviews. These challenges are important because to some degree, each individual challenge has the capability of impacting the organizational mission and values, but also the legitimacy and existence of the organization itself. Organizational challenges also have the potential to effect the level of community programs and outreach that contribute to building community capacity and collective efficacy. Throughout the interviews, the most prevalent challenges of the organization were the amount of or limitations on resources, religious conflict abroad and foreign policy, reaching or involving specific communities, and the differing agendas brought forth to IFLC members and potential stakeholders.

One of the most significant challenges that IFLC has to deal with is competing agendas. During one interview, a participant noted that "people come with their own agendas and it's very difficult for them to see beyond that." [8] This also extends to the broader community of Metro Detroit who may view IFLC as a vessel to network or assist in dealing with certain tasks or programs. During one board meeting, I was able to witness this firsthand as guests at the board meetings addressed their causes and desire to partner with IFLC in some capacity and as board members discussed potential future endeavors. Two guests at the board meeting brought different community health issues to IFLC: drug prevention broadly and social work in Dearborn. They each gave a short elevator speech, discussed the potential of a partnership of some sort with IFLC,

[8] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020

and left. Following this, board members discussed future plans for specific IFLC committees: engage in environmental justice, training for faith community nursing, and a proposal for creating a new committee focused on youth.[9] It was clear that there is a need for an organization like IFLC, one with no defined commitment or cause other than interfaith activism, in the Metro Detroit area. However, one potential drawback of this need is that it can lead to organizations overextending themselves in order to meet community demands and needs. This awareness of possible overextension is of particular importance given the shift toward providing traditional government services through private means, changing demographics, and an increase in demand for nonprofit services (Andersson et al., 2016).

When it comes to resources, IFLC is like the vast majority of nonprofits in the sense that they require grants to operate. IFLC has a limited number of professional staff that is separate from the board, and most are paid part-time or volunteer. During my time as an intern, it became a clear reality that it would be a serious benefit for IFLC to hire full time staff. During one interview, a participant commented that a hypothetical $100,000 grant would allow the organization to hire at least two more people who could then develop and operate additional programs or assist with current programs. [10] While additional income revenue would increase the capacity of IFLC, it could potentially come with certain expectations. One participant discussed the danger that could be associated with permanent employees, not in regard to the people occupying such positions, but rather concerning employing such positions. He stated:

> "That's dangerous, having permanent employees, because you then need to find an income stream that will support that. The income stream will have a tendency to form and reform what you do. That is, the groups that will give you money will want to tell you what you should do with the money. So, it's an it's a big question whether or not we will

[9] Field notes, July 2019, Board meeting at Islamic Center of America.
[10] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.

> go from a pretty much a volunteer group to having some professional know, a director or an office and all that sort of thing." [11]

This indicates that IFLC may be making some important decisions in its near future regarding its organizational structure. It also highlights the delicate balance that exists for nonprofits that are largely volunteer operated yet have a significant commitment to community outreach and services. In short, IFLC relies on grant money to function, but there is a risk associated with grant money that may come with certain obligations.

Another issue to consider in relation to resources was the general lack of fiscal resources in the city of Detroit for the past several years. This lends credence to the importance of social disorganization theory and its specific relationship to the interfaith community in Metro Detroit. One interviewee who is affiliated both with IFLC and with another prominent interfaith group is heavily involved in the faith-based council for Detroit public schools, though this affiliation is through the other interfaith organization. The faith-based council for Detroit public schools focuses on faith-based partners which are each matched to one Detroit school in order to provide services such as tutoring, volunteers, mentorship, and more. Detroit Public Schools Community District's website for the faith-based council displays a quote from its newly appointed superintendent that states: "educating Detroit's students includes urging the entire community to fill the gaps that our children face." [12] In line with social disorganization theory, Detroit represents a disorganized community which is now forming partnerships with faith-based organizations. This is likely due to their experience in community building and organizing which draws on their extensive social capital. One interviewee reflected on the faith-based council prior to its official start and said:

> "But honestly, until the last two years, it's been a very disorganized situation of where we went and presented it [peer mediation program] to the board five years ago. And they [Detroit public schools] were interested, but then they never got back to us. We called

[11] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.
[12] https://www.detroitk12.org/Page/10328

> and called, and nothing came of the action. So, we're here now and we have this wonderful superintendent. He has expressed interest." [13]

This reflects not only how a lack of resources can alter a community in terms of its educational ability, but also how new leadership and strategic partnerships can help build and organize community back to a more organized space over time. It is worth noting that during my internship, I attended a meeting at a church in Detroit in which Detroit Public School faith-based council was part of the focus. IFLC was interested in learning more about how they could become involved in the faith-based council. A later follow up interview indicated that IFLC informally supported a separate interfaith organization (Detroit Interfaith Outreach Network) that is involved in the council. The interviewee reflected on how IFLC created a service project for its Religious Diversity Journey's students in the form of assembling snack packs. These snack packs were then provided to the interfaith organization officially affiliated with a Detroit public school and were then given out to children who were known to be food insecure during weekends, when they could not obtain meals at school. [14] This dynamic partnership reflects the high level of community capacity and social capital that exists between interfaith organizations across Metro Detroit.

A final issue regarding IFLC's challenges as they relate to resources is human capital in two specific ways: the ability that IFLC has to address certain community needs and its limitations in engaging specific demographics. When it comes to having volunteers, IFLC does not seem substantially limited in this capacity. One interviewee noted that:

> "IFLC will continue growing…it's only limited by the volunteers that are willing to put in as much time as we all do… so, the limitation, as a friend of mine used to say, is that resources will flow to competence. So, the limitation is finding the competence. Finding people who are willing to put in the energy. I don't have any trouble finding people who will support me because they know how much energy I want to put into it, and they know

[13] Interview with PARTICIPANT004, June 2019.
[14] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, March 2020.

> me and trust me. The more people you have like that involved, the more you know, you can draw resources to the work." [15]

Over the course of my experience with IFLC I have learned that within the very near future at least three board members will be retiring, two of whom were original founders. Though I have no doubt that these board members will remain active in interfaith work, this makes finding and training competent volunteers and leadership more essential than ever. This process has already begun as a recently appointed chair of IFLC has begun her tenure. As one interviewee put it, "there's been kind of a turnover, almost like a generational turnover…I feel like it's in great hands and it's been wonderful to see that transition." [16]

IFLC recognizes that the continued growth of the organization needs to incorporate demographics that are not as involved in the organization as desired. During one interview, a participant stated that "there's very little connection to the Detroit African American community. Lots and lots of Christians are involved in IFLC, but no Black churches." [17] This interview was one of the first conducted and it serves to demonstrate that IFLC is both keenly aware of areas in which they can improve, but also that they need to take action on having diverse leadership. Without representative leadership, community organizations may have challenges in legitimizing their presence in a community. In other words, leadership and membership should reflect the demographics of the community. A lack of reflective leadership and membership can have significant impact on whose voices get amplified and what community issues receive attention. It is worth noting that following this interview, in June 2019, IFLC named Reverend Stancy Adams as their new chairperson. [18] This is significant because Rev. Adams is a minister in Detroit with

[15] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.
[16] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.
[17] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.
[18] IFLC Newsletter, June 15, 2019, https://www.detroitinterfaithcouncil.com/newsletter-archive/

extensive experience in religious education who will be capable of playing a key role in connecting IFLC with the Black church community in Detroit, thereby increasing the organizations community capacity and social capital.

Another challenge that IFLC has recently faced is internal conflict over the religious violence occurring in India. I address this in the following section, but it is also relevant here. During an interview, a participant stated that:

> "But right now, what's happening in India has become a real problem for us here. We've got a lot of South Asians and there's a woman who is now a state representative in Michigan. But she'd been one of the leaders of the interfaith organization in Troy. I think it was them…. And then we had a board member…who both of them have been involved with an organization called the Hindu American Foundation, which has ties to the kind of the Hindu nationalist groups in India. And there's been a lot of attacks against Muslims, Sikhs and Christians…we currently have no Hindu board members and we're trying to find some. The Hindu folks that have been most involved in the interfaith movement earlier were all connected with this Hindu American Foundation And so we're actively trying to find some folks that don't have those connections." [19]

This excerpt highlights that IFLC does care about the affiliations that interfaith leaders may have in their personal or professional lives. During a follow up inquiry, I asked this interviewee to detail further how the religious violence in India was impacting the organization. He explained that though IFLC has taken no official stand on the religious violence in India, some of the Hindus connected to IFLC have distanced themselves from the nonprofit because they will not take a stand against a former IFLC member who has expressed that he would like IFLC to take a stand. [20] Thus, there exists the potential for IFLC to develop a strained relationship with the Hindu community in Metro Detroit. This would not be unlike previous tensions that existed over the Israel and Palestine conflict.

[19] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.
[20] Follow up interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.

IFLC is not the only interfaith organization facing challenges in creating a demographically representative and inclusive organization. During the group interview, which was composed of both IFLC leadership and leadership from another interfaith organization, one participant remarked that "we've been trying to cultivate certain populations that are not yet included. And we've had some success, but it takes, you know, over the years you have to keep at it." [21] This specific discussion was in relation to the difficulty of connecting with Metro Detroit's vibrant and large Chaldean community. During the course of my research, it seemed as that involving the Chaldean community involved in interfaith work was not an easy feat. One participant stated during an interview that though the Jewish community had done a lot of partnerships with the Chaldean community, that work kind of come to a halt. [22] However, she expressed how she had recently connected with a member of the Chaldean community and had hopes of reigniting some form of relationship or partnership. [23]

Subtheme 3: Organizational Challenges: Religious Conflict Abroad and Foreign Policy

Religious conflict abroad can have a significant impact on interfaith efforts in any context, but this is likely particularly salient in a community such as Metro Detroit. When asked what some of the biggest challenges were in establishing and maintaining interfaith relationships or partnerships, one participant responded with:

> I think one is trying to keep the focus on Detroit and not these other homelands, whether it's the Middle East or South Asia or wherever, and say, well, we're here, we're going to focus on what we deal with here… So it's one of those examples of how an organization or any interfaith organization is going to have to navigate some of these things because religions are global. Yeah. So, you know, conflict someplace else between one religious group and another religious group. It comes with us here. [24]

[21] Group interview, PARTICIPANT011, June 2018.
[22] Group interview, PARTICIPANT012, June 2018.
[23] Group interview, PARTICIPANT012, June 2018.
[24] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.

It comes as no surprise that when navigating interfaith relationships, the religious conflict abroad that has the most potential to impact Metro Detroit relationships is between Israel and Palestine. Multiple interviewees discussed this conflict, showcasing that it is a conflict that not only resonates with the Metro Detroit population, but also is one that has the potential to threaten the interfaith relationships that exist. During the group interview, I asked the group if recent events that were unfolding at the time in Gaza were cause for concern. One participant said:

> I'm concerned and there's two things that have happened with the Imams who we do interfaith work with. And one is one of Imams said 'because of what's going on in Gaza and Israel, and Israel is wrong, we will no longer buy anything made by Israel' and I won't mention which Imam that was…one of the ones who do have interfaith to work with…Well that mosque put out a statement and said they will no longer have any Israelis flocking to the mosque…. That was in the Free Press so that's out there. I'm going tomorrow [to an interfaith event], I'm not going to boycott it, I want to continue my interfaith work. But was it upsetting? Very. I feel like we're going back to 2006 you know, what happened to the Jewish and the Muslim communities. [25]

This participant also reflected on how the past war between Israel and Hezbollah ignited the need for deepening interfaith relationships at home during times of extreme conflict. She said that:

> One of the main reasons I started WISDOM with my other cofounders is because in 2006 there was enormous tension between the Jewish and the Muslim community. There was a war going on between Israel and Hezbollah. Kind of similar to what's going on with Gaza now. But in our Metro Detroit area there was a Rabbi who was involved with interfaith who said 'I'm done. I'm not talking to the Imams anymore.' He like slammed the door on any interfaith communication and I went 'what is wrong with you men?' So anyway, it was really one of the reasons why I personally was very excited to bring women together of all faith traditions and have open conversations so we can understand each other because the tension going on in Metro Detroit and in the world was horrific. [26]

Alternatively, another interviewee offered a perspective arising from her Muslim faith and identity as an Arab American regarding conflict abroad:

[25] Group interview, PARTICIPANT012, June 2018.
[26] Group interview, PARTICIPANT012, June 2018.

