EXAMINING ECOLOGICAL FACTORS TO FORM A MACRO MODEL FOR WORKING WITH IMPOVERISHED AFRICAN AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOODS

by

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"...I want to say to every Negro woman present, don't sit down and wait for the opportunities to come. Get up and make them!"
-Madam CJ Walker

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter Azariah Norvell Gail Lang. Anything is possible with God. Your mother will always love you, even if you don't get your PhD.

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ABSTRACT

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This social science study examines three ecological factors (geographical, institutional, and social) of impoverished African American neighborhoods, while also assessing the differences of poor neighborhoods with lower amounts of poverty and those with higher amounts of poverty. Twelve of the poorest neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama were included in the study. The ecological factors included 1) geographical variables determined by the average age of the homes in neighborhood,

number of hazardous areas, the number of unoccupied units, and the structural integrity of the neighborhood, 2) institutional variables determined by the number of operating businesses, churches, medical facilities, social organization, schools and the quality of the schools and 3) social variables determined by the neighborhood connectedness, peer support, friend attachment, warmth toward mother, warmth toward father, and religious affiliation. The amount of poverty was assessed using three different measures analyzed independently of one another:

- Median incomes of the impoverished neighborhoods
- Percentages of individuals with incomes below poverty threshold
- Percentages of individuals with incomes less than half of the poverty threshold (extreme poverty)

The analysis included correlations among variables to assess strength of association, one-way ANOVAs to assess differences among groups, and linear regressions to assess explanations of the amount of poverty. Several significant findings were apparent with educational quality within these impoverished areas. The findings bring about new facets for consideration in terms of impoverished African American neighborhoods, especially those neighborhoods with higher rates of extreme poverty. Although limitations were apparent, the study also yielded paramount implications for the social work profession relating to churches, schools, and current government initiatives.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the majority of social science studies about poverty, which observe the effect poverty has on the individual, this study examines the ecological factors surrounding impoverished African American neighborhoods to form a substantive explanation of the phenomenon and, more importantly, to suggest a way to realistically alleviate the problem. For the purposes of this study, poverty is the inability to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and medical assistance, which ultimately have lead to a host of social ills, such as crime, substance abuse, and medical issues for persons living in poverty. For these reasons, poverty is an overwhelming and devastating phenomenon within the United States and other countries.

This chapter defines the problem of poverty by examining the current views of the phenomenon, the current measure used, and the prevalence of poverty both within the United States and among the African American population. After a brief synopsis of the phenomenon, the final portion of this chapter provides a brief historical overview of the government's efforts to address the realities of poverty and how to reduce its occurrence within the US.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The US, even with all its wealth, has a large portion of its population living at or below the poverty line of less than $10,000 a year and has one of the highest poverty rates among the post-industrialized developed nations (Guardian, 2006). These poverty rates are affecting all ages, ethnic groups, and genders, and the US government has made a conscious effort to eradicate poverty centered on two central arguments: individual deficits and systemic faults. These two arguments, rooted in conservative and liberal ideology, either consider poverty to be the cause and consequence of individual deficits, such as the motivation and willpower of a person to find or maintain employment (Banfield, 1970; Hazlitt, 1973; Kaus, 1986; Devey, 1987) because of such faults or attribute poverty to the faults within the government or economic system such as limited employment opportunities and inadequate living wages (Marris & Rein, 1982; McLanahan, 1985; Devey, 1986; Iceland, 2006; Mead, 2007). A part of this debate has focused on the current gauge used by the United States government to measure whether a person is living in a state of poverty.

1.1.1 Measuring Poverty in the United States

The US currently uses an absolute measure of poverty developed by Molly Orshansky in 1963 (Orshansky, 1965), and this official measure of poverty consists of two components: 1) the poverty threshold or the standard amount of income needed to live during the year, based on food consumption and the number of individuals in a family (Iceland, 2006; Mink & O'Connor, 2004), and 2) the actual family income, which the government compares with the poverty threshold (*see Table 1*).

Though the US has used poverty thresholds and family income to measure poverty for decades, many findings report the current measure understates the reality of poverty because of the decline in food expenditures and the absence of other needs such as clothing, shelter, and personal supplies (Besharov & Germani, 2004; Economist, 1998; Bernstein, Gould, & Mishel, 2007). In contrast, other reports indicate poverty is overstated using the current measure (Lewit, Terman, & Behrman, 1997; Rector, 1991), attributing the overestimation to government benefits such as food stamps, welfare, and Medicaid that are never calculated into familial income. Because of failure to include these governmental benefits, some scholars argue this measure provides an inaccurate picture of a family's income, contributing to the higher rate of persons reported below the poverty threshold. Though both arguments are valid, the federal government has made no efforts to modify the current measure, and continues to use this measure to determine the percentage rates or prevalence of poverty within the United States.

Table 1. *2006 Poverty Thresholds (Health and Human Services, 2006).*

Persons in Family	**48 Contiguous States and D.C.**	**Alaska**	**Hawaii**
1	$10,210	$12,770	$11,750
2	$13,690	$17,120	$15,750
3	$17,170	$21,470	$19,750
4	$20,650	$25,820	$23,750
5	$24,130	$30,170	$27,750
6	$27,610	$34,520	$31,750
7	$31,090	$38,870	$35,750
8	$34,570	$43,220	$39,750
For each add'l	$3,480	$4,350	$4,000

1.1.2 Prevalence of Poverty within the United States

In 2006, in the United States, 36.5 million people lived in poverty (US Census, 2007), having incomes of $20,000 or less for a family of four (Tyre & Phillips, 2007) and of the 36.5 million, 25% percent were under the age of 18, 62% percent were adults between 18 and 64, and about 52% lived in what the US currently categorizes as standard poverty areas, where more than 20% of residents fall below the poverty threshold (Jargowsky, 1997) and anyone living in a standard poverty area where more than 40% of residents fall below the poverty threshold is in an extreme poverty area (US Census, 2007) (*see Table 2*).

Table 2. *Categories of Poverty within the United States* (US Census, 2000).

Category One	**Category Two**	**Category Three**	**Category Four**
0.00 – 12.39%	12.4% - 19.99%	20.00% - 39.99%	40.00% or higher

1.1.3 Prevalence of Poverty among African Americans

The prevalence of poverty among African Americans draws an even more dismal picture than that among any other ethnic group. Of the close to 40 million African Americans living in the United States, 25% fall below the poverty line, compared to 8% of Caucasian Americans (US Census, 2007), and almost 40% of the 40 million African Americans live in areas where over 40% of the population is living in an extreme poverty area. Many of these African American families are experiencing limited amounts of food, unmet medical needs, overcrowded living conditions, and job loss and underemployment (Sherman, 2006; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). Of the 54% of African American households headed by single women (Barbarin, 2002), 41%

percent live in poverty (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002) and although the poverty rate for African Americans has declined, the rate remains higher than that of any other ethnic group (Chow, Johnson, & Austin, 2005). Social scientists such as Leventhal, Fauth, & Brooks-Gunn (2005) see high unemployment rates, high crime rates, high geographical and ethnic concentration, high population density, and multiple subsets of social capital deficiencies in these poor African American neighborhoods.

These consequences are major concerns for African Americans and the neighborhoods in which they reside because although African American neighborhoods have higher concentrations of poverty, they still continue to have limited institutional resources such as banks, medical facilities, and grocery stores to help sustain the neighborhood (Turner & Hayes, 1997). These limited resources contribute to the push for more research focusing on the ecological factors of African American neighborhoods in poverty because poverty is more prevalent and detrimental in these areas. The results of examining ecological factors of impoverished African American neighborhoods will contribute to increased support for economic and social development in these neighborhoods. Before creating such a developmental plan for tackling poverty, one must important to first acknowledge how the United States government has addressed the issue of poverty in the past, including different legislative strategies and efforts.

1.2 Brief Historical Overview of Poverty

The United States adopted many of its early political approaches to poverty from England, which first acknowledged poverty as a social issue in the 1300s. This acknowledgement of poverty arose along with a shortage of workers willing to labor in

factories and in order to increase the number of workers, the government outlawed gifts of money to the "undeserving poor" or beggars who were able-bodied citizens with "limbs strong enough to labor" (Mink & O'Connor, 2004, p. 552). The English government believed outlawing assistance to the undeserving poor would force these people into the labor market (Mink & O'Connor, 2004) while the "deserving poor," such as the mentally ill, elderly, and sick women and children, had licenses to beg for money in certain geographic areas of the city. Eventually, the English government abolished this use of licenses to beg and enacted the *Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601* that provided "direct aid to the unemployable" and "gave local government responsibility for helping poor" (Iceland, 2006, p. 119). These laws also stated that able-bodied persons must work and that family and community members were responsible for assisting them with food, clothing, and other similar needs. As the begging among able-bodied citizens continued and began to increase, the English government became fed up and decided to terminate any kind of financial aid to all citizens, leaving the decision to assist the poor in the hands of private charities and organizations (Mink & O'Connor, 2004).

For the next 200 years, these voluntary acts of charity took place in England, Great Britain, and America. During the 1880s, the United Stated transformed these voluntary acts of charity to individuals by addressing poverty at a neighborhood level (Iceland, 2006) through the use of settlement houses or institutions run by middle and upper class families that provided goods and social services to the poor out of good will. Social work pioneers, such as Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, established Hull House in 1889, the first settlement house within the US (Mink & O'Connor, 2004).

Hull House was located in Chicago and provided social services to the multiethnic urban community. The Hull House attracted all kinds of resident volunteers who had a college education and professional skills for addressing social problems. The resident volunteers conducted one of the first social science studies of neighborhood poverty entitled *Hull House Maps & Papers* (1895) and used the results to advocate for governmental action to help poor people in the United States. The study was one of the first among many social science studies to examine neighborhoods in poverty and to advocate for the US government to get involved in addressing poverty at the neighborhood level, rather than focusing on the individual.

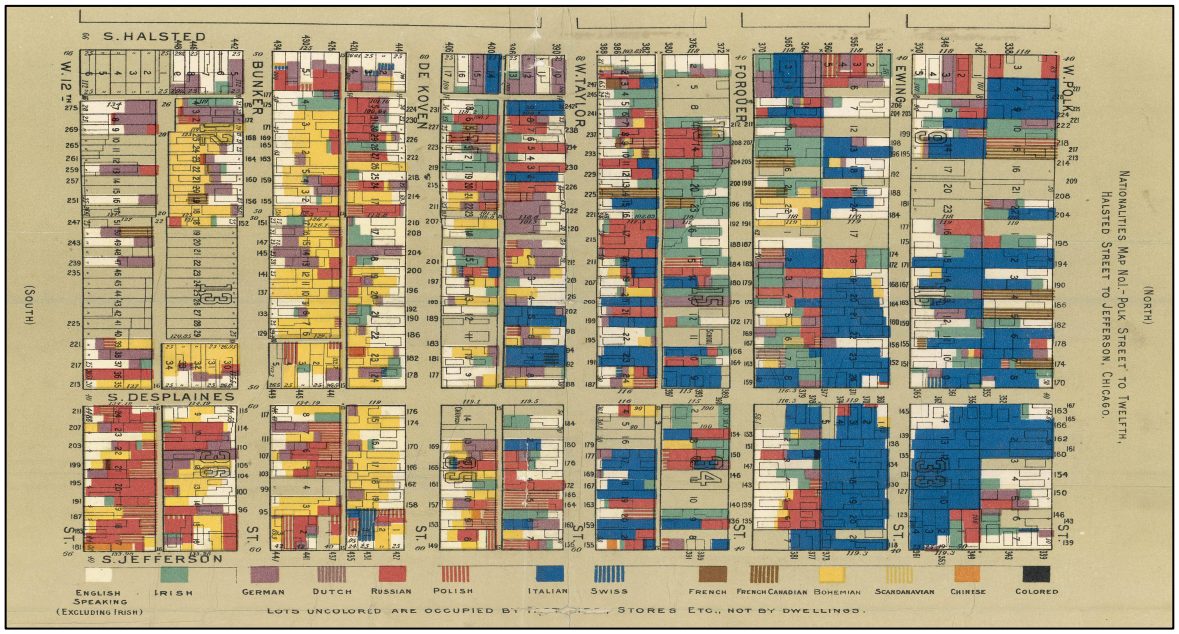

Figure 1. *Neighborhood Assessment of Inner City of Chicago (Hull House Maps & Papers, 1895).*

Another social science study conducted by W.E.B. Dubois (1899), the first African American to obtain his PhD from Harvard University, not only examined a neighborhood in poverty but also provided an insight into the causes of poverty among

African Americans. The study, entitled *The Philadelphia Negro,* reported the institutional practices of the government as the root causes of chronic poverty, because opportunities for economic advancement were inaccessible or unavailable to many African Americans (Mink & O'Connor, 2004). Like his female counterparts from Hull House, Dubois also emphasized the need for governmental action to address economic opportunities in poor neighborhoods.