> There are some people will say, we hate America, but they don't hate the American people. They hate the American *policy* towards their countries…people will say, you voted for the war in Iraq. And then they went in and they destroyed Iraq without having proof. That was later found out. Okay, that's not the American people's fault. That is the foreign policy initiatives of the government of America...I also believe that the policies for Palestine and Israel…where the majority of the people probably are standing with Israel and not with Palestine, feeds into that hatred. And then I also for me, I look at myself, the Arabic community…what are we doing as the Middle East or the Arabic communities or what are we doing to solve that problem? So, you can even say insurgents in Iraq are probably also Muslims. Doesn't matter now, they could be Muslims—Sunni, Shia, Druze…but under the umbrella of Muslim, you're creating a problem there, too. So, America may have started it, but you're not doing anything to help make it better. So, but people, they don't want to look in the mirror. You know, and take ownership of their own wrongdoings, too, and see the bigger picture. [27]

This excerpt conveys several complicated messages. First, the participant is asserting that when stereotypical imagery of angry Muslims exists, those people are not speaking to their hatred of American *people*, but rather American foreign *policy*. Second, she is stating that issues as contentious as Israel and Palestine or the war in Iraq feed into that hatred of American *policy*. Finally, she is stating that insurgency as a tactic further perpetuates problems abroad, generating more hatred towards *policy*, and that violent responses abroad to American *policy* does nothing to help the situation. The impact of issues such as the war in Iraq or the conflict between Israel and Palestine are *policy* driven issues that ultimately have an impact on a global society. She also is saying that as a Muslim Arab American, she feels that her own community needs to be taking part in a solution, which for her can occur via interfaith work.

At the time of this writing, the issue that was gaining most attention within IFLC and its need to discuss foreign policy stances related to deadly religious violence happening in India.

> IFLC's working on the question of why we don't have a foreign policy and we don't want to have a foreign policy. What we want to do is be focused on Detroit interfaith relationships and Detroit. And if through those relationships, we can help people process stuff or have some sort of positive impact. Good. But that's not our focus. Our focus is building the relationships and working together in Detroit. [28]

[27] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020.
[28] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.

From this dialogue it can be determined that religiously motivated violence abroad can have a real and a profound impact on interfaith efforts that are local and community based. This also comes into the direct conscience of IFLC as they grapple with affiliates in their broader network who have ties to movements that support violent Hindu nationalist ideas. As I mentioned above, the challenge IFLC is now facing is incorporating Hindu leadership or partnership that has no ties to such movements. The ongoing religiously motivated violence in India has real ramifications on IFLC and efforts in Metro Detroit, such as causing fractured relationships between previous interfaith leaders.

Summary: Organizational Mission, Values, and Challenges

IFLC faces many organizational challenges that directly relate to its mission and values. Coming full circle, it is understandable why IFLC wishes to remain neutral in foreign policy by declaring they have no foreign policy. At the time of this writing, IFLC is working on draft statement explaining why they have no foreign policy, but it has not passed by board approval. There remains a complicated relationship that exists between the interfaith community and religious conflict abroad, and as a researcher who has been involved in this community for several years, I suspect that this will be the case for the foreseeable future. There will consistently be conflicts or events which occur abroad that specific demographics within the Metro Detroit community feel passionate about. This makes sense given the rich history of immigration to Metro Detroit and the very real fact that many people in the region have loved ones affected by violence abroad. When their community abroad is at risk of violence exposure, it is only natural that they would want their community at home to condemn such violence. In order to ensure fairness however, IFLC will be most successful by not getting involved or speaking out about such conflict. As the leadership recognizes, efforts need to remain local. The difficult issue to navigate then

becomes how local efforts become global and how global impacts local. This is especially relevant to this research given that global conflicts rooted or related to religion have the capacity to inform how citizens come to view threats of violence. The next section analyzes interpretations of violence and viewing violence as a norm.

Theme: Interpretations of Community Violence and Threat of Violence as a Norm

In order to frame the remainder of this analysis, it is necessary to address how participants viewed community violence. When interviewing participants, I decided intentionally not to define community violence beyond telling interlocutors that I was most interested in gang violence and violent extremism. I quickly found that by leaving the issue of community violence open to their interpretation, I was able to gather data that most accurately reflected the lived experiences they had in relation to exposure to community violence. Participants shared experiences of situations where community violence was a real threat and when they perceived it as a threat that had become a norm with varying degrees of influence in their lives. This section will address examples of community violence as experienced by participants and explore the concept of a threat of violence being so persistent that it becomes a norm.

It seems wise to begin this analysis by sharing two separate experiences I had during my time in Metro Detroit. The first was in Detroit with an African American Reverend who rented me an Airbnb I stayed at during a period of my research. During my stay, she and I had several discussions regarding my research. When I spoke about my interest in researching violent extremism, it quickly became clear that her interpretation of that directly related to police brutality against Black people across the US. This is a valid interpretation of what violent extremism can mean to a person who has a different lived experience than I do. Another instance of this occurred in a Hamtramck coffee shop during a discussion with the owner, who had long since emigrated

from Bosnia. During this discussion, he asked me about my research and was quick to relate violent extremism to the actions of former patrons. He recalled how patrons to his café had left reviews online about how his café catered to jihadist terrorists. These individuals were referring to the people that live in Hamtramck, a diverse community with many Muslim residents. The owner argued that those who offered such reviews were, in fact, the violent extremists. Again, this is a valid interpretation on how one person interprets the meaning of violent extremism. Acknowledging these interpretations of violent extremism call into question the difference between how everyday people interpret violent extremism and how government entities or research institutions interpret violent extremism. This is important to acknowledge because policy around violent extremism should take into consideration the community that policy is for.

These experiences occurred early in the dissertation field work. Therefore, it became clear early on that the people who lived in Metro Detroit were going to interpret what community violence is in different ways and that their interpretation was going to be informed by their lived experience. Accordingly, this section explores how participants perceived community violence and how they perceived it had affected their lives.

Subtheme: Fear of Violent Extremism Against Religious Groups

One of the most prevalent themes throughout the interviews was the perceived threat of violent acts that might be carried out against religious groups, particularly against Jews and Muslims. Addressing this can easily become complicated, as these forms of violent acts may or may not be referred to as *hate crimes* or *terrorism*. Defining these terms is beyond the scope of this research, and what matters the most is that participants viewed these types of acts as forms of violent extremism. Rather, it should be understood that for some research participants, what generally might be classified as a hate crime or act of terrorism was a type of violent extremism. This suggests that perhaps there exists a complicated relationship in the process of defining

community violence. Hate crimes, terrorism, and violent extremism are all forms of community violence and therefore regardless of the accuracy or inaccuracy of participant interpretation, their insights are valid and useful in informing the broader interpretations of community violence.

To proceed, it is best to examine the data from the perspective of Jewish and Muslim participants. All participants from these faith groups had one thing in common: they feared that their communities were vulnerable to community violence, and specifically that their communities were likely to be *targets* of community violence. It is useful to utilize the words of one participant who said that "I think that there are different communities that would be differently aware." [29] In this sense, some communities are going to be more keenly aware of a threat of violence against them due to their religious beliefs and cultural practices.

Some of the most profound insights to come from participants addressed the measures that their specific religious community took to ensure safety. This was particularly striking when it related to security measures taken at schools and houses of worship. One Jewish participant remarked:

> Both my kids schools have security that wears concealed weapons. And also, a whole variety of security procedures that they won't even tell us about. Because of the reality of the potential for violent extremism. So, I think there are some communities that are particularly more aware of it than others. [30]

This participant, who is Jewish, went on to further detail the seriousness of security for Jewish institutions. She acknowledged that the schools her children attended as well as the synagogue her family attended had bulletproof windows—the synagogue had two sets of bulletproof windows in doors that anyone entering the building has to pass through. [31] This fact highlights that the Jewish community feels there is a serious potential for violence. The same participant continued to say:

[29] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.
[30] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.
[31] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.

> "So, we live in a unique community that is very aware of the potential for violent extremism. And actually, I just noticed that the Jewish Federation of Detroit has a job wanted ad out for a community—a school security specialist. They are hiring a full-time coordinator for Jewish school safety. I think it is something that people in my particular community are very aware of." [32]

On the other hand, the Muslim community in Metro Detroit feels similar sentiments. One participant detailed the level of security in place at her mosque:

> We do have a lot of security. We lock all the doors. You can only buzz in. We also have security for the school, for the children. You know, there's security that drives around the mosque all day. There's a security guard that is with the children at the school at all times. And sometimes we are on higher alert than usual. Things happen. There is a shooting, and especially if the shooter happens to be a Muslim... Yeah, we always have to be on a high end where there's cameras everywhere. Sometimes we have people come in on Friday prayer and want to cause a ruckus. [33]

Similar to her Jewish counterpart, this participant reflected on serious levels of security protocol that permeates the daily life of anyone who attends the mosque or sends their children to school there. This security exists for good reason and the participant recounted an instance of when there was a perceived threat of a violent act. She said:

> We had one time someone come in and dressed as the Grim Reaper. Yeah, but we left him alone. And he went into the prayer room and he came back out. We had security. He was watching him, and he left peacefully. Thank God that it ended that way. I've never known him to come back again. But he did come the one-time. [34]

This story stuck out to me as a researcher because there are multiple components to consider. First, the people at the mosque had no idea who this person was as he remained masked the entire time. Second, they had no idea what his intentions were. It could have been a person who was simply curious but wished to be anonymous, or it could have been a person assessing the level of security the mosque had. Finally, it exemplifies again that security in a house of worship is a very legitimate thing to have. The participant also revealed that the mosque gets weekly, sometimes daily,

[32] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.
[33] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020.
[34] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020.

threatening phone calls from people that could realistically be calling from anywhere. [35] Continuous threatening phone calls and the appearance of the grim reaper are reason enough for any person to feel a sense of consistent anxiety over their personal safety. Though these are not inherently violent acts, they could lead to instances of community violence. This exemplifies that community violence does not necessarily occur spontaneously and calls into question whether or not the threat of violence is a categorical form of violence.

What eventually revealed itself during the interview process was that the threat of violence had become very normalized in the sense that it could exist as a day-to-day concern. Indeed, the threat of violence is so pervasive that it becomes an accepted norm in these religious communities that are often targeted. One participant explained how persistent bomb threats impacted her thought process:

> I mean it was a Tuesday and then two weeks later it was a Tuesday. And um, because my kids are teenagers and they have cell phones, before the school even emailed to say what was happening they were like 'this is what' happening right now—we are in a lock down' and I turned to my husband and I was like 'its bomb threat Tuesday'…
> I actually wrote to the head of one of my kid's schools and I was like 'this is not an appropriate reaction for me to have—like bomb threat fatigue'. Like my children's school had a bomb threat and I wasn't even worried. [36]

The term 'bomb threat fatigue' used by the interviewee expresses how she felt as a parent of children whose school was the target of bomb threats. This form of potential community violence had been occurring so often that it was becoming expected and normalized. Another interviewee expressed a similar sentiment:

> I hope this never happens, but I always in the back of my mind, I always say, you know, there's going to be a day when someone who's crazy enough is going to come in and do something here, in Dearborn, because we are the largest Muslim community in United States, an Islamic center of America is the largest mosque in the United States. So, in the

[35] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020.
[36] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.

> back of our minds, we always worry about that. We always worry about that, Yeah, we worry and have to pray for the best. [37]

Both participants shared their thoughts and feelings regarding persistent threats of violent extremism their community might face. This suggests that the threat of community violence against religious groups is very real and exists to the point of becoming a norm. To varying degrees, it has the propensity to shape the way people live, work, and worship.

To participants, it often seemed that the most credible threat for violent extremist violence in their communities came from what one participant called the "white right." [38] She stated that these people are "right of center [politically]" and that believed her interfaith affiliation was "a ploy to convert people and to trick people." [39] She discussed how many of her neighbors embodied this categorization and recalled how she one time had to leave a neighborhood party because she could not stand some of the comments they were making. [40] She also recounted how neighbors had openly expressed suspicion for the one Muslim person in their neighborhood, stating things such as "the shades are always drawn…what are they doing over there?" [41] This type of groupthink on unfounded grounds treats certain demographics as suspect communities regardless of the fact that the people under suspicion have done nothing wrong. This participant also made it clear that she remained in contact with these people primarily so she could continuously insert her own thoughts and opinions regarding the importance of interfaith work and tolerance. [42]

Subtheme: Gang Violence

The subject of gang violence did not receive as much input from interviewees as did violent extremism. This is likely due to the fact mentioned previously in that IFLC has recently only began

[37] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020
[38] Group interview, PARTICIPANT010, June 2018.
[39] Group interview, PARTICIPANT010, June 2018.
[40] Group interview, PARTICIPANT010, June 2018.
[41] Group interview, PARTICIPANT010, June 2018.
[42] Group interview, PARTICIPANT010, June 2018.

to strengthen its relationship to the religious communities in the city of Detroit. Most interviewees lived in the suburbs, which has a degree of separation from the gang activity in Detroit. However, a few participants did have some things to say. One participant remarked on the work a friend of hers was doing in Detroit. She said:

> He has helped people who've come out of prison to help them train and get jobs at his church… That's really for help to create businesses. And then his neighborhood used to be a big gang neighborhood…And he got all these gang members to join his church. Oh, they now have their own band marching band. They have basketball games. They take care of the neighborhood. I think most of them, if they're still in a gang, it's transformed the nature of the gang. [43]

Though this is secondary information, it reflects the nature of a faith-based organization in Detroit being involved with gang intervention and violence prevention. It is unclear on whether there is any interfaith component to this, however a religious institution is directly involved with preventing community violence. Future research should examine this relationship more carefully.

Another participant had a family member who had experienced gang violence at his place of business in Detroit years ago. She stated that:

> Living in the suburbs are always like, OK, the gangs in Detroit. Well, I don't know where I mean, and I know like my family, my father, he owns gas stations in Detroit from the 70s. I mean, he still owns them now, but he's seen it where people would literally come to this... I mean, they'd have shootouts at the gas station…now we've seen it go from shootouts at the gas station to people leaving Detroit. And there's not that much traffic in Detroit anymore. So, I don't know if people leaving or there or the gangs are not there or they've gone somewhere else, but in those particular areas there is not that much traffic anymore. [44]

Therefore, there is some separation between those who live in the suburbs of Metro Detroit and do not ever experience gang violence personally. This general lack of experience impacts how they perceive the topic of community violence. The lack of insight on gang violence from interviewees does indicate that exposure to different types of community violence may relate to geographic

[43] Interview with PARTICIPANT004, June 2019.
[44] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020.

location. Even with close proximity to Detroit, interviewees do not feel threatened by gang violence in their day to day life.

It is worth noting here that Detroit does have at least one violence prevention program that directly targets reducing gun violence and gang violence: Operation Ceasefire. Operation Ceasefire began in 2013 and it was initially developed by the 5th and 9th East side precincts (Circo et al., 2018). This program utilizes a focused deterrence model and has strategic community partnerships which include members of the faith community (Circo et al., 2018). The final report does not detail the nature of any partnership with a faith community in Detroit, but it does state that Operation Ceasefire has been an important factor to violence reduction in Detroit (Circo et al., 2018).

Summary: Assessing Perceptions of Community Violence in Metro Detroit

Perceptions of community violence expressed by the people interviewed in this research revealed the most prevalent theme to be that there was a concern over violence that targets religious institutions. There was also the sentiment that certain religious groups are a suspect community. This was most salient in the treatment of Muslims. One participant stated that "I think that there are a lot of Muslim communities that are concerned about violent extremism because they are obviously clearly, blatantly, unfairly targeted." [45] Out of those interviewed, the concern over religious institutions that could be a target were undoubtedly related to Jewish and Islamic houses of worship or schools. Out of those interviewed, the sentiment was that those who identified as Muslim were more likely to be the demographic falsely accused or viewed to be who would perpetrate an act of violent extremism.

[45] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.

Another topic raised by participants was the relationship that may exist between the causes of gang violence and violent extremism. This is a significant finding given that the literature has called into question the mechanisms that underly behavior of gangs and violent extremists, finding both similarities and differences (Pyrooz et al., 2018). One participant stated:

> I think of gang activity and white nationalist activity as very similar kinds of groups of people that are joining it are, you know, they want a sense of having a Gnostic sense. I don't know if that makes any sense for you, but they want a sense that they have the secret knowledge of what's going on and they have the secret knowledge of conspiracies. They have a secret knowledge of who's right and who's wrong. They have a secret knowledge of where their community is and where their community is not, who belongs in their community and who does not belong in their community, that they take on the basis of where the where their community starts and stops. And you're supposed to… if you as a gang member, you're supposed to know where you belong and where you don't belong. And, you know, you do enforce those borders. And it's a little different I think with the with the white nationalists. But they've got a sense of their borders too… There are those people who are part of the conspiracy and they know what this conspiracy is. They know what it is that's been maligning them…. They may call those people white people or patriots, and they call each other… They know who the true patriots are and the ones who are not and who should have weapons and who shouldn't have weapons. So, I think that there's there are similarities between the two groups. [46]

This excerpt not only supports the finding that white nationalism, or the *white right*, exists as something people in Metro Detroit view as a potential threat, but it also explains the basis for potentially grouping gang members and violent extremists together. To this interviewee, these groups were similar based on their sense of wanting to have some form of secret knowledge and also a sense of having boundaries (whether geographical or pertaining to people who either are or are not part of a movement). Towards the end of one interview, another participant questioned the motivation for joining a gang or a white nationalist group. She stated:

> "I wonder like do gangs and white nationalists…Now, I don't if this is going to sound right. Like are they misplaced? Because they've had other things happen in their lives and they find that a gang or the white hate groups…they feel like a unit, that they belong together, and they don't belong anywhere else…does that make them like a unit, a family

[46] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.

unit?" [47]

This participant diverges from the above participant, who theorized that there might be specific similarities between group involvement of gangs and violent extremism. Instead, she poses the question of whether those who join a gang or a white nationalist group are driven by a desire for a sense of belonging. Both participants ultimately posed questions that are topically similar to that of this research: why does an individual join a gang or violent extremist group and how might those groups be similar? Answering those questions falls outside the scope of this research, but they do reflect how participants view the individuals that join groups such as a gang or white nationalist group.

During the research, some participants reflected on the historical legacy of violence in Detroit. Their experiences and memories of the riots in Detroit undoubtably impacted their perceptions on community violence and what responses to such violence worked. One participant recalled that:

> I have experience with the violence that occurred around the civil disturbances in Detroit in 1967. And that the uneasiness that continued in the community in 67, 68, 69. 70, and 71 when I was still a pretty young man….[48]

This participant also commented that:

> At that point people that were affiliated with various religious groups did actively go out on the street. I was part of that to meet with groups of people who were quite animated about the amount of oppression that they said they felt in the community and that I observed as I think, being reinforced and true. And so, the lack of services and so on, especially in the African American community… So, I observed that as a young man and saw the effectiveness of people who were recognized as a people of faith. Trying to encourage people to find ways to work out their differences and their anger in a less destructive ways. [49]

[47] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020.
[48] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.
[49] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.

Another participant, though not speaking specifically to the 1967 riot but rather on the general history of Detroit, stated that "with Detroit, if it wasn't for the faith-based community, people would have had it a lot worse over the years." [50] Both statements support the fact that the faith community in Detroit has had a significant influence on the overall well-being of the community. Historically, people of faith receive recognition for being effective in mitigating anger into less destructive paths of engagement and the faith community as a whole has contributed to the overall welfare of Detroit in a positive manner.

The next section will address specific practices and programs that exist in Metro Detroit which may contribute to preventing forms of community violence by increasing religious literacy, providing a safe platform for learning, and ultimately creating bridging social capital among bonded groups. It aims to highlight how the faith community in Metro Detroit has played an active role in consistently following community ties.

Theme: Practices and Programs

IFLC has three separate programs it offers; one specifically for children and two that are for adults. Religious Diversity Journeys (RDJ) is a program offered to seventh graders across Metro Detroit. It is an immersive program that allows a maximum of 900 seventh graders to visit six different houses of worship where they are able to learn about the religion and culture of a respective house of worship while also being able to ask questions about the religion in a safe environment. RDJ works to challenge stereotypes and false information regarding religion while also teaching students to find common ground across faith traditions. This attempt to establish common ground comes in many forms, such as emphasizing the role music has in religion or the

[50] Interview with PARTICIPANT004, June 2019.

similar undertones within the Abrahamic faiths. Students attend RDJ while they simultaneously study world religions at school.

RDJ is IFLC's most popular program and the most institutionalized program offered by the organization. RDJ was so popular among parents who were chaperoning the field trips that IFLC established a similar program for adults: Exploring Religious Landscapes (ERL). ERL typically features panelists who discuss a specific topic and then answer audience questions. For an example, topics have included *Women & Islam, Exploring Women and Faith, Exploring Women and Hindu Life,* and *Exploring Islam and Judaism*. IFLC's program *Ask A…* is a program that features individuals from a specific faith and serves as a platform where the audience asks questions and those representing the faith provide answers. Previous programs include *Ask A Buddhist, Ask a Jew,* and *Ask a Pagan.* Both programs take place throughout the year.

The programs offered by IFLC represent an opportunity for *bridging* social capital. Bridging social capital occurs when there are "ties among people with diverse backgrounds" (Daoud et al., 2017, pg. 648) as well as the building of new relationships (Walter & Hyde, 2012). These definitions of bridging social capital are most applicable to the students who attend RDJ given the strategic planning that goes into assembling RDJ. Cohort planning is an extensive process that intentionally attempts to place students that might otherwise never come into contact with one another into the same cohort. Through doing this, students are able to connect with peers across Metro Detroit who have different backgrounds, religions, and cultures than their own. Bridging social capital is also defined as the sharing of resources within social groups of members who have similar connections and relationships with differing social groups who have another form of social identity (Kawachi et al., 2008). Not only are the students able to experience this form of bridging social capital, IFLC as an organization is engaging in linking social capital. This

is defined as refers to the relationships and participation in group activities, institutions, or with people of authority to help communities gain access to important resources (Daoud et al., 2017). In the case of RDJ, the important resources IFLC is able to gain access to includes houses of worship as well as clergy and staff who help to run the program. The amount of human capital required to run RDJ is no easy task to achieve and I discuss this in the following thematic section under community capacity.

The most important aspect of the programs offered by IFLC are their ability to create situations where bridging and linking social capital occurs. It is bridging and linking social capital that are crucial in the field of violence prevention as it creates relationships based on shared goals and understandings. In a community as multicultural as Metro Detroit, the value of this opportunity is significant. This is especially true for RDJ, which educates hundreds of kids a year across Metro Detroit. Though this might seem like a small number compared to the relative population, the kids who attend RDJ are also taking the lessons they learned and sharing them with classmates and family members.