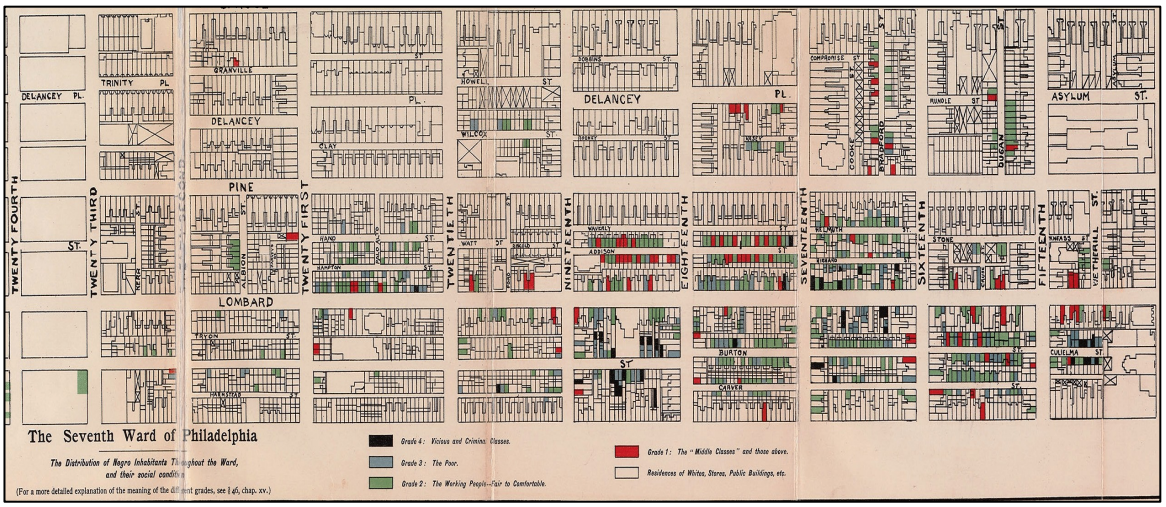

Figure 2. *Neighborhood Assessment of Seventh Ward of Philadelphia (Dubois, 1899).*

Social science studies such as *Hull House Maps & Papers* and *The Philadelphia Negro* provided insurmountable insight into the detrimental conditions of neighborhood poverty, and based on these social science strategies the US government began to address social issues at a systemic level by establishing the Children's Bureau in 1912 and the Women's Bureau in 1920. These bureaus specifically addressed needs of children and the needs of women. Although, a bureau specifically addressing poverty was not established, the time for specifically doing so would come soon after the stock

market crash of 1929, which led to the Great Depression that would, for the most part, expose the realities of poverty and its effects on society.

Once elected, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933) described the effect the Great Depression had on the United States:

> The country was dying by inches. It was dying because trade and commerce had declined to dangerously low levels; prices for basic commodities were such as to destroy the value of the assets of national institutions such as banks, savings banks, insurance companies, and others. These institutions, because of their great needs, were foreclosing mortgages, calling loans, refusing credit. Thus there was actually in process of destruction the property of millions of people, who had borrowed money on that property in terms of dollars which had had an entirely different value from the level of March, 1933. That situation in that crisis did not call for any complicated consideration of economic panaceas or fancy plans. We were faced by a condition and not a theory. (¶ 3)

Because of the effects of the Great Depression, Roosevelt sought to take a monumental step towards alleviating poverty within the United States by creating the Social Security Act of 1935, one of the main legislative items of the New Deal. This act incorporated different social programs such as social insurance to cover the disabled and elderly, along with public assistance or welfare programs (Aid to Dependent Children) for many impoverished people and those without employment. During this time,

Roosevelt initiated several other programs within the New Deal to help Americans recover from the economic damage caused by the Great Depression (Iceland, 2006). And although some scholars contend the New Deal was a failure (Library of Congress, 2003; Santos, 2003), the programs still "set a precedent for the federal government to play a key role in the economic and social affairs of the nation" (Library of Congress, 2004, ¶ 3).

While the government continued approaching poverty as a condition that had "nothing to do with the individual" (Katz, 1989, p. 24), scholars like Oscar Lewis (1959) and Michael Harrington (1962) attempted to shift the view of poverty back to individual attributes. Lewis and Harrington focused on these individual attributes such as behaviors and characteristics to propose overall culture among impoverished groups and although this "culture of poverty" was an interesting concept, the US government, now under John F. Kennedy, continued to tackle poverty at the systemic level through wage policies and "experimental" food stamp programs (Mink & O'Connor, 2004, p. 776).

After the 1963 assassination of Kennedy, newly inaugurated president, Lyndon B. Johnson continued Kennedy's advocacy work, and spoke of a great society that demanded an "end to poverty" in the United States (LBJ Library Archives Staff, 2007, paragraph 44). He proposed a War on Poverty and created several domestic programs such as Job Corps, Upward Bound, and Headstart to assist persons living in poverty (Mink & O'Connor, 2004), many of which still exist today.

Many scholars believe the United States lost this war on poverty (Murray, 1984; Katz, 1989; Reagan, 1988; Miller, 1995), because of the overwhelming amount of

disapproval some of the programs developed, such as the Community Action Program (CAP). CAP was a community-based program helping the government to develop anti-poverty programs and was deemed a failure, by Democrats and Republicans, due to amount of monies used with little effective output (Berlin, 2007). In addition, some Republicans contend the original purpose of ending poverty became lost in the creation of programs, which promoted dependency on welfare rather than personal responsibility and self-sufficiency (Burton, 1992; Mink & O'Connor, 2004; Nemon, 2007). As years have progressed, the thought of blaming the individual for his/her condition seems to be the national attitude towards poverty, with terms such as "immoral" and "irresponsible" used to describe impoverished individuals receiving governmental assistance (Mink & O'Connor, 2004, p. 84).

To address the American concerns about an increased dependency on governmental assistance, the most recent legislation attempting to resolve poverty places major responsibility on the individual to become self-sufficient but fails to acknowledge the need to address impoverished neighborhoods. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) focuses on decreasing the amount of dependence on the government by promoting training and employment (Schram, 2004). This act places guidelines and restrictions on poor persons to obtain and maintain employment or attend job-training courses while searching for employment (Collins & Goldberg, 2004). In addition, poor persons on welfare have no monetary assistance after a five-year period (Collins & Goldberg, 2004) and though PRWORA has moved many persons off welfare, many still are living in poverty. Burke

(2001) emphasizes that "getting people a job doesn't make them self-sufficient" and this requirement is an implication of PRWORA (p. 90). PRWORA seeks to fix the individual rather than the economic conditions that lead to persons living in poverty.

The government has always focused on alleviating or reducing the number of impoverished persons within the US, but has spent less time focusing on the factors surrounding impoverished environments. An examination of the aforementioned programs may yield insight helpful for formulating a macro model for working in poor neighborhoods with a goal of helping to reduce the prevalence of poverty.

1.3 Poverty Reduction

"Because it is right, because it is wise, and because, for the first time in our history, it is possible to conquer poverty."-Lyndon B. Johnson's Special Message to Congress, March 16, 1964

Major reductions occurred in the percentage of persons living in poverty during the Johnson Administration and the aftermath of the War on Poverty programs and using some of those strategies to modify current government programs and economic conditions help reduce poverty (Mink & O'Connor, 2004). Many of those modifications involve the creation of new businesses, the reduction of barriers for existing businesses, and the ability to bring more people into the economy-all important elements in conquering poverty during the twenty-first century (Baker, 2000). This study attempts to learn more about these types of ecological factors (*e.g. War on Poverty legislation*), rather than dwelling on individual deficits (*e.g. TANF legislation*) to form a suggestive model for reducing poverty within the United States.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories of poverty tend to focus on ecological factors and help provide a foundation and a model for assisting African American neighborhoods in poverty. This chapter discusses two types of theories: social and structural. Many social theories concentrate on the individual or group deficiencies of living in poverty, while systemic theories concentrate on the non-social system or structures surrounding the impoverished person or group. These social and structural theories are integrated and illustrated by an ecological model that describes and defines African American neighborhoods in poverty.

2.1 Social Theories

Several social theories contribute to the phenomenon of poverty. However, similar to social science studies about poverty, most social theories specifically focus on the individual rather than on the group or neighborhood. For example, the *social isolation theory* and the *social disorganization theory* both look specifically at how poverty causes detrimental individual characteristics or attributes like depression, rather than at how poverty affects the group or, in this instance, the neighborhood (Rankin & Quane, 2000; Small & Stark, 2005; Small & McDermott, 2006; Hannon, 2005; Hannon & DeFina, 2005).

Other theoretical models such as the popular *Moynihan Model*, developed by presidential aide Patrick Moynihan in 1965, focus more on poverty at the family level, attributing the extreme poverty to the breakdown of the African American family (Harrington, 1986; Harrington, 1997; Mink & O'Connor, 2004). Neither the *social isolation theory* nor the *Moynihan Model* takes into consideration the neighborhood as whole; rather, they seek to explain individual characteristics of people who are living in poverty.

Since this study addresses neighborhoods in poverty, it will make use of social theories that focus on impoverished neighborhoods and the ecological factors within these neighborhoods. Among these social theories is such as the *culture of poverty theory* (Lewis, 1959) or *cultural deficiency theory* (Herring, 1995). The previously mentioned social theories of poverty *(social isolation, social disorganization, Moynihan Model)* integrate frameworks that explain and analyze social concepts related to poverty, but the *culture of poverty theory* and *cultural deficiency theory* attribute poverty to features of a neighborhood's distinct values, beliefs, and traditions that prevent neighborhoods from achieving economic progress and/or social mobility. The *culture of poverty theory* was introduced in 1959 by Oscar Lewis, an American anthropologist, after he conducted an ethnographic study observing poverty in Mexico and Puerto Rico. To this day the *culture of poverty theory* remains one of the most influential social theories about poverty. Lewis provides various traits to describe the culture of poverty and classifies these traits into four types:

- Relationships between the subculture and the larger society

- Nature of the neighborhood
- Nature of the family
- Individual attitudes, personality, and values (Islam, 2005, p. 5)

Lewis (1959) ascribes the subcultures to barriers to economic achievement with impoverished neighborhoods and highlights the negative impact poverty can have by creating subcultures detrimental to impoverished neighborhoods (Ford, 1977). And in order to survive the culture of poverty, the neighborhood has to develop its own institutional resources and opportunities because the larger society tends not to acknowledge impoverished people, causing those in poor neighborhoods to resist the dominant culture in order to retain dignity while ultimately trying to survive (Islam, 2005; Sherman, 2006). The culture of poverty then perpetuates itself "generation after generation" in a cycle of poverty because many of the poor persons continue to remain poor throughout their lives and across generations (Miller, 1976, p. 720).

Because of the high percentage of African American neighborhoods in poverty many studies using the culture of theory framework focus on the African American population (Wilson, 1987; Jargowsky, 1997; Adelman & Jaret, 1999). Many social scientists have viewed African Americans living in poverty as a culture among them, because these African Americans may hold distinct values not embraced by the larger society. To survive, these African Americans living in poverty resist mainstream ideals by developing their own sense of belonging within the neighborhood. Even during the era of slavery this "African survivalism is a major source of Black culture and has contributed to the difference in the way that Blacks and Whites relate to their respective

environments" (Wilson, 1990, p. 24). Although the culture of poverty theory is important to consider with its relation to African Americans and poverty, the theory leads insight into other structurally based theories that focus on non-social systems surrounding the culture of poverty.

2.2 Structural Theories

"Poverty researchers have focused on who loses out at the economic game, rather than addressing the fact that the game produces losers in the first place."-Rank, Yoon, & Hirschl, 2003

These structurally based theories hold systemic views of neighborhood poverty, recognizing the faults within the governmental or environmental system and attributing these faults to poverty, and emphasize the structure of society as contributing to poverty. These structural theories are less rooted in the ability of an individual; rather, they concentrate on such ecological factors as institutional structures and the economy of neighborhoods in poverty. Thus, they attribute poverty to a degree to institutional resources that limit the overall opportunity for advancement within society (Cotter, 2002).

Several structural theories focus on such structural aspects of neighborhoods as spatial concentration, spatial mismatch, structural perspectives, and neighborhood disorder. The s*patial concentration* of poverty (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004; Strait, 2006; DeVerteuil, 2005) and *spatial mismatch* of poverty areas (Lichenwalter, Koeske, & Sales, 2006) deal specifically with concentrated areas of poverty occupied by large percentages of one ethnic group and end up creating impoverished neighborhoods with

spatial inaccessibility to employment, social organizations, and even medical facilities (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004). Interestingly enough, African Americans are more likely to live in these poor neighborhoods (Stoll, 2001; Subramanian et al., 2005); by contrast, whereas Caucasian Americans geographically disperse into different areas (Turner & Hayes, 1997). Similar to the claims made by Oscar Lewis (1959) with the culture of poverty theory, the Black-Out-Migration theory attributes *spatial concentration* and *spatial mismatch* of African Americans to the flight of middle class African Americans from neighborhoods, increasing the number of African American neighborhoods in poverty (Quillian, 1999).

While *spatial conce*ntration and *spatial mismatch* center on the certain locations and concentrations of neighborhoods in poverty, other structural theories such as the *structural perspective* (Albrecht, Albrecht, & Albrecht, 2000) and *neighborhood disorder* (Natsuaki, Ge, Brody, Simons, Gibbons, & Cutrona, 2007) focus on the physical conditions of poor neighborhoods. Ross (2000) makes reference to the impact of such physical conditions on neighborhoods in poverty as "dilapidated buildings, observable signs of littering, vandalism, and graffiti" (p. 164). These types of neighborhood conditions greatly influence the social and institutional resources and opportunities of impoverished African Americans by inhibiting opportunities for advancement of not only the individual but of the neighborhood. Institutional resources, such as banks, heavily influence the social roles of individuals living in poverty. This phenomenon reflects an idea similar to the culture of poverty concept, by arguing that social roles influence the attributes of the overall social capital or social abilities of the

neighborhood (Ford, 1977). Because poor neighborhoods have these limited institutional resources of "limited opportunities for advancement, little financial capital, and small profit margins" (p. 16), these limitations create a poor neighborhood economy, leading to what many economists call a poverty trap.