The remainder of this thematic section will discuss RDJ, ERL, and *Ask A…* in order to assess their potential impact on preventing community violence. This section will also address a program not formally tied to IFLC, but rather to faith leaders across Metro Detroit. This program focuses specifically on how to counter violent extremism in local communities, of which there is key importance for the involvement of faith leaders and communities. Including this is done in order to highlight the extreme importance of ensuring that faith leaders are present at the table when it comes to methods of violence prevention.

Subtheme: Religious Education and Literacy

As mentioned above, this section will address the programs IFLC offers to the Metro Detroit community. RDJ is IFLC's cornerstone program; it receives the most resources and

funding. It is also IFLC's oldest program, having been operational for nearly 20 years. Because of this, RDJ had a tendency to discussed more frequently during interviews. Furthermore, since the vast majority of the data collected specifically focused on RDJ, that will be the primary program evaluated here. The table below depicts the programs offered by IFLC for ease of reference.

Religious Diversity Journeys	• Seventh Graders (800-900 per year) • Immersion Program • Visit six houses of worship • Teaches tolerance towards religious and cultural differences
Exploring Religious Landscapes	• Adult program • Panel of speakers focusing on specific topics • Q&A
Ask a….	• Adult program • Speakers represent any given religion/culture • Audience members are able to ask any questions they have regarding religion/and culture

An important aspect of the RDJ program is the diverse representation that is present in the program. There are students who are not only from different school districts participating in the program, but also students from various religious and cultural backgrounds. One participant shared that an interesting aspect of the program was how individual schools chose the students who participated; since the max capacity of the program is around 900 each school can only send a certain number of students from their seventh-grade class. She stated that:

> Now we are at like 35 schools, and we have Dearborn and Hamtramck in the program. So, Hamtramck brings its English learners to RDJ. Not its…'probably can miss class and make up the work on their own' kids. But kids that lived in Yemen 18 months ago. And kids that are actively learning English and teaching their parents English. So, it's just...I found it really, really, really moving that there were definitely some concentration and appropriate behavior challenges with the Hamtramck and Dearborn kids…That I really felt like when people complained to me about that… I really tried to challenge them with the importance that these were brand new Americans. [51]

[51] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.

This statement reflects the meaning that RDJ participation can have for some students, particularly those who might be new to the US. This program not only offers them an opportunity to learn about other religions and cultures, but it also allows them to gain insight into topics that they can then share with their parents. It also serves as an example to the wider community that participates in RDJ that immigration for children is no easy occurrence and that newly arrived children are *brand new Americans*. To these students, RDJ is a platform for learning the values, such as religious tolerance and acceptance of diversity, that are a part of the foundation of American values.

The structure of RDJ allows for students to learn about things that world religions have in common while simultaneously teaching children to celebrate and tolerate religious differences. One of the most important things RDJ does through this is challenge false perceptions on religions that children have somehow come to believe is true through their lived experiences. One story exemplifies this best:

> I had a teacher from Troy come to me at the Muslim Unity Center and say 'this girl over here she came to me and she said 'I can't I can't go to the mosque, my parents won't like because in the country where we are from we don't get along with the Muslims'. And the teacher said 'okay well then you have to drop out of the program. You can't just pick and choose what religions to learn about.' And I don't know the details, but she ends up coming to the mosque. The teacher pointed her out to me. This little girl had her hand shot up in the air all day long asking questions. And at the end of the day I do like a verbal wrap up. Process with the kids. Where I ask them...I say 'I didn't know that' as a lead and I ask them to stand up, but I'll walk around with a microphone or talk… She stood up and said 'I didn't know that Muslims believe in God.' And I'm telling you like my skin crawled. Tears. The woman at the Muslim Unity Center who I was co-running the program with, literally cried. She's like 'I wanna go home and tell my parents.' [52]

This story serves as an example of the impact RDJ has on students and parents of students. In this story, a student was surprised to learn that Muslims believe in God and she was excited to share

[52] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.

this information with her parents. It is a powerful story that emphasizes the common ground that exists between religions, especially the Abrahamic traditions. Though these students are in seventh grade and not likely to personally engage in community violence, attending RDJ may serve as one potential mechanism that occurs during key developmental years which may impact students later in life by teaching the importance of tolerance. Determining this with a degree of certainty is far beyond the means of this research, but the question on how impactful this experience across the life course is an important one.

One of the things that sets RDJ apart and makes it such a successful program is the fact that it provides a very immersive, hands on experience. Students are physically inside of a house of worship where respective clergy or religious leaders from that community teach them. This means that students who may be Muslim or Christian are able to visit a synagogue and learn from a Rabbi, and vice versa. Students can hear music and song that belongs to a religion or culture from clergy or religious leaders actually performing music in front of them. They are able to take part in witnessing how some milestones throughout a life look, such as a demonstration of what a Jewish wedding looks like. On the topic of immersion, one participant stated that:

> When you give people an immersive experience, it's an emotional experience and that that experience does change…they're what we call hearts and minds, but it really creates a different emotional basis for the way they approach things from then on. They then begin to say not only is it not true that Muslims are dangerous, but my friend wouldn't do that… That's an emotional understanding…so those kinds of experiences that I think we give people and that we encourage people to have emotional immersive experiences. And we know that people come out of our events and fill out the questionnaire that say, you know, I had no idea. It changed my whole way of looking at this. [53]

During the time that I was an intern for IFLC, I was able to access a number of questionnaires that came from RDJ students. Indeed, I was responsible for converting some written questionnaires to typed responses. These questionnaires serve as secondary information regarding what students

[53] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.

learned through out any particular RDJ experience. For example, one question asked students to identify a shared value across faith traditions and to explain why that is important. Student responses include:

- To be respectful to people and always be humble and kind because you should always be equally nice to others. Most of the faiths are really similar.
- Sharing kindness and things that you have and might not need. This is important because it unites all the people of the world
- We are all equal, it is important, so we are all treated the same, & not judge someone by looks or what their religion or what they believe in because we all have different opinions on things, but we still treat each other the same. Treat people how you want to be treated
- That there is another path then violence. I think this value is important because peace is better than violence
- All faiths value respecting the people around you. This is important because if you respect others, they will respect you and the community will become better. [54]

A separate question prompts the students to reflect on how RDJ changed their understanding on religions and people, and how that new understanding will impact their life. Student responses include:

- To love one another, not to fight, made me more aware of the different relationships with God
- I know that it's not one religion that do bad things, it's the people who decide to
- It makes me think that the people around me aren't very different from me. It sometimes helps me get along with people better. I can also correct people's misconceptions
- I used to be prejudiced against other religions because they didn't do things the way I did, but now I accept that these religions are different and of course cannot be the same as mine
- It kind of makes me really see how ignorant people are and were. They couldn't see the similarities in their religion, and so, they created wars and fights and arguments. [55]

Statements such as these indicate a deep level of learning. Students stress learning values such as respect, nonviolence, equality, unity, and how to make their community a better place. These statements also suggest that students are taking what they learn from a religious literacy program and applying it in a broader sense in the way they rationalize applying this to their community. Finally, some statements made by students in the questionnaire appear to support that religious literacy has allowed them to adapt a viewpoint that champions nonviolence, both in the personal

[54] RDJ questionnaire database, personal document.
[55] RDJ questionnaire database, personal document.

community violence form and the state-level war form. Students report being able to get along better with other people, being able to communicate properly in order to correct misconceptions, and that peace is a better pathway that violence. These responses highlight that RDJ, and religious literacy education broadly, does have the capability of preventing community violence through the teaching of shared values.

Subtheme: Effective Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism

The topic of policing in order to counter violent extremism (and violence, broadly) effectively is one that receives ample attention in the literature. Academic debate has often focused on homeland security policing and community policing as typologies for police work. This analysis focuses on the latter, specifically as it exists in Dearborn. To clarify, community policing was established to be a broad and flexible concept that would be particularly relevant in societies that are culturally and religiously diverse (Pickering et al., 2008). Furthermore, community policing essentially reorders police priorities to include an increased emphasis on community cooperation and a reconfiguring of police work to include social objectives that go beyond a traditional focus of law and order (Pickering et al., 2008). Those who advocate for community policing have argued that police functions need to be reprioritized in order to address the 'root causes' of crime, such as social disorder and inequality (Vaughn Lee, 2010).

During the interviews with interfaith community members, it was immensely clear that there was a high level of respect for Dearborn Police Chief Ronald Haddad. When interviewees discussed police-community relationships they would reference him, often times by name. Haddad has set himself apart as a leader who genuinely cares about the community, and arguably the region, that he works in. He has also been involved in high level government work that focuses on best ways to prevent violent extremism. One example of this is his service on the Department of Homeland Security Advisory Council's Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group

that took place during Spring 2010. This report included several relevant general findings, such as: (1) community-oriented policing works in preventing violent crime (2) all violent crime is local and (3) emphasis should be on building safe, secure, resilient, and crime resistant communities. [56] Including this data in the overall analysis was important not only because it demonstrates the interfaith network, but also because it highlights how a police department has worked with an interfaith community in violence prevention.

I was able to interview one police officer from the Dearborn Police Department as a part of this research. This interview was possible due to the IFLC network, highlighting the extent to which the interfaith community in Metro Detroit. During this interview, the participant gave me several documents that exemplify the community policing work in Dearborn. One document highlights a faith-based tabletop exercise held in September 2013 in Dearborn. The goal of this exercise was to focus on interfaith communities in Dearborn and southeastern Michigan and present were leaders or representatives of nearly all religious denominations and organizations present throughout the region. This exercise was a scenario that was based on a fictitious crisis in order to cultivate conversation and idea exchange in relation to prevention, protection, mitigation, and responses to a simulated emergency. [57] There were four objectives during this simulated crisis: (1) develop improved, multi-directional information sharing capabilities and processes among vested stakeholders at the facility, community, and sector levels (2) promote the development of collaborative processes and integrate resources (3) identify existing vulnerabilities and support an after-action process to mitigate risk and increase the resilience of the communities vested stakeholders (4) develop a sector-specific tabletop exercise program for dissemination throughout

[56] Department of Homeland Security Advisory Council, CVE Working Group, Spring 2010: https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/hsac_cve_working_group_recommendations.pdf
[57] Faith Based Organizations Tabletop Exercise, September 12, 2013, Dearborn MI: From the desk of Chief Ronald Haddad.

participating faith-based communities, alongside a summary of best practices. [58] This exercise in one way that the Dearborn Police Department engages with faith-based stakeholders in building collaborative relationships to respond to a crisis.

During the interview, I was able to gain valuable insight into the practices Dearborn uses to counter violent extremism. First, the participant identified three common themes that tend to present themselves among violent extremists:

> But anyway, when you look at these active shooters and these, quote unquote, acts of terror, there's three things that are pretty common. Number one, and these are general, but they're in common for the most part. Most of them have not been on law enforcement's radar, not many law enforcements contacts. Number two, there was always a component of mental fitness or mental illness attached to it. Then number three, somebody close to them knew that they were teetering on this violence, self-destruction, etc. [59]

Assessing this statement for accuracy is beyond the scope of this research, however this does reflect the lived experience of a highly trained, highly involved police officer. The aspect of this statement that is most relevant to the research is observation number three, where its indicated that most of the time someone close to a potential perpetrator of community violence is aware that the person is on an edge of violence. This is perhaps the most important step in community violence prevention given that it is often these people who decide whether or not they should express concern to law enforcement. This is undoubtedly a difficult decision to make, especially if it involves informing on a relative. However, Dearborn has set itself apart by creating a violence intervention/prevention program based on community trust through community policing efforts. The interviewee stated that:

> That's why we developed an intervention model here. Mental health intervention model, where we have trained our community that unlike most law enforcement in America, no assault… We've trained them on intervention, that if they fear or suspect or know that

[58] Faith Based Organizations Tabletop Exercise, September 12, 2013, Dearborn MI: From the desk of Chief Ronald Haddad.
[59] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.

> one of their loved ones or one of their classmates or one of their work partners is teetering on violence and they have the potential and the ability to pull it off, we want to know about it. And what we try to do is defuse them, work with our social agencies, some kind of faith-based community to get them help. Oftentimes they're young. We use the school board and we have removed weapons from homes. We've advised them [families] on finances and not given them [potential perpetrator] credit cards where they can buy things online. And we've even let our domestic violence advocates use their resources to get them help. And we had seven major interventions here in the last six years or so, maybe longer time flies when you're having fun. And I can tell you what didn't happen. There was no headlines in the newspaper that says 'this guy or this person slaughters people'. There's no proactive measurement for what didn't happen. But I can tell you what didn't happen. We didn't have any atrocities here that would have captured the headlines. [60]

This excerpt identifies all the moving parts that are involved in Dearborn's intervention model: social agencies, faith-based communities, school boards, families, and domestic violence advocates. The interviewee also stated that additional services included family counselors and psych and behavioral services. [61] Additionally, the interviewee clearly stated that there have been seven major interventions over the last six years, indicating that this program has had success. Measuring that success is difficult given that, as the interviewee states, there is no way to proactively measure what *did not happen.* The interviewee also discussed how important the interfaith relationships were to the Dearborn Police Department.

> Before I got here, there was a… The mayor had already established an interfaith group. And we've put it on steroids now. We've reached out not only more within the community, but within our whole region, because southeastern Michigan, for example, we don't have a synagogue in Dearborn. But I know that we have some Jewish members that live here, not many. And that right around us, our residents go and worship in other cities and other city members come here. So, we've really spread out when we have training, be it anything to do with terrorism. We've developed several national programs here. I always bring them all and we do a tabletop exercise, get their views on things. And then when I send my recommendations back to the secretary there, what the community thinks, not only what I think so. And to be precise, we found that inclusion builds trust. We're not meeting with one group and giving them a version. We're not excluding another group. [62]

[60] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.
[61] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.
[62] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.

The interviewee clearly indicates a deep understanding regarding not only the religious ties to his own community, but also those within southeast Michigan. He acknowledged that people are moving within Metro Detroit for worshiping purposes and that in this sense, the borders of Dearborn are very permeable. Therefore, it is incredibly important to include representatives from southeastern Michigan not only to establish inclusion to build trust, but also to protect those who reside in Dearborn but might worship elsewhere, and vice versa.

The interviewee had important things to say regarding the perception of what community violence is, specifically in defining terms such as terrorism or violent extremism. He recounted an incident following 9/11 that occurred on the Detroit and Canada border. To summarize, a father and daughter were profiled during a stop at Windsor Tunnel and officers suspected they were engaging or attempting to engage in some form of terroristic behavior due to the fact that they were taking pictures of big tanks at a gas station. [63] This was very far from the truth and the reality was that the pictures were for a school project the daughter was completing.[64] On the other hand, the interviewee recounted the following:

> They literally stop a skinhead with a three-foot pipe bomb in the back of an all raggedy car. This is to blow up something here in southwest Detroit. And one of my commanders at the time and I loved the guy dearly… I said "first of all, you gave a public statement and you shouldn't have done that. A second of all. I want to understand how you told the media that this was not an act of terror. He has a three-foot pipe bomb, you had to blow up the car at the same with blankets around it. You know, bomb blankets I'm talking about [because] it's so volatile. The bomb squad, which is one of the most trained in the nation, wouldn't move it…How do you know that's not terrorism? "Well, it's just a skinhead with issues" he says. That's part of the problem…And again, some of the laws are so narrowly tailored. Right. So, he sure the hell terrorized out of all of us on a southwest Detroit that morning. [65]

[63] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.
[64] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.
[65] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.

This statement reflects the discussion in the previous section regarding perceptions on what constitutes community violence. In this situation, a father-daughter pair were suspects for committing acts of terrorism for taking pictures of a gas station, while a far-right extremist is a 'skinhead with issues.' The understanding and framing of community violence matter a great deal when attempting to formulate best practices to prevent it from happening.

Summary: Practices and Programs that Prevent Violence

This section provided an overview of two specific programs that exist in Metro Detroit. One, RDJ, does not solely exist to prevent community violence. In relation to this research, RDJ creates the question on whether or not religious literacy matters in creating tolerant and inclusive societies which will inherently be less prone to forms of community violence. The other, the Dearborn Police Department intervention program, does exist solely to prevent violence. This program serves as an example of how important community-based partnerships and relationships are in the field of violence prevention. It also serves as an example that faith-based communities must have a seat at the table, particularly in religiously and culturally diverse societies. It also serves as support for the argument that community-based policing methods can have a high level of success when implemented properly. Part of this implementation also requires that the police force reflects the demographic make-up of the population it serves. The interviewee shared this sentiment when reflecting on the relationship between the Dearborn Police Department and the broader community and stated:

> Well, I think it's a very respectful relationship…And it's been hard work for community and police alike. But we do enjoy a high level of support from our community. Right down to funding and mlllages… they always pass them, but they're very demanding, and that's why it's so important to have a police department that reflects the demographics of the community. Someone once told me that I gave someone preferential treatment because I took an interpreter with me to a school and I said, well, I can't give them equal treatment if they can't understand what I've said. So, it's not preferential treatment? I said

it's equal treatment. [66]

This statement and section exemplify the profound level of community capacity present in Dearborn. Preventing community violence is a community effort, and this is supported by taxpayers time after time. The interfaith community is also an invaluable partner in preventing community violence in Dearborn. This level of community capacity also extends outside of Dearborn when it comes to the interfaith community in Metro Detroit. The following section will address the collective efficacy of the interfaith community as well as their community capacity.

Theme: Collective Efficacy and Community Capacity

The Metro Detroit interfaith community appears to have a remarkable level of collective efficacy that theoretically should increase their overall community capacity. This was apparent not only through interviewing members of the interfaith community, but also by learning about the various programs they offer and the ways that people are active in the community at large. This analysis has already focused on programs such as Detroit Public Schools faith-based council and IFLC's religious literacy programs. Therefore, this section will analyze how interviewees demonstrated their ability for collective efficacy and community capacity without solely focusing on programs that exemplify this. Subthemes used to analyze this theme include leadership and mobilizing and resource sharing, as these were two subthemes frequently discussed. It is important to understand that the interfaith community truly values the importance of local, community-based work. One participant remarked that "I really think a lot of things that really happen here at the grassroots level…All the changes and understandings and things always are at the grassroots level." [67] Through this statement, it is clear that there is a high level of collective efficacy, particularly *organizational* collective efficacy. This is defined as an organization's or group's

[66] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.
[67] Interview with PARTICIPANT008, March 2020.

perception of its ability to problem solve and its ability to improve the life of the members involved (Ohmer, 2016; Pecukonis & Wencour, 1994).

Subtheme: The Importance of Good Leadership

The interfaith community in Metro Detroit is comprised of several key leaders. Once an individual spends time with the community, it pretty quickly becomes clear who the core leaders are. During interviews, participants would always urge me to talk to specific people. After hearing the same names recommended over and over, it was evident that reliable leaders were critical to the functionality of the interfaith community. Each leader brings a different skill to the table, and collectively they are able to have a strong impact on the faith-based community across Metro Detroit.

During one interview, I asked a participant how he felt his position in the community impacted the level of social cohesion. He responded by saying that:

> I know how to build coalitions, and then the only thing that limits people like me who do know how to build coalitions is how much energy we have got, how much time we have. The people I know that build coalitions tend to sort of do it naturally. And so, the one thing that I understand about building any coalition, or maybe call that a community, a form of community, is that you have to understand what the principle is under which you are building the community. So, because everyone comes to a community, comes to a coalition, comes to a committee with their own their own agenda. [68]

Having a leader who is capable of building a coalition or community naturally is of extreme value. That is a set of skills that can come to great use in terms of cultivating organizational collective efficacy and community capacity. This is also important because coalition building often involves multiple stakeholders from the community, therefore acting as another instance of bridging and linking social capital.

[68] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.

One participant was perhaps slightly more critical of the interfaith relationships in Metro Detroit. The participant was not critical in a negative way, but rather in a way that signified that leaders need to be doing more to challenge themselves. This particular statement was in relation to the challenges that IFLC faces on addressing forms of religious extremism. The participant stated that:

> We need to up our game as the interfaith folks from kind of being nice to each other and all that to developing an interfaith movement that's strong enough to take on these kind of issues…so much of our interfaith relationships is like that where we go through stuff we don't particularly like because we don't want to offend anybody. Right…but our relationship isn't strong enough to handle the disagreements and the challenges and the big issues and so on. So, a lot of interfaith stuff can be pretty insipid. And but if we're going to make a difference, especially in areas of violence and extremism, we've got to we've got to find profound ways to increase our relationships. [69]

This is an honest reflection that does represent the challenges that an interfaith organization can have, especially among key leadership. It is unlikely that all participants would fully agree with this statement. However, this participant had expressed concern over what was happening in India and this is a response to that. His message is clear: if the interfaith movement wants to increase the level of impact they have, especially relating to violence or extremism abroad, they have to increase the strength of their relationship.

There are multiple interfaith organizations across Metro Detroit, and it was not uncommon for people to be involved in more than one organization. This also helps with bridging and linking social capital to build collective efficacy and community capacity. Organizations often co-sponsor events and share pertinent interfaith information. As mentioned earlier, IFLC does not officially consider itself a 'parent' or 'umbrella' organization despite the fact that they do operate as one in some ways. IFLC's newsletter often shares information regarding *other* interfaith events and organizations. One participant reflected that:

[69] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.

> And here locally… I mean not only does [she] for ten years do the WISDOM Window [newsletter] where she blasts information about what we're doing, what the interfaith groups are doing, InterFaith Leadership Council does that too. So, there's a lot of cross pollination when people are doing free PR for each other because we're all trying to do the same things. There's like a couple groups all trying to do similar things and we all support each other. And we go to each other's events, but we also do PR for each other for free. [70]

Through this, it is clear that the interfaith community and organizations in Metro Detroit do many different things to support one another. That support represents bridging and linking social capital as well. The outreach individual houses of worship who participate in the interfaith community also exemplifies this support. One Jewish participant shared that:

> Muslim unity center here does such an amazing job. I mean their outreach… and they're welcoming. I mean that's like their full-time effort, they just go beyond. And they and people… if you meet somebody from the community, [they] invite you to come. And so, they're really doing insane levels of outreach and trying to be welcoming. And it's wonderful and it's so welcoming there. [71]

What is perhaps most profound about this statement is that was a Jewish participant speaking about an Islamic house of worship. This establishes that the interfaith movement in Metro Detroit has made a real impact on people of faith. They feel *welcome* in houses of worship that they do not identify with. This portrayal of feelings from a Jewish adherent about an Islamic house of worship also embodies the fact that the interfaith community has created a strong level of community capacity. This was possible due to the effectiveness of the leadership in Metro Detroit's interfaith community, historically up through today.

Subtheme: Mobilizing and Resource Sharing

There are many events that exist to support the claim that IFLC specifically, as well as the broader interfaith community in Metro Detroit, have a strong capacity to mobilize and share resources. Most of these events are in previous sections, such as the interfaith response to Terry

[70] Group interview, PARTICIPANT013, June 2018.
[71] Group interview, PARTICIPANT013, June 2018.

Jones in Dearborn and the interfaith programs and events that occur throughout Metro Detroit. This section will highlight what participants said about such events in order to convey the level of mobilization possible and the degree of resource sharing. Mobilization and sharing of resources indicate a high level of collective efficacy as well as a high level of community capacity.