The idea of a poverty trap complements structural theories, focuses primarily on the economy of the poor neighborhood, and considers that the economies of poor neighborhoods are trapped in "persistent underdevelopment" due to coordination failures of businesses surrounding the neighborhood (Matsuyama, 2007, paragraph 1; paragraph 6). Other models of the poverty trap include structures influencing the circular nature of the trap such as "human capital, division of labor, and market size" (Young, 1928). The poverty trap structures enhance the economy and relate heavily to the spatial locations of poor neighborhoods, the surrounding institutions, and the physical conditions of the institutions inside the poor neighborhoods. The poverty trap argument suggests poverty is impossible for people to escape as long at these economic structures remain in a negative state (Matsuyama, 2007).

Overall, the social and structural theories offer valid explanations of the phenomenon of poverty. By incorporating both theories into a comprehensive ecological model using the Ecological Systems Theory, this study helps illustrate the impact of ecological factors on African American neighborhoods in poverty.

2.3 Ecological Systems Theory

The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) is grounded in the disciplines of ecology and sociology (Brueggemann, 1996). Initially proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979),

EST incorporates concepts from a number of different theoretical perspectives and highlights a positive interaction between people and their environments in order for healthy development to occur (Davies, 1991). The theory focuses on interrelated structures and processes among four systems: micro, meso, exo, and macro (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Aber, 1997). The microsystems include individuals and family, the mesosystems include direct interactions with the microsystems (such as the culture of poverty), the exosystem surrounds the micro and mesosystems and includes external networks influencing those two systems such as institutions, and the macrosystems are primary influences on such other systems as cultural values, political affiliations, economic patterns, and social conditions (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997). The relationships between the larger environments affect the processes within the mesosystems and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

These ecological systems, within the impoverished neighborhoods, can be open or closed. These systems possess states of equilibrium or disequilibrium, sometimes leading a neighborhood to embrace inappropriate attire and negative behavior. Most importantly, the systems tend to maintain a "goodness of fit" or a favorable level of fit between personal or neighborhood needs, capacities, or aspirations. The demands and resources are a part of determining the level of fit, which in turn determines the way the impoverished neighborhood in poverty adapts to the fit (Wakefield, 1996, p. 478). For instance, if the dominant view leads the neighborhood to adopt values that are detrimental to the residents, such as inappropriate attire (sagging pants) or detrimental behavior (selling drugs), the neighborhood adapts evolves into goodness of fit even if

the behaviors have negative consequences. The resources available and the level of demand for those resources within the neighborhood determine the balance of this fit (Germain & Gitterman, 1987). In a poor neighborhood, resources are limited and so are the demands, creating an *unbalanced* level of fit, thus promoting negative behaviors (e.g. selling drugs, prostitution, gambling).

EST emphasizes the importance of a *balanced* level of fit between the individual and the neighborhood. This balance results from a continuous process of changing behaviors or events to improve the level of fit within an impoverished neighborhood or to maintain the current atmosphere of the neighborhood. Germain & Gitterman (1987) refer to this phenomenon as "causal circular exchanges" because changes in one system have consequences for another. Furthermore, the transactions within these changes are continuous exchanges that shape, change, and influence the other system over time. These causal circular changes are similar to the cycle of poverty concept because persons living in an impoverished neighborhood have to adapt to the system already in place whether through avoidance or joining the activities. The choice of adaptation will continue to occur within generations. In order for positive change to occur, change within all systems has to occur with more impact coming from the macrosystem (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). This emphasis on the macrostructure is the main argument to support this study on ecological factors of African American neighborhoods in poverty.

The components of the Ecological Systems Theory include the social and structural theories discussed earlier, because EST describes concepts about the relationships of the micro, meso, exo, and macro systems (*see Figure 3*). Complex

layers within each system, such as behaviors, guidelines, and the status quo, influence each other in some fashion. These layers can be positive or negative, with each ultimately causing change in another layer (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). This scenario is evident using the well known Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or welfare. TANF begins at the macrosystem by way of governmental policies. TANF affects the social organizations involved with the impoverished population, and in turn, the behaviors, guidelines, and status quo of the social organizations affect the communication among the impoverished group. This impoverished group now has a collective thought about the social organizations that provide TANF services and has created its own behaviors, guidelines, and status quo affecting future involvement with other social organizations and other groups that are presented to them in a helping role. Other types of macro structures are also involved, such as the environmental or ecological systems, are also involved because of the amount of influence the ecological system has on the microsystem. These layers support the need to examine interactions of these social and structural systems of poverty at the ecological level rather than at the individual level.

The comprehensive ecological model of impoverished African American neighborhoods in poverty contains specific components of different relationships within the layers and systems based on past empirical studies on neighborhood poverty and because the phenomenon of poverty is most detrimental to African Americans, many of the studies examined include sampling of this racial group. The next chapter is an

extensive review of the literature about neighborhood poverty aimed at examining ecological factors important to this study.

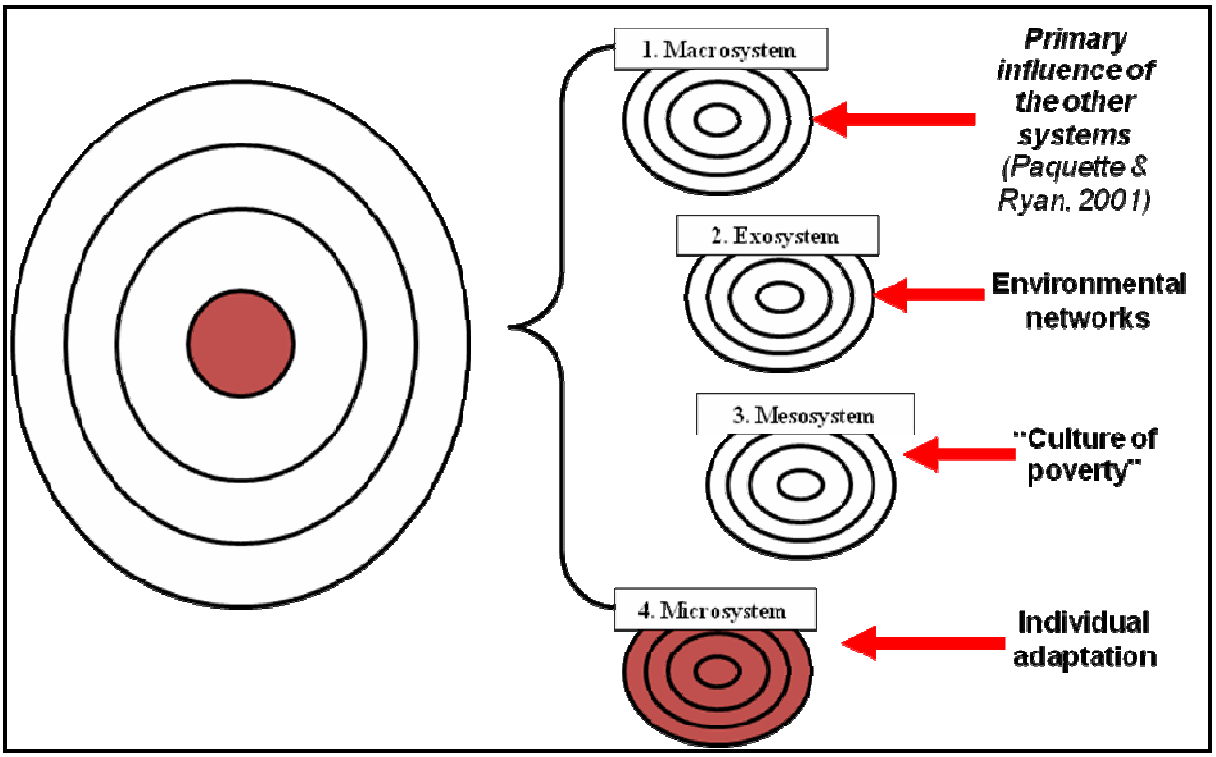

Figure 3. *Incorporating Neighborhood Poverty with the Ecological Systems Theory.*

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 African American Neighborhoods in Poverty

This empirical review of the ecological factors in African American neighborhoods includes the specific ecological factors of geography, institutional opportunities and resources, and social opportunities and resources. The researcher derived these ecological factors from studies on neighborhood poverty conducted from 1997 to 2007, based on the principle that more recent research is more rigorous in its analysis than previous studies. The major limitations of the reviewed research include the absence of certain institutional variables (churches, medical facilities, and social service organizations), limited observation of nonlinear relationships, and the number of studies, in general, about neighborhoods experiencing poverty during this timeframe. However, even with the limitations, this review of literature still helps to create a foundation for understanding impoverished neighborhoods by highlighting ecological factors related to particular African American neighborhoods.

3.2 Neighborhoods Experiencing Poverty

Before delving into the literature review of studies about neighborhoods in poverty, the researcher must make the distinction between neighborhoods and

communities. Some researchers have used the terms "community" and "neighborhood" interchangeably, creating confusion. A "community" refers to a common bond among people through a shared place (Sampson & Morenoff, 2002) and a "neighborhood" is a "collection of both people, [and] institutions occupying a spatially defined area" (Park, 1996 in Sampson & Morenoff, 2002, pp. 147-154). Even if a neighborhood is geographically based, it is not necessarily a community based on the previous definitions, and understanding these differences is important in the measurement of a community or a neighborhood.

Measuring a community is often difficult because of the complexity in identifying boundaries and bonds of people within the neighborhood (Sampson & Morenoff, 2002). For that reason, many researchers concentrate on measuring neighborhoods that depend on spatial delineation derived from census tracts or block groups (Dietz, 2002). However, one of the concerns with using census tracts is that specificity of data is unavailable (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). Some researchers, such as Sampson & Raudenbush, have proposed measuring neighborhoods with alternate methods like ecometrics, a form of ecological assessment using systematic procedures for directly measuring neighborhood variables.

Other neighborhood poverty studies have used methods like neighborhood clusters or boundaries drawn by the researchers to improve the quality of neighborhood measures (DeVertueil, 2005). Neighborhood clusters closely resemble the configuration of a neighborhood based on the local perception of neighborhood boundaries (DeVertueil, 2005) and while neighborhood clusters are more time consuming, they

appear to portray a more realistic image of what constitutes a neighborhood than any other measure.

Even though neighborhood clusters represent the most accurate information, research examining neighborhood poverty continues to utilize census tracts because of the accessibility of information (Chow, Johnson, & Austin, 2005). While census tracts do not fully account for established neighborhood boundaries (Small & Newman, 2001), they are better than such other measures as block groups, when researchers compare specificity (Queralt & Witte, 1998). The use of census tracts for studying neighborhoods in poverty has been consistent over the past several decades. Additionally, the use of census tracts as the unit of analysis has the following other advantages: they are relatively homogeneous, they are small enough to constitute closeness, they are clearly defined, and they generate a large amount of data (Pandy & Coulton, 1994). For these reasons many studies continue to examine neighborhood poverty using census tracts.

3.3 Neighborhood Poverty Pioneer: Julius Wilson

Within those studies of impoverished neighborhoods is the heavily referenced research, by Harvard Professor Julius Wilson (1987) of the inner city of Chicago, where Wilson observed ecological factors of neighborhood poverty or what he commonly refers to as "disadvantaged neighborhoods." Within these disadvantaged neighborhoods, Wilson observed geographic location and limited institutional resources in the Chicago area heavily populated by poor African Americans.

Wilson's general assessment described these poor inner city African American neighborhoods as truly disadvantaged because of relative scarcity of institutional

resources (Small & Stark, 2005). He attributed the scarcity of institutional resources to the limited presence of middle-class African American families. Wilson also argued that limited organizational and institutional resources, along with the absence of middle class and working families, "deprive[d] ghetto neighborhoods of key resources, including structural resources…such as residents with income to sustain neighborhood services" (1996, p. 54). Wilson highlighted the detrimental effects of the middle class flight of African Americans into neighborhoods where the dominant groups were Caucasian American, leading to heavier concentrations of urban poverty.

He also acknowledged the contemporary fair housing legislation, which ignored the structural conditions of heavy concentrations of impoverished African Americans. These structural conditions attributed to increased single African American female households, decreased marriage rates, and increased out of wedlock births, helping to create a socialization of negative behaviors while the neighborhood itself was disconnected from affluent society. In addition, Wilson placed major emphasis on the structural atmosphere, in terms of the disappearance of manufacturing jobs or outsourcing, which increased the rate of unemployment in these impoverished African American neighborhoods.

Wilson concluded the presence of poverty within many poor neighborhoods results from the structural transformation of the city's economy. He predicted that if the economy remains unaddressed then problems would likely increase with each generation to come. He proposed a "case for a universal program" that restructures the current economic policies addressing the problems of disadvantaged or impoverished African

American neighborhoods (1987, p. 120). Wilson's main argument concentrated on economic reform, which included "profound structural economic changes" (p. 121). His 1987 study began the emergence of research into neighborhood poverty after the unexpected increase in poverty in the United States during the late 1980s.

3.4 Empirical Review Method

A review of the empirical literature on African American neighborhoods in poverty addressed Wilson's hypothesis of limited organizational and institutional resources, along with importance of developing a better understanding of the ecological factors associated with the phenomenon. The review included both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications in the social sciences from 1997 to 2007. The review consisted of identifying all articles related to neighborhood poverty in the United States.

The researcher assessed sixteen databases to locate articles. These databases included Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete, EconLit, Education: SAGE full text collection, ERIC, Health Source: Consumer Edition, JSTOR: The Scholarly Journal Archive, Kluwer Online, MasterFILE Premier, Psychology: SAGE full text collection, Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect, Social Work Abstracts, and Science & Technology Collection.

Major search terms within the databases included, but not limited to, "neighborhood poverty," "community poverty," "African American neighborhoods," "African American communities," "African American poverty," "poverty concentration," "poverty neighborhoods," "poverty communities," "low-income

neighborhoods," "low-income communities," "disadvantaged neighborhoods," and "disadvantaged communities."