The Terry Jones incident of 2011 is one of the most relevant examples in Metro Detroit's recent history that highlights the interfaith community's capacity to mobilize. To revisit, Terry Jones had planned to come to the Islamic Center of America in order to burn a Quran. One participant who was there at the time stated that:

> When I first got here, Terry Jones came. And believe me when I tell you that parking lot had 1,200 people in and out there. KKK, Michigan militia. Bam! You name it. Anybody that had a cause for a cause was here because they knew CNN was here. People wanted to support Dearborn. People that didn't want to support Dearborn. People liked the cops. People weren't sure. People that hated the cops. They're all here. [72]

The situation had a serious potential to turn violent. Not only was the Islamic community under direct threat from an inflammatory religious "leader" with no ties to Dearborn, but there were multiple other extreme organizations competing for the media attention in order to gain airtime for their causes. One participant was involved in organizing the interfaith response to Terry Jones. He stated that:

> Terry Jones came to Dearborn to the Islamic Center, which is the largest mosque in the US. And I helped organize the actions in response to that. IFLC played a major role. And that I said we…This is a Christian who's attacking…. I said it shouldn't be up to the mosque to deal with protection. It should be the Christians. And that's been one of my big themes, is that it's one thing to protect your own community. It's another thing when somebody from your own community is attacking others, people of other faiths. And I say that's where we really need to stand up. [73]

The interfaith community showed their mobilizing capability in this instance when over 1,000 people showed up in support of the mosque. So many people showed up that they were able to

[72] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.
[73] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.

form a protective circle around the mosque. Through this example, it is clear that the interfaith community has the capacity to prevent community violence.

The religious literacy programs offered by IFLC also emphasize the interfaith community's ability to mobilize and share resources. RDJ is likely the most challenging program to carry out given that it demands a sustainable plan for upwards of 800 students, broken into smaller cohorts. One participant said:

> The thing with the kids is the religious diversity journeys. That's really great for impacting kids and parents. But it's also really cool because the host congregations mobilize a number of their people. It can't be done by just one interfaith nut who's trying to do it. You've got to get members of your congregation involved. And that also excites them and changes them. [74]

Thus, RDJ is a program that mobilizes the interfaith community. Given that the congregation is interacting with diverse set of kids and their parents, this is also an opportunity to build bridging social capital. Furthermore, at the end of RDJ the students break into two cohorts for a final trip. One cohort goes to the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA) where they are able to learn about how "cultures and religions represent things that are sacred to them through art no matter what culture, what religion, everyone has art and what is representing the things that are special to them." [75] The other cohort visits the Holocaust Memorial Center (HMC) where they are able to learn not only about the Holocaust, but the consequences of religious intolerance. The end of the year trip to the DIA or the HMC represents the community mobilizing for an interfaith initiative. Each institution is responsible for not only ensuring they have adequate resources for hundreds of kids, but also paying employees to be present for the field trip. In other words, the broader Metro Detroit community supports an interfaith initiative, thereby establishing bridging and linking social capital.

[74] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.
[75] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, June 2018.

Summary: Building Collective Efficacy and Community Capacity in a Diverse Community

IFLC and the Metro Detroit interfaith community actively and continuously engage in programs, practices, mobilization, and resource sharing which increases the collective efficacy and community capacity levels present. Throughout the research, it has been clear that certain challenges to the community may increase or decrease collective efficacy and community capacity. An example that may decrease collective efficacy and community capacity is religiously motivated violence abroad. The conflict between Israel and Palestine has, at times, posed a serious challenge to the interfaith community. This conflict has even caused some within the community to sever ties with others in the community. However, this conflict also led to the creation of WISDOM, which is an interfaith organization that now highly contributes to the collective efficacy and community capacity of the interfaith community. An example of a challenge that increases collective efficacy is the aforementioned Terry Jones incident. This suggests that external threats to the Metro Detroit community have the potential to bring the community together, thereby increasing not only bridging and linking social capital, but also increasing collective efficacy and community capacity. The following and final section will address the question of whether or not the interfaith community in Metro Detroit, particularly IFLC and its network, is able to prevent community violence.

Theme: Does Interfaith Activism and Dialogue Matter in Preventing Community Violence?

One of the main questions that this research asked was how faith-based organizations contribute to community violence prevention and intervention, as well as how relevant this is as an institutional or organizational support mechanism. Research indicates that communities can prevent violence and subsequent negative health outcomes by developing collective efficacy (Ohmer et al., 2016). More importantly, most of the research that focuses on community violence prevention focuses on law enforcement strategies alone, while paying less attention to the role a

community has in creating a safe neighborhood (Butts et al., 2015; Ohmer, 2016; R. J. Sampson, 2011). Therefore, this research is an attempt to fill the gap in community violence prevention literature by examining an interfaith organization and those within its networks in order to understand community mechanisms that may prevent community violence.

The research indicates that IFLC, its network, and the work of the interfaith community does serve as one potential community mechanism that prevents violence. To be clear, IFLC is not directly involved in violence prevention programs. This research is more about how interfaith organizations develop collective efficacy and community capacity through bridging and linking social capital. By applying the integrated model, we can develop a deeper understanding on how community organizations function at the organizational level to improve communities. Future research on this subject should attempt to formally measure collective efficacy and community capacity. Whether this is developed through the numerous IFLC programs or by sharing communication channels (newsletters) from one organization to another, the interfaith community in Metro Detroit appears to have become a well-established aspect of society that works to establish and maintain norms and values, establish and maintain trust in one another, and it has demonstrated its ability to intervene in order to address problems. All of these are aspects of developing collective efficacy (Ohmer, 2016). This final thematic section will address the core of SEM and SDT; the importance of relationships. Without these relationships, collective efficacy would not be possible and community capacity would be extremely limited. This section will also address the challenges that participants identified in regard to direct involvement with violence prevention for the sake of transparency.

Subtheme: The Importance of Relationships

Research that examines the role of relationships in developing collective efficacy is well established. Studies have examined the role of relationship quality and collective efficacy in couple

therapy (Aguilar-Raab et al., 2018), in neighborhood collective efficacy and collective action (Carbone & McMillin, 2019), and the importance of social networking between teachers' in increasing collective efficacy (Berebitsky & Salloum, 2017), just to name a few. The role and quality of relationships is important because it may play a significant role in the strength of an organization and their collective efficacy. During the research, three distinct, yet often overlapping, forms of relationships emerged: community and police relationships, interfaith relationships, and police and interfaith relationships. To be clear, this research was not intentionally focusing on the role law enforcement had on preventing community violence. Rather, interfaith participants often referred to the importance of positive a positive police relationship with *their* organization and mission. This is less about how some police departments in the Metro Detroit region have successfully implemented community policing in their specific community and more about how the relationships between sectors of the community have played a role in further developing collective efficacy and community capacity.

To begin this analysis, it is important to first emphasize the role of *trust* in building collective efficacy. Many of the participants at one point or another mentioned how important trust was, especially when it came to relationships with law enforcement. One participant, the one from a law enforcement institution, stated that "I think you have to have a very honest and profound open communication with your communities. The minute you resort to doing anything deceitful, you've lost their trust." [76] This reflects the importance of honest communication in the building of a relationship as well as the importance of trust in that relationship between community and police. This participant also stated that relationship building needs to start from a place of *not* treating the community as a suspect community. He stated that "if you think they are doing something bad,

[76] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.

then that's a bad starting point for any relationship of trust." [77] In regard to this, it is essential when first building a relationship with a community to approach it from the perspective that the community is not 'doing something bad' or rather guilty of breaking a law. Another participant provided an example of building relationships with religions leaders when he reflected on the concept of trust as it related to the FBI potentially infiltrating mosques. He stated that:

> The FBI certainly began to get a feeling that they didn't need to infiltrate these mosques. They basically needed to just know, have good relationships with two imams.
> And those imams would let them know if there was somebody that was dangerous because the imams didn't want these dangerous people around anymore than anyone else did. [78]

Reflected in this statement is the argument that infiltrating houses of worship is not the way to gain valuable information from a community. In order to access desired information, the best way forward is to establish genuine relationships with specific religious leaders. These relationships are rooted in trust.

One participant shared a story of an instance in Hamtramck that truly embodies the amount of trust and relationships it can required to prevent community violence. He said:

> It was kind of…. kids attacking each other. Coming out of school and the police were there and they kind of stifled it… there was a lot of stone throwing. The kids were throwing stones at the cops. And, you know, it was it was kind of nasty. No injuries. I don't know that there were any arrests…But that night on YouTube, they were showing video of these kids saying "tomorrow it's a riot. It's a riot" …. And so, the police, you know, before the police chief would have done nothing except saying "we're going to come out, we'll come out in our riot gear" and all this kind of stuff. The new police chief…He was the first police chief to really engage the community organizations. So, he called [the] interfaith group in Hamtramck, and he called us and asked us to come in right away. So, we came down to the police department. He showed us the videos of the kids calling for the riot and said, "you know, we got to deal with this." And what we did, we did two things. One is the next day was Friday, so they went into all the mosques for Friday prayers and said, "don't let your kids walk home from school, go get your kids and bring them home." And the second thing is we had police and every cop had a religious leader and we patrolled the streets together, all these interfaith leaders. So, we are patrolling the streets outside the high school. And we also prayed, and God sent rain. So

[77] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.
[78] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.

> that kind of… it ended up everything just was calm. Fine. No issue here. But I thought it was beautiful how the community asked the interfaith leaders to help. And we did that as an organization. [79]

This instance of community violence prevention was possible due to the police department recognizing the value of having a relationship with Hamtramck's interfaith community. Instead of what could have been a potentially violent riot, the community came together in a proactive way to prevent violence from occurring. In other words, these relationships proved to be critical components of community violence prevention.

When speaking directly to the question of interfaith activism and dialogue and community violence prevention, one participant said:

> I'm really glad that you're doing something like that…you know… does interfaith and community violence…does that make that any less? It's really interesting. Yeah, I think yes. Because I think when you make those connections with people like in a group or one on one, they look at you differently than just somebody you don't know. You could hate them just because you don't know them. All right. But once you get to know somebody it's hard to hate somebody if you really like their character. And that could go on to like other people in their community, you know. [80]

What is important from this participants viewpoint is not only the establishment of relationships between people who otherwise might have hated one another, but it also reflects how people might disperse this information into their community. If one person has a positive interfaith experience, one that potentially transforms their way of thinking, it is possible that that person will share that experience with others in their social network. Therefore, building interfaith relationships has the potential to share information not only within an organization, but also among those networked to people in the organization or interfaith community.

[79] Interview with PARTICIPANT005, March 2020.
[80] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.

Though it is clear that relationships are key in developing collective efficacy, participants were transparent about challenges that may arise in violence prevention efforts. The next section will address some of the challenges identified by participants.

Subtheme: Challenges in Direct Intervention

There are several challenges the interfaith community, and IFLC particularly, could face in an attempt to engage directly with violence prevention. One of the main challenges in getting interfaith organizations involved in violence prevention directly is resources. One participant remarked that:

> I think that religious institutions can play a role in preventing community violence...I don't think that that is something that religious institutions like houses of faith seen themselves as kind of that being their turf until very recently. So, my professional hunch is that there could be a role, *should* be a role, that religious institutions might be stepping into in the future. But my guess is that they don't have the... I don't know that they have the curriculum, the language, the skills or the volunteer or professional resources at this point to be community violence preventers. I think that IFLC could in the future. As an organizer before individual houses of faith could do that...preventative work. As a leadership organization. [81]

A challenge is therefore acquiring resources that would be necessary to be actual violence preventors. Some of IFLC's leadership does have experience in conflict resolution, so I do believe that organizationally IFLC would be capable of becoming involved in direct community violence prevention programs if they ever decided to. Additionally, IFLC has leaders with the knowledge of coalition building, which would be essential in order to prevent community violence directly.

An obvious challenge to any direct community violence intervention would be connecting to the target population. One participant in particular identified disaffected youth as one population that would be difficult to reach. He said:

> And that is with disaffected young men and to a certain degree, disaffected young women…I don't think the groups, generally speaking, religious groups in general, can tap into those disaffected people…you know, the skinheads and the folks who are

[81] Interview with PARTICIPANT001, March 2020.