The research identified a total of 61 articles (*see Appendix A*). The researcher examined ach article for specific content related to the ecological factors and the African American population or family system. The articles excluded observed influences of neighborhood poverty on individual characteristics, such as parenting skills (Paschal & Hubbard, 1998; Pinderhughes et al.), mental health (Nowlin et al., 2007; Caughy et al., 2003; Natsuaki et al., 2007), child development (Caughy & O'Campo, 2006), health (Kobetx et al., 2003; Barr et al., 2001; Datta et al., 2006) and teenage pregnancy (Harding, 2003).

Of the 61 articles found, 32 articles specifically observed ecological factors of African American neighborhoods in poverty in some manner (*see Appendix B*). The disciplines for the examined studies included sociology (Adelman & Jaret, 1999; Albrecht, Albrecht, & Albrecht, 2000; Cotter, 2002; Elliott & Sims, 2001; Hannon, 2005; Hannon & DeFina, 2005; Morenoff & Tienda, 1997; Sampson & Morenoff, 1997; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997; Saporito & Sohoni, 2007; Solomon, 2006; Small & McDermott, 2006; Small & Stark, 2005; South, Crowder, & Chavez, 2005; Quillian, 1999), social work (Koeske, & Sales, 2006; Brisson & Usher, 2005; Ohmer & Beck, 2006), geography (Strait, 2006; Holloway & Mulherin, 2004; DeVerteuil, 2005), public health (Leventhal, Fauth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2005; Subramanian, Chen, Rehkopf, Waterman, & Krieger, 2005), health behavior (Zenk, Schulz, Israel, James, Bao, & Wilson, 2005), government (Rankin & Quane, 2000), criminology (Lichtenwalter,

Stewart & Simons, 2006), public policy and research (Elliott & Sims, 2001; Noonan, 2004; Stoll, 2001), human nutrition (Algert, Agrawal, & Lewis, 2006), city planning (Sawicki & Moody, 2000) and urban affairs (Turner & Hayes, 1997; Galster, Quercia, Cortes, & Malega, 2003).

The empirical review of the 32 identified articles included an analysis of the following topics: (1) operationalization of poverty in neighborhoods, (2) theoretical foundation, (3) research design, (4) sample, and (5) data collection. *Appendix B* illustrates all articles and the aforementioned information. All of the articles used the federal definition of poverty as the criterion for poverty areas. The majority of the studies defined neighborhoods using census tracts (N=17) (Quillian, 1999; Small & Stark, 2005; Galster et al., 203; Zenk et al., 2005; Hannon & DeFina, 2005; Leventhal et al., 2005; Sawicki & Moody, 2000; Hannon, 2005; Sampson & Morenoff, 1997; Ohmer & Beck, 2006; Holloway & Mulherin, 2004; Strait, 2006; Morenoff & Tienda, 1997; Rankin & Quane, 2000; South et al., 2005). Other studies used block groups (N=5) (Stewart & Simon, 2006; Noonan, 2004; Saporito & Sohoni, 2007; Brisson & Usher, 2005; Sims & Elliott, 2001), zip codes (N=2) (DeVerteuil, 2005; Small & McDermott, 2006), county tracts (N=2) (Albrecht et al., 2000; Cotter, 2002), geographical borders (N=1) (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997), metropolitan areas (N=1) (Adelman & Jaret, 2000), and TANF recipients (N=1) (Solomon, 2006). Two studies did not mention the measures researchers used to identify neighborhoods (Lichenwalter, 2006; Algert, 2006).

Over 70% of the research (N=23) utilized a theoretical foundation for their study and a majority of the theories mentioned dealt with social togetherness-such as social correction and social control-among the identified members of impoverished neighborhoods (Solomon, 2006), social isolation within neighborhoods (Rankin & Quane, 2000), social transformation of neighborhoods (Morenoff & Tienda, 1997), collective efficacy within neighborhoods (Sampson & Raudenbush; Ohmer & Beck, 2006), and the social disorganization of neighborhoods in poverty (Small & Stark, 2005; Small & McDermott, 2006; Hannon, 2005; Hannon & DeFina, 2005).

Other studies placed an emphasis on geographical considerations of location, space, and concentration, such as spatial concentration of poverty, as a foundation for their studies (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004; Strait, 2006; DeVerteuil, 2005), spatial mismatch of poverty areas (Lichenwalter et al., 2006), structural perspectives of poverty areas (Albrecht et al., 2000), and the ethnic makeup within poverty areas (Stoll, 2001; Subramanian et al., 2005).

All of the studies used non-experimental designs, which included surveys along with secondary data analysis. Also, a majority of these studies used cross sectional data (N=21) (Stewart & Simons, 206; Solomon, 2006; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997; Small & McDermot, 2006; Albrecht et al., 2000; Hannon & DeFina, 2005; Hannon, 2005; Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Sawicki & Moody, 2000; Noonan, 2004; DeVerteuil, 2005; Ohmer &Beck, 2006; Rankin & Quane, 2000; Adelman & Jaret, 2000; Cotter, 2002; Zenk et al., 2005; Subramanian et al., 2005; Small & Stark, 2005; Elliott & Sims, 2001; Lichenwalter et al., 2006; Algert et al., 2006), while the other studies used

longitudinal data (N=11) (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004; Stoll, 2001; Leventhal et al., 2005; Saporito & Sohoni, 2007; Brisson & Usher, 2005; Turner & Hayes, 1997; Strait, 2006; Galster et al., 2003; South et al., 2005; Morenoff & Tienda, 1997; Quillian, 1999).

The data sets had sample sizes ranging from 500 (Small & Stark, 2005) to 100,000 individuals (Cotter, 2002). The collection of social science studies used primarily Census Data from the United States and different states. Some researchers geographically coded (geocoded) data based on the areas of study (Subramanian et al., 2005; Small & Stark, 2005). Two of the longitudinal studies used the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (South et al., 2005; Quillian, 1999). All of the databases included demographic, economic, and housing information.

3.5 Review of the Findings

After reviewing the thirty two journal articles, the researcher developed a model inclusive of the identified ecological factors for impoverished African American neighborhoods, outlining the three major ecological factors to be utilized in this social science study (*see Figure 4*): (1) the geographical factor, which entails such variables as the different forms of geographical or physical boundaries or presence within a neighborhood; (2) the institutional factor, which entails such variables as the economic opportunities and resources as access to employment, education, transportation, economic capital, and presence of businesses, churches, and social organizations in the neighborhood; (3) and the social factor, which entails such variables as the social capital of neighborhoods in poverty stemming from such forms of socialization as sense of community, social control, and social isolation. These three identified ecological factors

encompass important explanatory variables surrounding African American neighborhoods in poverty.

Only seven of the reviewed journal articles included all three ecological factors as correlates of neighborhood poverty (Brisson, 2005; Solomon, 2006; Adelman & Jaret, 1999; Noonan, 2004; Solomon, 2006; DeVerteuil, 2005; Saporito & Sohori, 2007). These items are discussed in further detail during the literature review section.

A majority of the articles identified explanatory variables for the geographical factor-either by itself (Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997; Cotter, 2002; Hannon, 2005; Turner & Hayes, 1997; Holloway & Mulherin, 2004; Small & Stark, 2005) or in addition to other categories.

Nine articles identified the geographical factor with the institutional factor of economic opportunities and resources (Morenoff & Tienda, 1997; Subramanian et al., 2005; Quillian, 1999; Small & McDermott, 2006; Galster et al., 2003; Lichenwalter et al., 2006; Sawicki & Moody, 2000; Algert et al., 2006); while three articles included the geographical factor with the social factor (Stoll, 2001; Rankin & Quane, 2000; Stewart & Simons, 2006).

Six of the articles identified social capital (Albrecht et al., 2000; Ohmer & Beck, 2006; Hannon & DeFina, 2005), the institutional factor (Strait, 2006; Zenk et al., 2005), and the social and institutional factor (Leventhal et al., 2005).

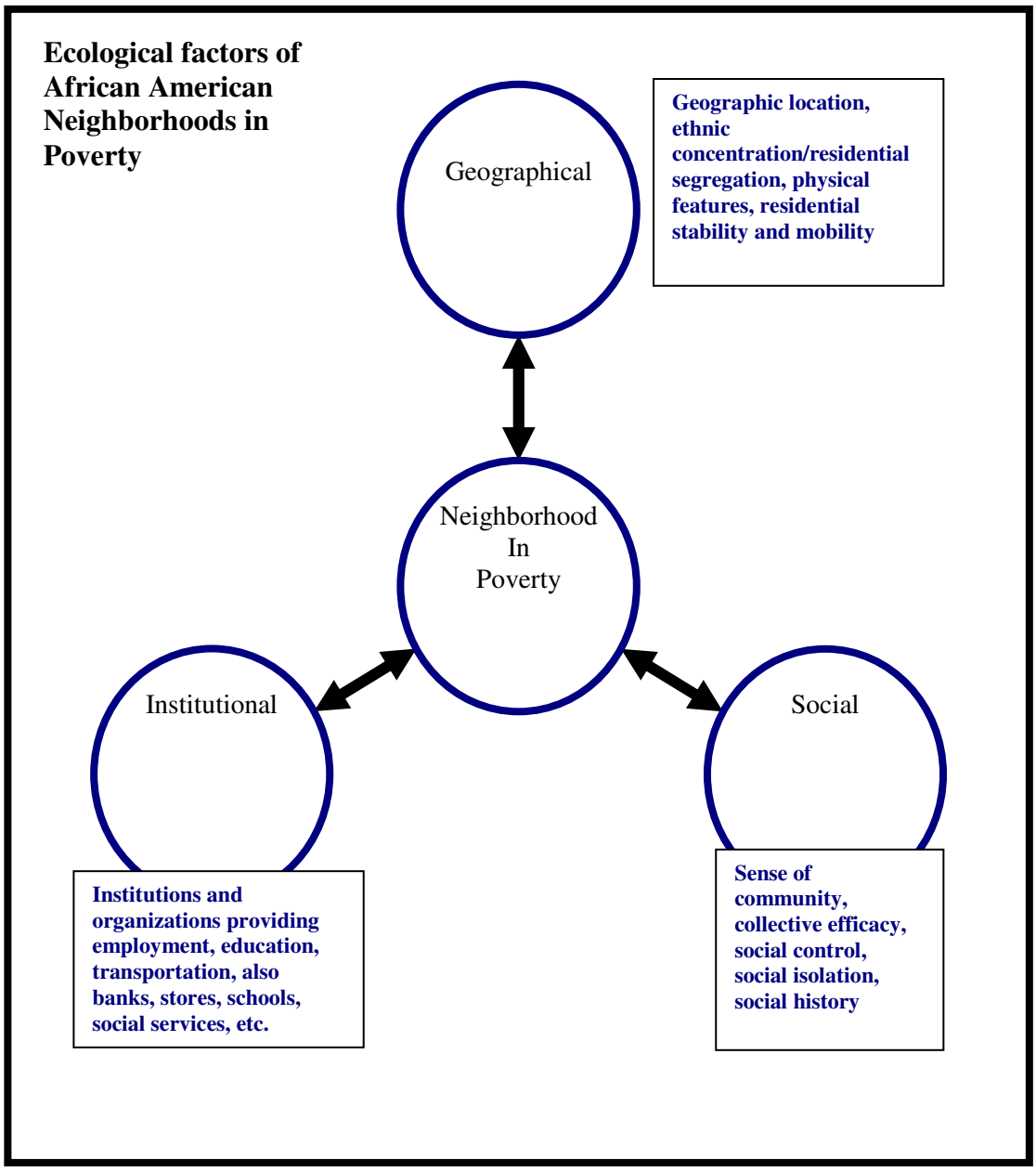

Figure 4. *Ecological Model of African American Neighborhoods in Poverty.*

3.5.1 Geographical Factor

As shown in Figure 4, the first major ecological factor to understand is the geographical factor, and its explanatory variables included geographic location, ethnic concentration, residential segregation, physical features of buildings, landscapes, group

boundaries, and residential stability and mobility. The g*eographic location* of poverty refers to "high density poverty within a particular place and over a sustained period of time" (DeVerteuil, 2005, p. 26). The geographic location of many impoverished neighborhoods has contributed to increasing problems, such as crime and violence (DeVerteuil, 2005). In addition to *geographical location*, *ethnic concentration* or areas with high rates of one ethnic group such as a large number of African Americans living in specific areas, is also associated with neighborhood poverty (South et al., 2005). *Ethnic concentration* has lead to educational inequality, differences in employment, and stereotypical attitudes that have added to the economic disadvantage of many poor African Americans (Adelman & Jaret, 1999). Morenoff & Tienda (1997) observed this spatial distribution of opportunity in poor neighborhoods and identified correlations between poverty and the *geographical location* and *ethnic concentration*, as statistically significant ($p<.05$). Many other studies support the negative impact of *geographical location* and *ethnic concentration* in poor African American neighborhoods (Yang & Jargowsky, 2006; Coleman, 2001; Small & Newman, 2001; Massey, 1996).

More so, geographical *location* and *ethnic concentration* contribute to *residential segregation* (Morenoff & Tienda, 1997; DeVerteuil, 2005; Small & Stark, 2005) and many studies recognize that impoverished neighborhoods with *residential segregation* having higher rates of diminished health, violence, and death (Subramanian et al., 2005; South et al., 2005; Adelman & Jaret, 2000; Small & McDermott, 2006). Adelman & Jaret conclude *residential segregation* is more detrimental for African Americans than Caucasians. *Residential segregation* is also attached to the *culture of*

poverty theory because *residential segregation* encourages the development of particular attitudes, behaviors, and values that are in contrast to the attitudes of mainstream society (Galster, 1996, p. 89).

In addition to *geographic location, ethnic concentration,* and *residential segregation*, some neighborhood poverty studies have addressed other important geographic variables like the *physical features* of poor neighborhoods. For example, the physical features of buildings and the physical features of landscape within neighborhoods (Mulherin & Holloway, 2004; Natsuaki et al., 2007). These impoverished neighborhoods are usually depicted as having physical features that exhibit a dismal appearance (Natsuaki et al., 2007) and these neighborhoods are usually occupied by disadvantaged African Americans (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004). Noonan (2005) observed other types of physical features that addressed group boundaries such as rivers, highways, and parks within and surrounding poor neighborhoods. He was able to associate the group boundaries with the local demographic dissimilarity in poor neighborhoods.

Other studies have observed the negative influence neighborhood features such as deteriorated buildings and group boundaries, have on social issues like parenting, education, and violence (Hasima & Amato, 1994; Pinderhughes, Nix, Foster & Jones, 2001; Fauth, Brady-Smith, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002; Bennett & Fraser, 2000; Kaiser & Delaney, 1996; American School Board Journal, 2005). And, while studying physical features is extremely important, it remains a largely unexplored area.

Other geographical variables include *residential stability,* such as vacancy rates, and *residential mobility* to move out of impoverished. Sampson & Raudenbush (1997) observed an inverse relationship between *residential stability* and *concentrated poverty* ($p<.01$), while South et al. (2005) revealed African Americans compared to Caucasian Americans have higher rates of moving from lower to higher poverty tract areas. And although African Americans appear to be able to move away from high poverty areas, they are still more likely to access a lower poverty area that has high *ethnic concentration* and *residential segregation* (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004; South et al., 2005). Holloway & Mulherin (2004) attribute these rates of *residential mobility* among African Americans to discrimination from housing markets which have limited the mobility of African Americans getting out of poverty.

Galster et al. (2003) examined these characteristics along with others, of the poorest of neighborhoods in metropolitan areas between 1980 and 1990. Their study used a multivariate analysis to provide correlates of poverty in metropolitan neighborhoods including: 1) population growth and geographic location, 2) demographic and racial characteristics, 3) age of the neighborhood, 4) socioeconomic status of households and 5) vacancy and tenure characteristics of neighborhood housing. Their results indicated significant changes for one third of the neighborhoods. *Residential segregation* had strong association with neighborhoods in poverty. The vacancy rates ($p<.01$) and tenure characteristics ($p<.01$) also yielded strong associations, specifically renter-occupied units and high neighborhood vacancy rates. All of the aforementioned studies support the existence of a strong relationship of the geographical factor. Using

geography as a main factor is important to make valid explanations for African American neighborhoods in poverty.

3.5.2 Institutional factor

In addition to geography, the literature review also revealed the institutional factor as another important factor to consider for making explanations of African American neighborhoods in poverty. The institutional variables included employment, education, transportation, institutions such as stores, banks, schools, for profit organizations and other institutions or organizations responsible for providing opportunities and resources within neighborhoods influencing the economic capital of the neighborhood. These *institutional resources* refer to the quality, quantity, and diversity of institutions (Chow et al., 2005) that are responsible for addressing the needs of its residents by providing economic resources and opportunities which "contribute to the vitality of neighborhoods" (Small & McDermott, 2006, p. 1997). Having limited institutional opportunities and resources rationalizes the negative outcomes like higher crime rates, out-of-wedlock births, and inadequate social controls (DeVerteuil, 2005). These outcomes lead to a consistent decay of local institutions, while also having a negative impact on African American neighborhoods in poverty.

Although providing certain institutional opportunities and resources has been a fundamental mission of African American churches (Shipp & Branch, 2006), majority of the observed studies only focused on neighborhood institutions that were "market dependent" such as grocery stores (Small & Stark, 2005). However, many of the studies support the importance of available *economic opportunity* for African Americans

(employment) (Adelman & Jaret, 2002) and other studies support the importance of *organizational and institutional resources* (grocery stores) (Algert et al., 2006). Recent statistics report impoverished African American neighborhoods have fewer grocery stores than Caucasian neighborhoods along with higher rates of food unavailability, and the neighborhoods are more vulnerable to poor health outcomes because of the limited access to healthy foods (Algert et al., 2006). Because the economic strength relies heavily on "any establishment that has a physical location and offers services or sells goods basic to day to day living," the economic strength of impoverished African American neighborhoods has suffered greatly (p. 169).

Other organizational and institutional resources have also contributed to the strength of impoverished neighborhoods (Small & McDermott, 2006; Peterson, Krivo, & Harris, 2000; Yen & Kaplan, 1999). Small & McDermott focused on for-profit establishments and businesses within African American neighborhoods and developed several fundamental hypotheses. One of the main hypotheses included the increase of African American residents based on the limited number of establishments and demographic and economic conditions. They included banks, childcare centers, convenience stores, credit unions, pharmacies, hardware stores, coin operation laundries, grocery stores, grooming stores and restaurants, as the selected establishments for empirical testing. The study results indicated statistically significant relationships for all institutional variables. Positive relationships occurred for eight of the organizational and institutional resources and negative relationships existed for banks and grooming stores. These findings recognize the importance of the relationship between impoverished

African American neighborhoods and the availability and accessibility of institutional opportunities and resources.

Small & Stark (2005) conducted a similar study with a specific focus on private and public childcare centers. The reported odds of having a private center was less than .308 to 1 in the poorest neighborhoods compared to 1.041 to 1 in the most affluent areas, whereas the odds for public child care centers increased for the poorer neighborhoods mostly comprised of African Americans. These limited organizational and institutional resources lead to limited organizational opportunities, specifically employment and educational opportunities.

More importantly, access to quality education differed greatly for poor African Americans and supports the disproportionate representation of poverty within the African American population group compared to Caucasian Americans (Stoll, 2001). Adelman & Jaret (2000) found variations for education (African Americans=.464; Caucasians=.355) and institutional structure variables (African American=.464; Caucasians=.533) revealing an increase in the severity of poverty among African Americans compared to Caucasian Americans. Quality educational facilities are dispersed so far from impoverished African American neighborhoods and are harder to access. This limited access to quality educational facilities correlates with limited access to transportation that is disproportionately experienced by women, low-income families, and African Americans (Slaughter-Defoe, 1993; Lichtenwalter et al., 2006). Forty-one percent of low-income African American single mothers are more likely to experience

higher levels of transportation disadvantage that contribute to the limited access to quality education (Lichtenwalter et al., 2006).

Based on these studies, poor neighborhoods have limited organizational and institutional opportunities or limited organizational and institutional resources. These institutional limitations emphasize obvious economic inequality within the African American population (Galster, 1996). In the past, manufacturing jobs have been available to provide economic resources for poor neighborhoods, such as decent wages and a way for low-income persons to reach middle class status. Now, the new wave of job opportunities offer low wages, limited advancement, and contain educational requirements that are difficult for many African Americans living in poverty to obtain (Galster, 1996; Adelman & Jaret, 1999). This structural change of the job market, to increased level of skill, has contributed to a "downward spiral" of job opportunities for African Americans (Lopez & Stack, 1998; Curley, 2005, p. 98) and this economic shift has lead to an increased level of joblessness causing significant changes in the African American neighborhoods in poverty. The companies that once hired blue-collar employers are now replaced by high levels of technology and higher education requirements, and the current economic structure is set up in a way that poor African Americans fall behind (Bradshaw, 2007, p. 16). African Americans are trapped in economically devastated neighborhoods (Rankin & Quane, 2000), and the vitality of the African American neighborhood's structure depends heavily on the economic support and involvement of working people (Wilson, 1987) therefore strong explanations are

expected from this study's observation of the institutional factor of African American neighborhoods in poverty.

3.5.3 Social Factor

The third ecological factor of African American neighborhoods in poverty focuses on social opportunities and resources, sometimes referred to as social capital (Brisson & Usher, 2005) and its explanatory variables include sense of community, collective efficacy, social control, social isolation, family socialization, and social history. Social capital is the social network of trusting relationships that exists in a neighborhood, in turn creating benefits for neighborhood members (Brisson & Usher, 2005) and the extent of the social networks is based on social opportunities and resources that exist within that network of relationships (Stoll, 2001) such as non-profit institutions like social service organizations and churches. Social service organizations and churches have been important in the establishment of strong bonds within poor neighborhoods (Fabricant & Fisher, 2002). Some scholars even contend African American churches as the cornerstone of many African American neighborhoods, and report an increase in their involvement with the creations of charter schools run by African American churches (Hodge, 1997).

Although, social service organizations and churches have played a "critical role in both maintaining and revitalizing social life within poor [neighborhoods]" (Fabricant & Fisher, 2002, p. 4), social network resources are still limited in African American neighborhoods with high poverty rates (Rankin & Quane, 2000). Putnam (2000) points out limited attendance at town hall meetings and church services over previous years

and, if impoverished African American neighborhoods continue to engage in such unproductive behaviors, a negative influence on other residents within the neighborhood will continue to exist (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004). These unproductive behaviors within impoverished African American neighborhoods have become an unhealthy neighborhood norm (Brisson & Usher, 2005; Ohmer & Beck, 2006) and have created an urge to bring the African American neighborhood back together.

Impoverished African American neighborhoods need a strong *sense of community* and *collective efficacy* for the development of strong social cohesiveness and bonding among its members (Stoll, 2001; Brisson & Usher, 2005; Ohmer & Beck, 2006). African American neighborhoods that have *collective efficacy* and a *sense of community* are more likely to establish togetherness among members that will also bring about a collective effort to maintain the neighborhood (Stoll, 2001; Solomon, 2006). The collective effort allows people in the poor neighborhood to disassociate from negative aspects of their surroundings to concentrate on strengths and resources within the neighborhood (Bolland, 2002). Impoverished African Americans typically live in a cultural context with a negative *sense of community* that devalues work, and this negative perception results in embracing instant gratification and limited working habits, creating difficulty in understanding how to adopt values of mainstream society (Herring, 1995). Sampson & Raudenbush (1997) developed and tested a hypothesis social capital and found associations to higher crime rate in poor neighborhoods where there was limited sense of community and collective efficacy.

In addition to limited *sense of community* and *collective efficacy*, limited *social control* has also been attributed to negative behaviors such as crime and when a neighborhood in poverty experiences limited social control there is also a greater likelihood of teenage pregnancy and drug use (Rankin & Quane, 2001) and is usually experienced by impoverished African American neighborhoods. Informal social control such as the readiness of the residents to get involved depends on the mutual trust and bond among the neighbors (Stoll, 2001; Brisson & Usher, 2005; Ohmer & Beck, 2006) with the assumption being that affluent neighbors exert a more positive influence on one another compared to poorer neighbors (Holloway & Mulherin, 2004). Limited social control, whether formal or informal, lends itself to *social isolation* or limited contact or interaction with individuals or institutions that represent that of the mainstream society (Ohmer & Beck, 2006; Wilson, 1987). For instance, if a neighborhood in poverty suffers from limited social control high levels of social isolation are likely to exist. Social isolation is a critical reason for the negative behaviors of many African Americans living in impoverished neighborhoods (Rankin & Quane, 2001).

In contrast, when an impoverished neighborhood has a sense of community, collective efficacy, and social control, there is a greater likelihood of social opportunity and resources within the neighborhood (Stoll, 2001). Although research has supported the importance of the social factor there is still limited support of past research in its relationship with neighborhood poverty (Fernandez, Harris, & Sosin, 1991; Pedder, 1991). This study, along with future research, will not only have to focus on the geographical and institutional factor of African American neighborhoods in poverty, but

also the social factor to yield findings that support focusing heavily on ecological factors rather than individual factors for neighborhood poverty.

3.6 Limitations of the Empirical Literature

After reviewing and identifying these ecological factors of geography, institutional opportunities and resources, and social opportunities and resources, the researcher identified many limitations creating difficulty in drawing conclusions and sound implications about the phenomenon. The researcher identified the major limitation of research on African American neighborhoods in poverty, between the period of 1997 and 2007, as the small number of articles specifically related to observing ecological factors, especially in regards to the presence of churches, social organizations, and medical facilities. Of the thirty-two articles observing ecological correlates, only one included the number of churches as an observed variable (Small & Stark, 2001). Research centered on the prevalence and quality of medical care facilities holds valuable insight into prevention and reduction of health risks among this population (Franzini, Caughy, Spears, & Esquer, 2005; Strait, 2006; Datta, Subramanian, Colditz, Kawachi, Palmer, & Rosenberg, 2006).

Also, the researcher concluded a strong need for longitudinal research in the area of neighborhood poverty. As stated earlier, over 50% of the articles were cross sectional. Neighborhoods change over time, and cross sectional studies do not reflect the change and although this study is also cross sectional there still needs to be more longitudinal studies that observe other possible existing relationships within poor African American neighborhoods.

In addition, many of the reviewed studies of African American neighborhoods in poverty hold the assumption of linear relationships. Linear relationships may not always be the case, especially for longitudinal studies and there may be curvilinear relationships that not accounted for. For example, the presence of convenience stores and churches may have positive relationships, but as the quantity increases, the associations may become negative. Many African American neighborhoods may have several convenience stores in one area, allowing an abuse of alcohol purchase and consumption contributing to higher crime rates and dilapidated neighborhood conditions. The positive presence of churches may begin to decrease after many of the religious institutions remain in a poor area with no progress in prosperity or physical condition.

Overall, strong correlations of African American neighborhoods in poverty were found among the explanatory variables of employment opportunity, education, population density, racial segregation, social capital, residential stability, poverty rates, and other institutional resources, along with family structure variables. Additional articles also mention correlations of geographic location and spatial configuration, neighborhood conditions, and ethnic concentration (Pinderhughes et al., 2001; Freishler, Bruce, & Needell, 2007; Paschall & Hubbard, 1998; Harding, 2003; Geis & Ross, 1998; Boardman & Robert, 2000).