> participating in militias and in white nationalist groups and all of that . How do you connect to those groups? How do you connect to…you know, poor white kids in our neighborhood, in our metropolitan area, say, in Waterford… where there's a lot of young people who are dropping out of school historically and can't find themselves in good paying jobs…who feel quite disaffected, who feel that the community has done them wrong and they have anti-social attitudes that they sometimes express. [82]

Connecting to specific demographics does represent a viable challenge, especially if that attempt to connect is coming from a faith-based or religious organization. It does not mean it is impossible though, rather it is just a challenge that any faith-based or interfaith organization would have to overcome if they decided to engage directly with community violence prevention. Members of IFLC have attempted to build bridges with faith-based institutions that have historical ties to violent movements. One participant shared that:

> we had Father Coughlin here at the Shrine of the Little Flower, which is this big church up on Woodward. During World War II he was an open Nazi sympathizer. Now, that unfortunately keeps a certain conversation going for decades. And whether it's true or not. And I have tried to reach out to the minister there to join our group. And he hasn't been willing to so far. [83]

Therefore, IFLC has put effort into forming relationships with certain demographics. This by no means is implying that the Shrine of the Little Flower is still perpetuating Nazi beliefs today, rather the participant has implied that certain conversations from the WWII era may still be going on. The participant, who is Jewish, noted that efforts might be more successful if a Christian leader invited the minister to join interfaith work. [84]

Summary: The Role of the Interfaith Community in Community Violence Prevention

The interfaith community in Metro Detroit has demonstrated its potential to play a role in community violence prevention. The above stories substantiate this, such as the Terry Jones incident in 2011, the seven cases of potential extremists in Dearborn, and the potential of a riot

[82] Interview with PARTICIPANT009, March 2020.
[83] Interview with PARTICIPANT004, June 2019.
[84] Interview with PARTICIPANT004, June 2019.

between high school kids in Hamtramck. It is not possible to quantify events that did not happen in order to assess how effective interfaith work has been. It is also important to consider the impact that religious literacy training and programs may have on children and adults throughout Metro Detroit. Quantifying this in relation to community violence prevention is beyond the scope of this research. The interfaith community has also demonstrated its high level of collective efficacy and community capacity. Though there are challenges to community violence prevention, building relationships to increase collective efficacy and community capacity are mechanism that may alleviate the difficulties in dealing with challenges. As one participant put it:

> If you're gonna be resilient at all, you have to have plans in place. You have to have relationships in place. And you have to have a strong foundation of trust for one another.[85]

Summarizing the Data within the Analytical Framework of SDT and SEM

This data relies on the perceptions of the lived experiences of participants and lacks formal measurements of organizational and community attributes such as collective efficacy, social capital, and community capacity. Therefore, the claims this data can make are largely subjective. It does *seem* as though IFLC has an immense amount of social capital and community capacity, but additional research using accepted measurements of such attributes would certainly strengthen this assumption. IFLC does build community and connections through their programs, such as RDJ and Ask A… but assessing the long-term impact of those programs has not occurred yet. In doing such a project, further assumptions could emerge regarding how interfaith activism may serve as one community facet that works to establish shared norms and values which inherently prevents community violence.

[85] Interview with PARTICIPANT003, June 2019.

Social disorganization theory is useful as it is one theoretical underpinning to explain why community violence is present or not present. When there is a breakdown of important community support, such as traditional institutions, disorganized communities may emerge. Within the SEM, we can look at a specific organization (or a broader set such as FBOs) and consider how their actions work to alleviate negative impacts of disorganized communities. Programs such as religious literacy training provide a pathway to cultivate shared norms and values of inclusion and pluralism, which are critical to have present in a multicultural setting. The subjective data collected in this research suggests that IFLC and those within its network believes that their work does cultivate these shared norms and values through various programs and instances of outreach.

Before moving to the final chapter, it would be useful to visualize how each theme related to the data collection and analysis process.

Theme	Data Collection Method	Analysis Process
Organizational Mission, Values, and Challenges	Semi-structured interviews Participant Observation Fieldnotes Newsletters	• Examine information provided by participants as it related to the organization • Document analysis of newsletters and field notes • Coding of interviews
Interpretations of Community Violence and Threat of Violence as a Norm	Semi-structured interviews Participant Observation Fieldnotes	• Examine information provided by participants as it related to their perception of community violence • Coding of interviews
Practices and Programs	Semi-structured interviews Participant Observation Newsletters Student Feedback Forms	• Examine information provided by participants as it related to IFLC programs/practices • Document analysis of newsletters and student feedback forms
Collective Efficacy and Community Capacity	Semi-structured interviews Participant Observation Fieldnotes Newsletters	• Examine information provided by participants as it related to the potential of collective efficacy and community capacity

		• Document analysis of newsletters
Does Interfaith Activism and Dialogue Matter in Preventing Community Violence?	Semi-structured interviews	• Analysis of prior themes • Examine information provided by participants that directly related to violence prevention

Table 2: Themes, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions, Implications and Future Research

Conclusion: Discussion of Results

This research set out to address one specific question:

> Using Metro Detroit as a case study, how can faith-based organizations contribute to community violence prevention and intervention? Furthermore, by using an integrated approach focused on SEM and SDT, how can faith-based organizations serve as protective factors against risks associated with community violence?

The answer to this question is that faith-based organizations in Metro Detroit, particularly the interfaith community and IFLC, likely contribute to some degree to community violence prevention and intervention through developing collective efficacy and community capacity. However, additional research is necessary in order to determine direct linkages between FBOs and community violence prevention and intervention. The impact that IFLC and its network may have on violence prevention exist in two ways: direct and indirect. IFLC has limited experience with direct community violence prevention, with the 2011 Terry Jones incident being most emblematic of this. This research suggests that IFLC and its network mostly engages with community violence prevention and intervention directly through building collective efficacy and community capacity. However, collective efficacy and community capacity building were not directly measured as a part of this research. Therefore, these conclusions are based on observations made throughout the research process. IFLC and its network appear to build community capacity and collective efficacy

in a number of ways, such as their landmark RDJ program that teaches children the value of religious literacy through immersive education. IFLC has been influential in cultivated norms and values for faith-based organizations across Metro Detroit that champion messages such as living in peace and respecting one another. IFLC also has the capability to mobilize its network, whether to respond to potential community violence threats or to provide religious literacy education. IFLC and its network is extremely relevant as an institutional and organizational community support mechanism.

As for the second part of the question, SEM and SDT help to make sense of the research. The two concepts make an integrated approach to untangling the data and establishing what is most important in building resilience to community violence. In this research, I examined a community-based organization, meaning that I most closely considered the organizational level of the SEM. It is the relationships that matter the most. These relationships impact every level of the SEM and have the strong ability to impact a disorganized community. These relationships also build collective efficacy and community capacity, which are necessary community attributes in community violence prevention. Additional research that measures collective efficacy and community capacity as they apply to the SEM and SDT would strengthen the argument that these are necessary attributes in community violence prevention.

Additionally, SEM and SDT exist in conjunction through The Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center (MI-YVPC). The MI-YVPC uses a comprehensive prevention approach rooted in public health principles. This approach utilizes the bases of SEM and SDT. MI-YVPC states that:

> "[SEM and SDT] theories provide the conceptual underpinnings that guide our Center. Social ecological theory focuses on environmental influences centered on individual development. Social (dis)organization theory focuses on the influences of the neighborhood context on social interactions. Applied to the issue of youth violence

> prevention, these theories suggest that approaches to youth development connecting adolescents and young adults to positive social role models and community engagement activities are critical for any comprehensive effort." (Morrel-Samuels et al., 2013)

To reiterate a point made in the beginning of this dissertation, the research conducted here is a social science exploration. The results are based on observations made during the research in regard to the lived experience of research participants. This research establishes a preliminary base for future research that should include a focus on measuring collective efficacy and community capacity. The lack of a formal measurement for collective efficacy and community capacity represent a limitation of this research.

Implications of the Research

There are several different implications that this research brought forward. These implications can impact both the theory and knowledge of academia as well as practical implications for stakeholders in Metro Detroit, or stakeholders with an interest in violence prevention. This section will first address theoretical and knowledge-based implications and then move onto the implications for stakeholders.

This research primarily implicates academic research in the way it calls attention to the need for an increase of interdisciplinary research. Complex social and communal problems such as community violence and the prevention of it demand this. To reiterate the words of Marmot, "research on the social, economic, cultural, and psychological determinants of health and the biological pathways by which they operate has to be interdisciplinary" (Marmot, 2008, pg. 292). Engaging in or becoming a victim of community violence certainly plays into the determinants of health; be it an analysis on root causes of violence (social or biological) or an analysis on how experiencing community violence does or does not impact health over a life course. Research that is going to address these questions in the future cannot be linear in focus and must incorporate the knowledge generated in other academic disciplines. This research has been an attempt to tie

together concepts taken from public health, sociology, criminology, and political science in order to better understand just *one* way community violence may be prevented.

This research also implicates theory and knowledge generated in academic studies that insist religion is the problem in society as well as a root cause of violent conflict. Research asserting this is counterproductive for a number of reasons. First, religion is not simply going to disappear. Instead of concluding that religion is the problem, academics should instead turn towards questioning how religion can be a part of the solution. The work of those in the interfaith community deserves more attention. Second, as this research has indicated, interfaith communities have the immense potential to mobilize their people and their resources. This is particularly true in communities such as Metro Detroit where bridging and linking forms of social capital appear to have established an incredibly resourceful network.

There are also several implications for stakeholders who have an interest in community violence prevention, be it in Metro Detroit or another geographical region. First, if interfaith work is to take a more direct approach to community violence prevention, resources to do so are necessary. Additional funding for things such as training and workspace would be necessary. In Metro Detroit, it appears that the relationships to undertake such a task are viable and healthy. However, this would require additional staff who would require compensation for their work. Funding community violence prevention efforts would be the first and most important step to take.

Another implication of this research is in regard to stakeholders not geographically located in Metro Detroit. This research indicates that a strong relationship between law enforcement and interfaith leaders is essential in community violence prevention. Law enforcement and interfaith leaders across the country should have a positive, working, and trusting relationship. Interfaith leaders should have a platform within law enforcement entities to share their opinion and

recommendation for handling certain situations. Furthermore, interfaith leaders should have a role in the prevention of community violence in the way that social workers or mental health counselors do. Interfaith leaders have a significant amount of social capital within their own personal social network and this should contribute to bettering law enforcement practices as well as for the wider community.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study brought forth multiple inquiries for future research. The most apparent issue that was raised in the literature review and applicable to the broader framework is the lack of research that examines the role of religion and crime over the life-course (B. Johnson & Jang, 2010). Pursuing this a future research venture would allow for an increased insight into the relationship between religion and crime, of which for me the key interest would be the relationship between religion and community violence. During my internship with IFLC, I spent a significant amount of time participating in the creation of a comprehensive database of former Religious Diversity Journeys students. Though not yet complete, the database has the contact information for over 700 participants dating back to 2013. A future study might utilize this database in an attempt to follow up with former students in order to assess the impact the program had on their life-course (if any), their religiosity, and any criminal behavior. This database, and others like it, may hold the necessary information for a starting point for research that examines the relationship between religion and crime across the life-course. Such a study would be a massive undertaking and would require both qualitative and quantitative analysis but would contribute greatly to the field.

In line with further examining the relationship between religion and crime, future research should investigate links between religious literacy and violence prevention. The degree to which participants in this research believed that religious literacy prevents community violence was

mixed, with some thinking it mattered a great deal and others feeling more skeptical on the matter. Research which examines an individual's level of religious literacy and engagement in violence would provide valuable insight into the general understanding of religion and crime. Furthermore, research examining the impact that religious literacy programs such as RDJ or ERL has on individuals on both short- and long-term spans of time would assist in evaluating the impact of these programs in both children and adults. A study such as this could collect qualitative or quantitative data immediately following a program and then incremental spans of time after a program, such as six months and one year, to assess the value of the programs on individuals who complete them.