Because America is ever changing and ever growing, increased social work research needs to focus on addressing this change and growth and this study utilizes the identified ecological factors of geography, institutions, and social variables, to form a

substantive explanation of the phenomenon and more importantly how to realistically alleviate the problem through effective social work practice.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

This chapter outlines the methodology used for the study, including the research questions, the research hypotheses, and the research design of the three identified ecological factors which consist of the geographical, institutional, and social factor. Also, this chapter includes operational definitions of the variables that make up the geographical, institutional, and social factor, how those variables will be measured, the validity and reliability of the measures, and the limitations of the overall research design (*see Table 3).*

4.1 Research Questions

This study on neighborhood poverty examines the following major research questions:

1. Which ecological factors are associated with the amount of poverty in a poor neighborhood?
2. Is there a difference between poor neighborhoods with lower amounts of poverty and poor neighborhoods with higher amounts of poverty?

4.2 Research Hypotheses

Several hypotheses are derived based on the above research questions.

H1: The variables making up the geographical factor are more likely to explain the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood than the variables making up the social or institutional factor.

H2: As the variables making up the geographical factor increase, the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood increases.

H3: As the variables making up the institutional factor increase, the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood decreases.

H4: As the variables making up the social factor increase, the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood decreases.

H5: There is a difference between poor neighborhoods with lower amounts of poverty and neighborhoods with higher amounts of poverty.

Poor neighborhoods are those neighborhoods where over twenty percent of its residents fall below the poverty threshold (*see Table 1*) (US Census, 2000). When a neighborhood has over forty percents of its residents falling below the poverty threshold, the neighborhood is considered an extreme poverty area. However, when a poor neighborhood has residents with incomes less than half of the expected poverty threshold, those persons are considered to be living in extreme poverty.

4.3 Research Design

The impoverished neighborhoods observed for this study came from Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. The researcher of the study was a part of a group of

research interns in the summer of 2007, participating in a research internship about poverty in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. The research internship conducted a survey entitled "Mobile Youth Survey" (MYS), a part of a longitudinal study that began in 1998 by primary investigator, Dr. John Bolland, a professor at The University of Alabama in Birmingham in the School of Public Health. Every year, the MYS has observed certain impoverished areas in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama (*see Figure 5*). The MYS is an ongoing longitudinal project that (a) studies the etiology of risk behaviors among adolescents living in extreme poverty; (b) studies how contextual factors (e.g., family, school, neighborhood) affects both the etiology or risk behaviors as well as the behaviors themselves; and (c) establishes a community laboratory where residents will be receptive to both interventions and complementary studies (Bolland, 2007).

This study utilizes four scales and one question from the most recent collected and filtered MYS data from 2005, of the observed impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, in addition to online data from the 2000 US Census, Alabama State Department of Education, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Census Bureau, US Postal Service & EASI, Simply Map, and the Mobile Police Department.

4.3.1 Scope and Purpose of Existing Longitudinal Data

The MYS longitudinal study also contained additional information pertaining to these impoverished areas of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, such as other scales assessing individual attributes. The researcher does not utilize this additional information since the focus of this study is ecological factors. The following paragraph

is information retrieved and modified from a pre-established document for MYS (Bolland, 2007, pp. 1-11). The information in the document was written by the primary investigator of MYS, Dr. John Bolland.

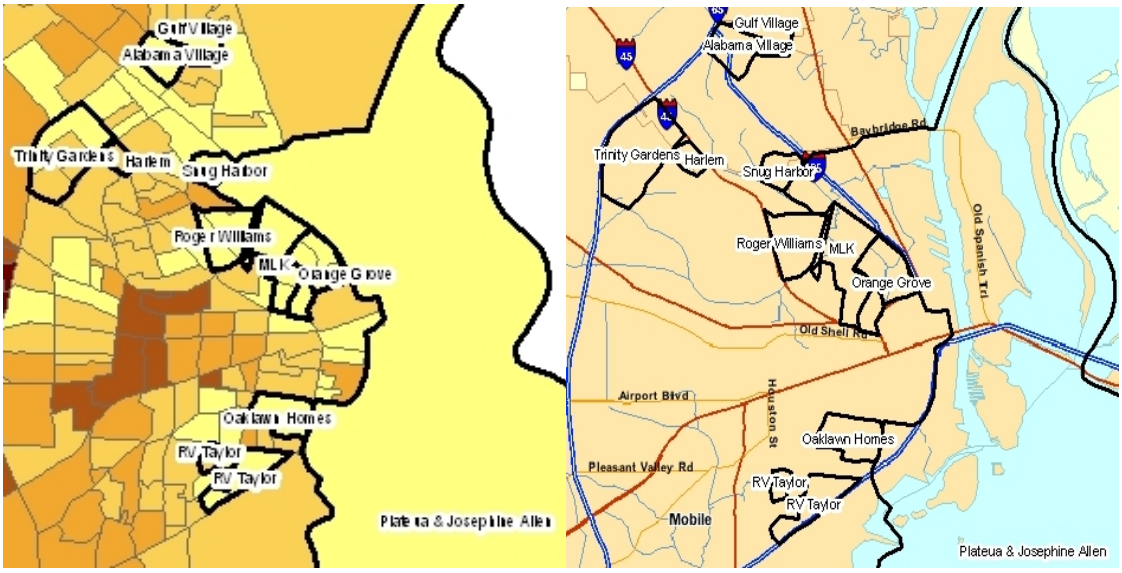

Figure 5. *Impoverished Neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard Alabama.*
**Neighborhoods included in study outlined in black.*
***Canary yellow indicates incomes less than $20,000/yr*

4.3.1.1 About MYS

The MYS is a neighborhood based multiple cohort longitudinal study with data collected annually. The MYS participants are youth between the ages of 9 and 19 years of age living in impoverished neighborhoods in the Mobile, Alabama metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Over 7,500 youth have participated in the study since 1998. One of the main purposes of the MYS is to study the contextual factors such as youth living in impoverished neighborhoods.

4.3.1.2 Location: Mobile and Prichard, Alabama

Mobile is located on the Gulf coast and has a population of 200,000. In 2000, over 45% of Mobile's population was African American and about 22% lived in

poverty. The median household income was $31,445. Prichard, Alabama borders Mobile, Alabama and has a population of 30,000. In 2000, over 80% of the population was African American, about 44% lived in poverty, and the median household income was $19,544 a year. In both areas, nearly half or more of the African Americans in Mobile and Prichard are living in a state of poverty. Many of the African Americans in the Mobile MSA lived in high-poverty census tracts with high residential segregation, placing Mobile third in the nation in the measure of concentrated poverty (Jargowsky, 1997). In 2000, the Mobile county school district also remained largely segregated (Frankenberg, 2005). These statistics regarding residential segregation and concentrated poverty areas strengthen the need to explore other ecological factors of impoverished African American neighborhoods. These ecological factors are so engrained within these neighborhoods that dismantling the negative consequences of joblessness and out of wedlock parenting will have to begin with the most effective factor, which this study hopes to discover.

4.4 Population and Sample Procedures

In the summer of 1998, investigators began recruited participants using a combination of active and passive recruitment strategies. Half of the public housing units with adolescents were randomly selected using housing authority data, and half of the residential units in non-public housing were randomly selected using census of addresses developed entering into the neighborhoods. Overall, there are eight waves of data from 1998 to 2005 and this study uses the most recent data from 2005 (Wave 8). The cluster sample of participants came from twelve neighborhoods representing block groups in 16

census tracts in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, with a population of approximately 26,372 (*see Table 3*).

Table 3. *Description of MYS Target Neighborhoods: Census 2000.*

	Census Tracts (Block Groups)	Population	African-American population	Poverty rate (individuals)	Extreme poverty rate (individuals)	Median household income
Non-Public Housing						
Plateau (M)[a]	12	2,511	88.8%	56.7%	28.3%	$13,810
Harlem (P)[a]	39.02 (1)	1,203	85.6%	47.1%	11.2%	$18,426
Martin Luther King (M)	4.01 (2, 3, 4) 5(1)	2,827	97.2%	49.5%	30.6%	$12,157
Snug Harbor (P)	43 (1)	535	100.0%	65.2%	24.2%	$11,597
Alabama Village (P)	47 (1) 48 (1,2)	2,565	84.5%	70.7%	39.0%	$10,793
Toulminville (M)	6 (2,3)	2,326	97.2%	56.7%	30.3%	$11,236
Trinity Gardens (M)[b]	39.01 (1, 2, 3)	2,479	97.9%	31.5%	12.2%	$18,374
Public Housing						
Orange Grove (M)	4.01 (1,2) 4.02 (1,2)	3,517	98.7%	76.3%	59.2%	$6,696
Josephine Allen Homes (M)	12	2,511	88.8%	56.7%	28.3%	$13,810
Roger Williams Homes (M)	6 (2, 3)	2,326	97.2%	56.7%	30.3%	$11,236
Oaklawn Homes (M)	13.02 (2)	1,816	98.2%	44.2%	22.9%	$14,648
R.V. Taylor Plaza (M)	15.01 (2, 4) 15.02 (1)	3,139	95.6%	64.6%	36.9%	$9,963
Gulf Village (P)	48 (1)	943	94.7%	81.4%	44.1%	$8,783
Bessemer Apartments (P)	40 (4)	1,487	98.0%	57.7%	30.3%	$11,950

[a]M = Mobile; P = Prichard
[b]Trinity Gardens was added as a new target neighborhood in 2001

*Toulminville and Bessemer Apartments closed down prior to 2005 and are not a part of the study.

The neighborhoods are based on the 1990 Census of the lowest median household income in Mobile and the neighborhoods serve as the unit of analysis or cases within the study. According to Tabachnik & Fidell (1989), this sample size of participants from MYS has high power and effect size using formula $N \geq 50 + m$ where m is the number of cases, but only for the social factor which uses four scales that will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter (Green, 1991, p. 500). "[T]he minimum number of subjects for each predictor or independent variable (IV) in a regression should

be 5-to-1" and in this case the number of subjects is over five cases or neighborhoods (N=12) which is a sufficient number to be able to run a linear regression (p. 500).

Six of the poorest neighborhoods are public housing developments or housing operated and owned by the federal government (Orange Grove, Josephine Allen Homes, Roger William Homes, Oaklawn Homes, R.V. Taylor Plaza, and Gulf Village) while the other six are non-public housing (Plateau, Harlem, Martin Luther King, Snug Harbor, Alabama Village, and Trinity Gardens). Eight of the neighborhoods are located in Mobile, while two are located in Prichard, Alabama. Table 3 provides the demographic information of the selected neighborhoods. About 94% of the targeted neighborhoods are African American as well as over 98% of MYS participants. Of the twelve neighborhoods the poverty percentage ranges between 31.5% and 81.4%, with a median poverty rate of 58.4% which greatly exceeds forty percent, the rate of extreme poverty. The household incomes range from $8,783 to $18, 476 with a median income of $12,524 a year.

Figure 6. *Public Housing in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama.*

4.5 Operational Definitions

The dependent variable of the amount of poverty is measured using median incomes, the percentage of individuals living below the poverty threshold, and the percentage of individuals making incomes less than half of the poverty threshold. The independent variables making up the three ecological factors include: (1) geographical variables determined by the ethnic concentration within the neighborhood, the average age of the homes in neighborhood, the numbers of older homes, the numbers of hazardous areas, the numbers of unoccupied units, and the structural integrity of the neighborhood, poverty concentration, and residential mobility, (2) institutional variables determined by the number of operating businesses, churches, medical facilities, social organization, schools and the quality of the schools, and (3) social variables determined by neighborhood connectedness, peer support, friend attachment, warmth toward mother, warmth toward father, and religious affiliation.

Each of the three ecological factors is described in detail in the following section.

1. Geographical Factor

    a. *Ethnic concentration* is the percentage of African Americans residing within the impoverished neighborhoods of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. The researcher retrieved the information about ethnic concentration from the pre-established document by Dr. John Bolland, describing the 2000 US Census (*see Table 3*).

b. *The average age of the homes* within the neighborhood is the average age of the homes within the impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. The researcher retrieved the information about the average of the homes from the 2000 US Census.

c. *The numbers of old homes* within the neighborhood are homes that were built prior to World War II in 1939 or earlier. The researcher retrieved the information about the numbers of old homes from the Market Segment of the EASI retrieved using Simply Map, an online database of demographics, mapping, and census data.

d. *The numbers of hazardous areas* in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, are designated areas within the neighborhood that contain hazardous waste sites, toxic release facilities, air pollution facilities, and impaired waters that do not meet water quality standards. The researcher retrieved the information about the numbers of hazardous areas from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

e. *The numbers of unoccupied units* are the housing units in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama that the city reports as unoccupied. The researcher retrieved the information about the numbers of unoccupied units from the 2000 US Census.

f. *The structural integrity of the neighborhood* used a likert scale of 1 (high structural integrity) to 10 (low structural integrity). The structural integrity of the neighborhood refers to the physical conditions of the

neighborhood, including quality of institutions and geographic landscape. The researcher retrieved information about the structural integrity of the neighborhood from the primary and secondary investigators of the MYS study, based on their familiarity with the neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama.

g. *Poverty concentration* is the percentage of extreme poverty within the impoverished neighborhoods of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. The researcher retrieved information about the concentration of poverty from the pre-established document describing the 2000 US Census (*see Table 1*).

h. *Residential mobility* is the percentage of MYS participants that reported moving within a two year period. The researcher retrieved the information about residential mobility from question # 20 on the 2005 MYS questionnaire which asks the participant "How long have you lived in your neighborhood?" The respondent has six answer choices as follows:

- Less than 1 year (=6)
- About 1 year (=5)
- About 2 years (=4)
- About 3 years (=3)
- About 4 years (=2)
- Five years or longer (=1)

Each of the answer choices were ranked from low residential mobility (=1) to high residential mobility (=6).