Another avenue for future research would be to examine the impact that faith-based partnerships with educational institutions has on violence prevention or other social issues of interest. The reality of the Detroit Public Schools partnership with faith-based organizations under the faith-based council is that faith organizations are providing a service to the schools in order to build community through providing support in any way possible. This relationship is not related to religious conversion and everything to do with supporting a community that is vulnerable. During my interviews, a participant spoke about this partnership and said:

> "What we're doing in most schools is we would go to the principal and say, what can we do to help you? We're not there to convert anybody. We're not trying to bring people into the churches. We're there to help the schools. So, we're doing things like in the school where we are… the principal said to me, he has kids who go home to houses where they don't have water and they're being bullied at school. So, can we provide hygiene products for them and they let them shower and wash their clothes at school. So, we do that. We have kids who don't have enough food at home. They depend on the meals they get at the school. So twice a month, we provide them snack packs to take home on Friday. So, they have something to eat that will keep them going through the weekend." [86]

[86] Interview with PARTICIPANT004, June 2019.

A faith-based partnership with a public educational institution sounds like it would inherently be a controversial program in the US. However, this partnership is working and is providing invaluable services to children across Detroit. Future research should examine this program (or others like it) and observe the long-term impact such partnerships have on the children who are receiving the services. Though the partnership in Detroit called an interfaith partnership, it is interfaith in nature. This pathway could serve as an additional option to further explore how interfaith activism can prevent community violence.

Additionally, an area for future research is the direct involvement that faith-based organizations have had in Detroit on gang violence prevention, particularly those faith communities that were involved in Operation Ceasefire (Circo et al., 2018). This type of relationship appeared periodically during the research, but there was not nearly enough information provided to make any sort of firm assessment that faith-based organizations have made a significant impact on gang violence prevention. However, given the social capital held by religious institutions and the strength of religious institutions in Detroit, it makes sense to question how involved churches have been in gang prevention and to what extent this involvement has had an impact. Future case study research on this topic would provide data that could be very useful to faith-based organizations that have an interest in violence prevention.

There is not a sufficient amount of evidence from this research to solidify the claim that interfaith activism in Metro Detroit actively contributes to community violence prevention. The presentation of this research does lead to a strong statement that interfaith activism can be *one* mechanism that contributes to community violence prevention through building collective efficacy and community capacity. This research is very much in the beginning stage and future research will need to move beyond the perceptions of participants

to include measurements of collective efficacy and community capacity, especially as it applies directly to violence prevention efforts. Additionally, future research should strive to consider religion as part of a solution rather than the problem. Framing religion as the problem in certain contexts can be counterproductive for the simple fact that religion is a widespread social phenomenon that is not going to just disappear. Framing religion as a potential solution can be useful in acknowledging that it will only go so far, but that it can be a resource to ameliorate societal issues.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interviewee Information

Participant	Affiliation	Interview Date
Participant001	IFLC	June 15, 2018 March 4, 2020

Participant002	IFLC	June 15, 2018
Participant003	Dearborn Police Department	June 20, 2019
Participant004	IFLC, DION	July 8, 2019
Participant005	IFLC	March 6, 2020
Participant006	IFLC	June 20, 2019
Participant007	HFHS	June 20, 2019
Participant008	IFLC	March 9, 2020
Participant009	IFLC	March 9, 2020
Participant010	WISDOM	June 25, 2018
Participant011	WISDOM	June 25, 2018
Participant012	IFLC, WISDOM	June 25, 2018
Participant013	WISDOM	June 25, 2018

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

VirginiaTech

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website http://www.irb.vt.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 25, 2016

TO: Priya Dixit, Allison Denise Hernandez

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Masters Thesis: The role of societal cohesion preventing radicalization and violent extremism

IRB NUMBER: **16-933**

Effective October 25, 2016, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As:	**Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7**
Protocol Approval Date:	**October 25, 2016**
Protocol Expiration Date:	**October 24, 2017**
Continuing Review Due Date*:	**October 10, 2017**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Appendix C: IRB Amendment Approval Letter

Division of Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-3732
irb@vt.edu
http://www.research.vt.edu/sirc/hrpp

MEMORANDUM

DATE:	April 16, 2019
TO:	Priya Dixit, Allison Denise Miller
FROM:	Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)
PROTOCOL TITLE:	PhD Dissertation: Interfaith activism and dialogue in countering and preventing violent extremism in Metro Detroit
IRB NUMBER:	**16-933**

Effective April 16, 2019, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the Amendment request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As:	**Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7**
Protocol Approval Date:	**October 25, 2018**
Protocol Expiration Date:	**October 24, 2019**
Continuing Review Due Date*:	**October 10, 2019**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.

Appendix D: IRB Continued Approval Letter

Division of Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-3732
irb@vt.edu
http://www.research.vt.edu/sirc/hrpp

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 9, 2019

TO: Priya Dixit, Allison Denise Miller

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)

PROTOCOL TITLE: PhD Dissertation: Interfaith activism and dialogue in countering and preventing violent extremism in Metro Detroit

IRB NUMBER: **16-933**

Effective October 9, 2019, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As:	**Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7**
Protocol Approval Date:	**October 25, 2019**
Protocol Expiration Date:	**October 24, 2020**
Continuing Review Due Date*:	**October 3, 2020**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.

Appendix E: IRB Approved Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Religious/Community Leaders

1. What is your definition of community?
2. How does your position in the community impact the level of cohesion?
3. How does your role impact integration of community members in such a multicultural community?
4. Do you feel that a well-integrated community plays an important role in preventing radicalization towards violent extremism?
    a. If yes, then how so?
5. Does this community host events to promote a sense of belonging to a community?
    a. If yes, what kind of events?
    b. Do the events aim to draw a multicultural crowd?
6. Do you feel that this community is receptive to integrating?
    a. If yes, can you describe ways that the community members have reached out to others in order to promote integration?
7. Do you have any experience in dealing with any forms of community violence? If so, what forms of community violence are most prevalent?
8. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the prevention of community violence? If yes, how?
9. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the intervention of community violence? If yes, how?
10. What are some of the biggest challenges in establishing collaborative, interfaith community-based relationships? What are some examples of these challenges?

Law Enforcement

1. What is your definition of community?
2. How does your position in this community impact the level of societal cohesion?
3. Do you believe that your multicultural community has successfully integrated individuals regardless of race, religion, and socio-economic status?
4. Do you often receive calls regarding potential hate crimes?
5. What steps do you take in your position to reach out to community members that may impact integration?
6. Do you have any experience in dealing with any forms of community violence? If so, what forms of community violence are most prevalent?
7. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the prevention of community violence? If yes, how?
8. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the intervention of community violence? If yes, how?
9. What are some of the biggest challenges in establishing collaborative, interfaith community-based relationships? What are some examples of these challenges?

Educators

1. What is your definition of community?
2. How does your position in this community impact the level of societal cohesion?
3. Does level of education play a role in integrating a multicultural community?

4. Is violent extremism and the prevention of it a subject that is addressed in your educational endeavors?
5. Are the demographics of classrooms representative of a multicultural community?
6. Do students exchange conversations about 'hot topics' happening in the media? (IE about violent extremist organizations)
    a. If yes, do they express their views about living in a multicultural community?
7. Do you have any experience in dealing with any forms of community violence? If so, what forms of community violence are most prevalent?
8. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the prevention of community violence? If yes, how?
9. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the intervention of community violence? If yes, how?
10. What are some of the biggest challenges in establishing collaborative, interfaith community-based relationships? What are some examples of these challenges?

Community Members

1. What is your definition of community?
2. Do you feel that you live in a well-integrated community?
3. Are there steps taken by community members that aim to promote inclusion of all members?
    a. If yes, describe the steps taken.
4. How do you personally feel about living in a multicultural community?
5. Do you have any experience in dealing with any forms of community violence? If so, what forms of community violence are most prevalent?
6. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the prevention of community violence? If yes, how?
7. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the intervention of community violence? If yes, how?
8. What are some of the biggest challenges in establishing collaborative, interfaith community-based relationships? What are some examples of these challenges?

Focus Groups

If possible, this dissertation will utilize focus groups as another method of data collection. Focus groups would be made of up community members over the age of 18. Methods of recruitment would be by inviting individuals to volunteer while attending interfaith or community events. Focus groups allow for more holistic data to emerge because they offset other, more structured, methods of data collections. Focus groups for this project would be guided by pre-determined questions in an attempt to create a more straightforward conversation. Focus groups would allow for a more vivid picture of both individual and community identity to emerge.

Sample focus group questions:

Introduction: My name is Allison Miller and I am a doctoral student at Virginia Tech. I research how community cohesion can counter violent extremism. I am interested in learning how community leaders and community resources impact the level of cohesion within a community, and thus how community members relate to their specific community in terms of feeling a sense of belonging.

1. What is your definition of community?
2. How do you play an active role in your community?
3. Do you feel that you live in a well-integrated community? Do you believe that all members of the community feel like they belong? Why or why not?
4. Are there steps taken by community members that aim to promote inclusion of all members?
    a. If yes, describe the steps taken.
5. What do you think about living in a diverse, multicultural community?
6. What do community leaders (such as religious leaders or law enforcement) do to increase community belonging? Is there anything they do that decreases community belonging?
7. What do you think about community resources that make you feel like you belong to the community? Do you think there is an area where you think this could be improved?
8. Do you have any experience in dealing with any forms of community violence? If so, what forms of community violence are most prevalent?
9. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the prevention of community violence? If yes, how?
10. Do you think religious institutions play a role in the intervention of community violence? If yes, how?
11. What are some of the biggest challenges in establishing collaborative, interfaith community-based relationships? What are some examples of these challenges?

Exit questions:

1. Is there anything you would like to say about what has been discussed that you did not yet have the chance to say?

Appendix F: IRB Consent Form

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Doctoral Dissertation: The Role of Community Engagement in Countering Violent Extremism

Investigator(s):	**Allison Miller**	**Ahern09@vt.edu/757-286-6691**
	Priya Dixit	**Pdixit@vt.edu/540-231-5323**
	Name	E-mail / Phone number

I. Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this research study is to analyze the role that community engagement in a multicultural community has in developing a sense of cohesion. This will be used to determine the role that integration plays on preventing violent extremism. Results will be used in a final dissertation as well as possible future publications. There will be approximately 40 subjects involved that will be representative of various positions within the community, ages, socio-economic status, and education levels.

II. Procedures

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded that will last no more than two hours. You will only be asked to participate in one interview. Topics and questions will be centered around reflections on belonging or not to community, reflections on others belonging or not to the community, violent extremism, the role of community leaders, and community resources. Location will be where you are most comfortable, ranging from personal office, coffee shop, or respective religious institution.

III. Risks

The risks associated with this study are very minimal for you. The main risk is the possibility of having negative input to the study. However, this study will be confidential in order to prevent any backlash towards you. Emotional discomfort may occur due to potential sensitive topics of discussion arising.

IV. Benefits

You are benefitting society by participating in research that aims to analyze and promote

the importance of integration and community cohesion. The research study benefits society by aiming to explain what aspects of a community can increase the level of cohesion, therefore decreasing the likelihood of violent extremism. The benefit of this could possibly impact local policies in order to make communities more resilient to violent extremism.

No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Data collection will include personally identifying information in the form of audio recordings. To protect your identity, You will be assigned a numerical study code prior to the interview that only the investigator will have access to. All data collection instruments (field notes and interview transcriptions) will only identify you by your study code. In the final thesis project, your name will be changed in order to protect your identity.

At no time will the investigator release identifiable results of the study to anyone without your written consent.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

There will be no compensation provided for participation.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research

investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at irb@vt.edu or (540) 231-3732.

IX. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ Date_____
Subject signature

_____
Subject printed name

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