2. Institutional Factor

a. *The numbers of operating businesses* are businesses that were operating during 2005. The researcher retrieved the information about the numbers of operating businesses from the zip and county business patterns of the US Census Bureau, the business delivery data of the US Postal Service, and the central business district calculations of the EASI.

b. *The numbers of churches* are churches that were operating during 2005. The researcher retrieved the information about the numbers of churches from the zip and county business patterns of the US Census Bureau, the business delivery data of the US Postal Service, and the central business district calculations of the EASI.

c. *The numbers of medical related facilities* are clinics and hospitals that were operating in 2005. The researcher retrieved the information about the numbers of medical related facilities from the zip and county business patterns of the US Census Bureau, the business delivery data of the US Postal Service, and the central business district calculations of the EASI.

d. *The numbers of social organizations* are social service organizations that were operating during 2005. The researcher retrieved the information about the numbers of social organizations from the zip and county business patterns of the US Census Bureau, the business delivery data of the US Postal Service, and the central business district calculations of the EASI. These social organizations consisted of providing non-residential

social services for youth, organizations promotion social or political goals, organizations promoting religious activities, organizations providing care services, organizations providing rehabilitation services, organizations providing residential care, and organization providing delivery of services to disadvantaged populations and other services such as housing, clothing, medical care, and counseling.

e. *The numbers of schools* are the public schools in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama that were operating during 2005. The researcher retrieved information about the numbers of schools from the Alabama State Department of Education.

f. *The quality of schools* refers to the access to quality education in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. Ratings range from low school accountability to high school accountability, attendance rates, dropout rates, reading and math proficiency scores using the results from the Adequate Yearly Progress Report mandated by the federal government for public schools within the United States. The researcher retrieved the information about the quality of schools from the Alabama State Department of Education.

3. Social Factor (all scales were derived from 2005 MYS data)

a. *Neighborhood connectedness* is a standardized instrument on neighborhood connectedness (Glynn, 1981; Perkins, 1990). The scale is made up of ten questions with a moderate test-retest reliability (r=.47) and moderate internal reliability (α=.55-.63). Each question contains

forced choice answers of disagree (=0) or agree (=1). The scores range from 0 (low neighborhood connectedness) to 10 (high neighborhood connectedness). This study uses an average score of the individual participants to represent the overall neighborhood connectedness.

b. *Peer support* is a standardized instrument on peer support (Bolland, 1998). The scale is made up of eleven questions and had a high internal reliability (α=.72-.90). Each question contains forced choice answers of disagree (=0) or agree (=1). The scores range from 0 (low level of support) to 12 (high level of support). This study uses an average score of the individual participants to represent the overall level of peer support within the neighborhood.

c. *Warmth towards mother* is a standardized instrument on warmth toward mother (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991) and two questions assessing the presence of a mother figure and how often that person lives with the youth. The scale is made up of six questions and has moderate to high internal reliability (α =.61 - .71). Each question contains forced choice answers of "I don't have anyone who is like a mother to me" and disagree (=0) or agree (=1). The scores range from 0 (low level of warmth toward mother) to 6 (high level of warmth toward mother). This study uses an average score of the individual participants to represent the overall level of warmth toward mother within the neighborhood.

d. *Warmth toward father* uses a standardized instrument on warmth toward father (Lamborn et al., 1991). The scale is made up of six questions and has high test retest reliability (=.60) and moderate to high internal reliability (α =.61 - .71). Each question contains forced choice answers of "I don't have anyone who is like a father to me" and disagree (=0) or agree (=1). The scores range from 0 (low level of warmth toward father) to 6 (high level of warmth toward father). This study uses an average score of the individual participants to represent the overall level of warmth toward father within the neighborhood.

e. *Religious affiliation* is three questions on the MYS survey. Each question has multiple-choice answers equaling different weights.

- Church attendance: Never (=0), Once in awhile (=1), Once a month (=2), 2 or 3 times a week (=3), and once a week (=4)
- Religious importance: Not important (=0), Somewhat important (=1), and Very important (=2)
- Read religious related material: Never (=0), Once in awhile (=1), Once a month (=2), 2 or 3 times a week (=3), and once a week (=4)

The overall scores for religious affiliation range from 0 (low level of religious affiliation) to 13 (high level of religious affiliation). This study uses an average score of the individual participants to represent the overall level of religious affiliation within the neighborhood.

All aforementioned scales are located in the Appendices (*see Appendix C through Appendix G*). Table 4 highlights all of the aforementioned variables that make up each of the three observed ecological factors in this study.

Table 4. *Ecological Factors, Explanatory Variables, and Source for Measurement*.

Ecological Factors	*Explanatory Variables*	**Source for Measurement**
Geographical	Ethnic concentration	2000 US Census
	Average age of the homes within neighborhood	2000 US Census
	Number of old homes	2000 US Census
	Number of hazardous areas	EPA
	Number of unoccupied units	2000 US Census
	Neighborhood structural integrity	Primary & Secondary Investigator ratings
	Poverty concentration	2000 US Census
	Residential Mobility	MYS
Institutional	Number of operating businesses	US Census Bureau, US Postal Service & EASI
	Number of operating churches	US Census Bureau, US Postal Service & EASI
	Number of medical related facilities	US Census Bureau, US Postal Service & EASI
	Number of operating social service organizations	US Census Bureau, US Postal Service & EASI
	Number of schools	Alabama State Department of Education
	Average school rating (AYP, Adequate Yearly Progress)	Alabama State Department of Education
Social	Neighborhood connectedness	MYS (Glynn, 1981; Perkins, 1990)
	Peer Support	MYS (Bolland, 1998)
	Warmth toward mother	MYS (Lambourn et al., 1991)
	Warmth toward father	MYS (Lambourn et al., 1991)
	Religious Affiliation	MYS

Since crime is a result of poverty rather than a cause, it is not included in the study. This study controls for crime by assessing the number of arrests of adults and youth in each neighborhood. Crime includes, but is not limited to, murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft. The researcher retrieved the information about crime from the Mobile Police Department using Simply Map to access a crime risk indices from the Total Crime Index for the impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama using block group indicators. The Total Crime Index uses an overall weight from eight crime related variables: murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. The weights for each crime related variable ranges from 1 to 20 depending on the nature of the crime (EASI, 2006).

All demographic information and utilized scales from the MYS transferred to create a new data set. The new data set included data from the Alabama State Department of Education, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Census Bureau, Simply Map, US Postal Service & EASI and the Mobile Police Department. The data set was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences © (SPSS).

4.6 Validity & Reliability

All of the scales utilized were tested for reliability and validity. Many of the aforementioned scales have at least moderate test-retest reliability and internal consistency, confirming a consistency of the measurement instrument along with the ability of assessing association of the scores (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Although there

are no reported assessments of validity, the questions and choices appear to have high face and content validity.

The threats to internal validity are minimized due to the longitudinal design of the MYS study. The internal validity threats from the longitudinal study of the MYS include testing and obtrusive observations.

4.6.1 Testing

Because some of the participants have taken it before, they may have become sensitized to the questions being asked or even developed a system of how to answer the proposed questions.

4.6.2 Obtrusive observations

In addition, the participants may have felt the need to answer in a certain way during the administration, because the facilitators observe them complete the questionnaire.

The results of the study will inform the presence of external validity after assessment of certain criteria: "cause precedes the effect, variables are empirically correlates, and correlations are not caused by another unobserved variable" (Babbie, 2005, p. 313), such as crime.

In addition, due to the large amount of explanatory variables a part of the data analysis, there is an increase in the likelihood of Type I error or rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true (Kurtz, 1983). In order to control for Type I error, the study uses a stringent p value, less than .05, when running the ANOVA and linear regressions within the neighborhoods in poverty.

4.7 Limitations of the Research Design

One of the main limitations of the research design is the limited generalizability of the explanatory variables that make up the social factor. All of the social variables come from MYS participants representing the twelve impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama with no participants over the age of twenty. However, the geographical and institutional variables encompass the entire neighborhood and can generalize to other neighborhoods in poverty resembling similar geographical and institutional characteristics.

Overall, the study appears to have the potential of external validity of being able to generalize to groups living in poverty with similar demographics of the neighborhoods included in this study. According to Babbie (2005), the main requirements of accomplishing external validity of a study include the "representativeness of the sample, the setting, and the procedure," (p. 335). Though the study has limited scope of adults living in neighborhoods in poverty, it grasps a high representation of African American youth living in poverty and the explanatory variables making up the social factor provide a good overview for many impoverished African American youth living in neighborhoods with similar geographic and institutional characteristics.

Another limitation of the design is the absence of a comparison group of African Americans not living in poverty. Since 2006, the primary investigator of the MYS has attempted to address both of these limitations by including adults related to the youth participants of MYS since it began in 1998 along with continuing to interview youth

who have transitioned out of extreme poverty. In the next few years, there is a high probability of having enough data to increase the generalizability to African American adults living in poverty.

To conclude, this study seeks to understand the relationships of the ecological factors to African American neighborhoods in poverty. The overall results will form a macro model of poverty specific to this population group. A macro model of African American neighborhoods in poverty will help in developing necessary interventions when working with this population group. The model provides an outline of important factors of neighborhoods in poverty for the development of appropriate interventions addressing the issue of poverty within African American neighborhoods, such as neighborhood development programs that focus primarily on macro factors of rehabilitation through reconstruction of dilapidated buildings and economic conditions.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The analyzed data included all of the aforementioned methodology. The data analysis sought to answer the main research questions:

- Which ecological factors are associated with the amount of poverty in a poor neighborhood?
- Is there a difference between poor neighborhoods with lower amounts of poverty and poor neighborhoods with higher amounts of poverty?

As stated earlier, the researcher assessed the amount of poverty using three different measures:

- The median incomes of the twelve impoverished neighborhoods
- The percentages of individuals with incomes below the official poverty threshold (*see Table 1*)
- The percentages of individuals with incomes less than half of the official poverty threshold or living in extreme poverty

5.1 Hypothesis 1: Explaining the amount of poverty

The first step of analysis included running separate linear regressions with all three measures for the amount of poverty to determine the predictability of each of the

observed ecological factors (geographical, institutional, social). Since the number of cases was equal to the number of observed neighborhoods (N=12), each linear regression was ran with only one independent variable at a time (*see Figure* 7). The linear regressions tested the following hypothesis:

H1: The variables making up the geographical factor are more likely to explain the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood than the variables making up the social or institutional factor.

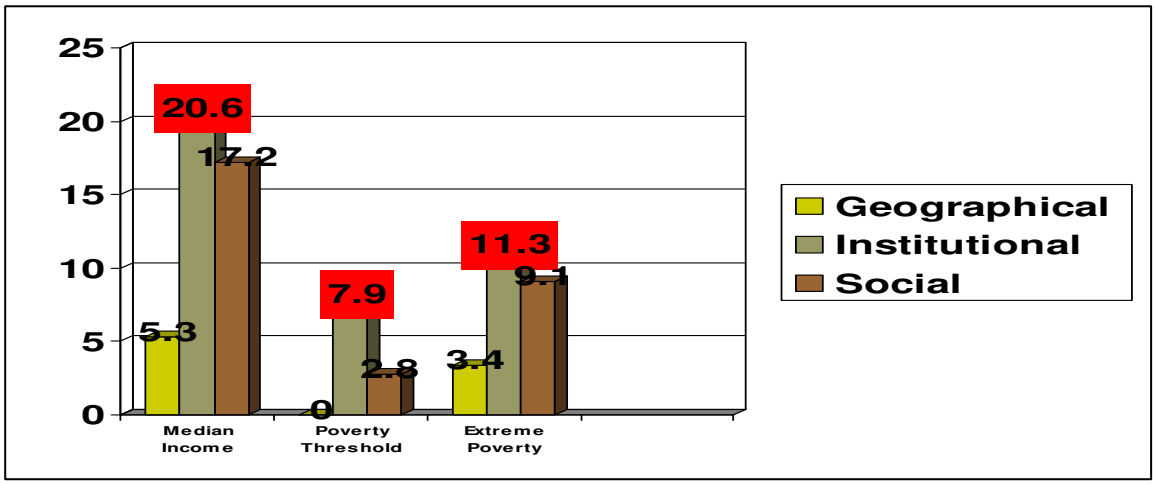

Figure 7. *The Percentage of Explanation by the Ecological Factors per Measure*.

After analysis, the institutional factor explained the amount of poverty within an impoverished neighborhood using the median incomes measure (F=5.4; p=.042) and the extreme poverty measure (F=2.390; p=.153); with three of the variables yielding a p value of less than .05. The three variables within the institutional factor centered on educational quality. These three variables for the institutional factor were the dropout rate (R_a^2=.573; p=.002), the average AYP progress of the school (R_a^2=.735; p=.004), and the average AYP percent of the school (R_a^2=.513; p=.006). These findings are contrary

to the main hypothesis which assumed the geographical factor to be the better explanatory variable for the amount of poverty. In fact, the geographical factor was the lowest explanatory variable of the amount of poverty for the median income measure (F=1.620; p= .232) and the extreme poverty measure (F=1.391; p=.266); while the social factor was a better explanatory variable than the geographical factor for the median income measure (F=3.286; p=.100) and the extreme poverty measure (F=2.107; p=.177).

In specific to the median income measure, 20.6% of the median income measure can be explained by the institutional factor (R=.592), 17.2% of the median income measure can be explained by the social factor (R=.497), and only 5.3% of the median income measure can be explained by the geographical factor (R=.373). In specific to the poverty threshold measure, 7.9% of the poverty threshold can be explained by the institutional factor (R=.404), 2.8% of the poverty threshold can be explained by the social factor (R=.341), and the geographical factor does not explain the poverty threshold measure at all (R_a^2=-.084; R=.122). In specific to the extreme poverty measure, 11.3% of extreme poverty can be explained by the institutional factor (R=.439), 9.1% of extreme poverty can be explained by the social factor (R=.417), and only 3.4% of extreme poverty can be explained by the geographical factor (R=.349).

5.2 Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4: Directional Relationships

Once the percentage of explanation, using adjusted R^2, had been determined, the next step of analysis included assessing positive and negative correlations of the observed variables making up the three ecological factors with the amount of poverty measures *(see Figure 8).* The variables were calculated to create one composite score

for each factor. For instance, the scores for neighborhood connectedness, peer support, warmth toward mother, warmth toward father, and religious affiliation, were added together to create an aggregate score for the social factor.

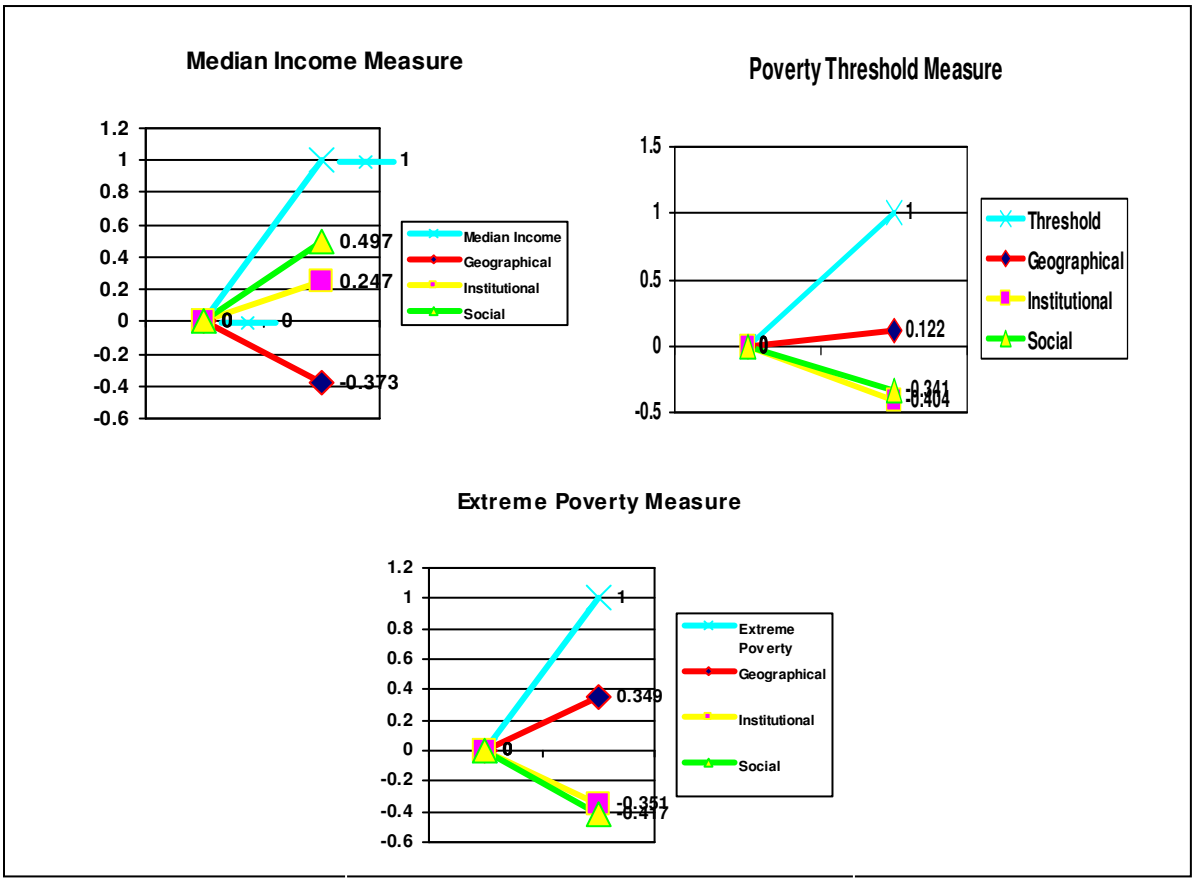

Figure 8. *Correlations among Measures for each Ecological Factor.*

These correlations between the amount of poverty and the ecological factors tested the following hypotheses:

H2: As the variables making up the geographical factor increase, the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood increases.

H3: As the variables making up the institutional factor increase, the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood decreases.

H4: As the variables making up the social factor increase, the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood decreases.

The analysis concluded all three ecological factors support the hypotheses explaining directional relationships with the amount of poverty measures (*see Table 5*). The geographical factor was positively correlated with the amount of poverty measures increasing by .349 standard deviations, the institutional and social factor were negatively correlated with the amount of poverty measures decreasing by .427 and .063 standard deviations (*specific to extreme poverty groups; see Table 5*). In other words, as the percentage of impoverished neighborhoods increased the geographical factor increased, the social factor decreased, and the institutional factor decreased supporting the directional hypotheses.

Table 5. *Correlations for Amount of Poverty and Ecological Factors.*

Correlations

		regular poverty standards/not extreme	lastinstitutional	geo5	Socialv	Percentage in extreme poverty	Medianincome
regular poverty standards/not extreme	Pearson Correlation	1	-.404	.122	-.341	.482	-.882**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.193	.705	.279	.112	.000
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
lastinstitutional	Pearson Correlation	-.404	1	.178	.082	-.351	.247
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.193		.580	.801	.263	.439
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
geo5	Pearson Correlation	.122	.178	1	-.508	.349	-.373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.705	.580		.091	.266	.232
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
Socialv	Pearson Correlation	-.341	.082	-.508	1	-.417	.497
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.279	.801	.091		.177	.100
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
Percentage in extreme poverty	Pearson Correlation	.482	-.351	.349	-.417	1	-.609*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.112	.263	.266	.177		.036
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
Medianincome	Pearson Correlation	-.882**	.247	-.373	.497	-.609*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.439	.232	.100	.036	
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Even though the researcher assessed hypotheses support for each of the factors, some of the explanatory variables within the factors were not in agreement with the aforementioned hypotheses. These deviations occurred for the median income measure and the extreme poverty measure. Regarding the median income measure, the number of institutions decreased as the incomes increased. One can assume as income increases available resources outside of the poor neighborhood increase. Also, as the median income measure increased unoccupied units, hazardous areas, and residential mobility increased. In regards to the extreme poverty measure, similar deviations occurred. For instance, as the amount of poverty increased, the number of churches increased (r = .039), the quality of schools increased (r = .756), the dropout rate decreased (r = -.807), and the average level of warmth towards the mother increased (r = .421).

5.3 Hypothesis 5: Differences within Groups

The final step of analysis included running separate one-way ANOVAs to assess whether there was a difference between groups and the observed ecological factors. The researcher used each of the three measures for the amount of poverty (median income, poverty threshold, and extreme poverty). All three measures for the amount of poverty were run separately from one another. The researcher separated each measure into two groups of low and high. Each of the three measures was made up of different neighborhoods based in the different categories of low and high (*see Table 6*).

5.3.1 Low and High Median Income Groups

The first measure used to assess the amount of poverty within the impoverished neighborhoods of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, were the median income levels of the

household. The researcher calculated the average median income for all twelve neighborhoods and used the average of $12,524 a year as the cut-off point for the two groups. The researcher categorized neighborhoods with a median income less than $12,524 as low and the neighborhoods with a median income higher than $12,524 as high. The median incomes measure has moderate variability between groups (9.04%) and maintained the range of possible outcomes between the impoverished neighborhoods.

Table 6. *Amount of Poverty Measures.*

Amount of Poverty (DV)	***Groups***		***Population Size***	***Average Income***
Median Income Groups	**Low**	*<$12,524/yr*	*18,331*	*$10,175/yr*
	High	*>$12,524/yr*	*10,520*	*$15,813/yr*
Poverty Threshold Groups	**Low**	*>58.38%*	*8,325*	*$14,637//yr*
	High	*<58.38%*	*18,047*	*$9,566/yr*
*Extreme Poverty Groups**	**Low**	*>50.8%*	*9,239*	*$15,203/yr*
	High	*<50.8%*	*17,133*	*$9,654/yr*

**Extreme poverty refers to the proportion of impoverished African American families with incomes less than half of the official poverty threshold.*

***Shaded areas refer to the neighborhoods with similar features*

Overall, seven neighborhoods made up the low median income group (Alabama Village, Gulf Village, Orange Grove, MLK, Roger Williams, RV Taylor Plaza, and Snug Harbor), four of the neighborhoods were public housing or housing operated by the federal government, three of the neighborhoods were located in Prichard, Alabama and four were located in Mobile, Alabama. The low median income group had a population size of 18,331.

Five poor neighborhoods made up the high median income group (Harlem,

Trinity Gardens, Oaklawn Homes, Josephine Allen, and Plateau), three of the neighborhoods were non-public housing or housing not operated by the federal government, and all but one of the neighborhoods was located in Mobile, Alabama. The high median income group had a population size of 10,520.

There was a significant difference found between the low and high median income groups. The least significant difference was in regards to the number of old homes within both groups. While the low median income groups had a total of 302 homes built prior to 1939, only 128 old homes existed in the high median income groups (F=5.442; p=.042). Significant differences among these two groups was also present among the reading proficiency scores (F=.8.659; p=.015), math proficiency scores (F=13.778; p=.004), and the AYP progress score (F=9.413; p=.012). Surprisingly, these proficiency and progress scores were significantly lower for the high median income group (*see Figure 9*).

5.3.2 Low and High Poverty Threshold Groups

The second measure used for the amount of poverty was the actual percentage of individuals living below the poverty threshold within the impoverished neighborhoods of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. The researcher calculated the average percentage of individuals living below the poverty threshold for each of the twelve neighborhoods and used the average of 58.38% as the cut-off point for the two groups. The researcher categorized neighborhoods with a poverty threshold less than 58.38% as low and the neighborhoods with a poverty threshold higher than 58.38% as high. The poverty threshold measure had moderate variability between groups (6.9%) and maintained the

range of possible outcomes between the impoverished neighborhoods.

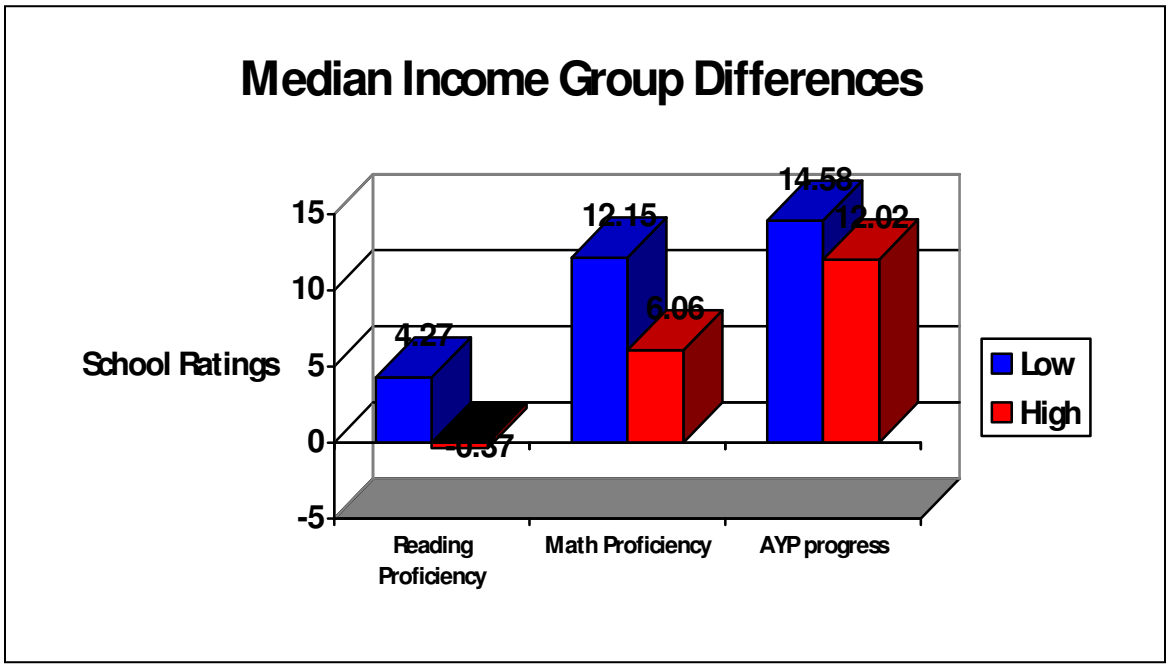

Figure 9. *Difference among the Median Income Groups.*

Seven poor neighborhoods made up the low poverty threshold group (Harlem, Josephine Allen, Oaklawn Homes, Martin Luther King, Plateau, Roger Williams, and Trinity Gardens), four of the neighborhoods were non-public housing or housing not operated by the federal government, and all but one of the neighborhoods was located in Mobile, Alabama. The low poverty threshold group had a population size of 18,047.

Overall, five poor neighborhoods made up the high poverty threshold group (Alabama Village, Gulf Village, Orange Grove, RV Taylor Plaza, Snug Harbor and), three of the neighborhoods were public housing or housing operated by the federal government, three of the neighborhoods were located in Prichard, Alabama and two were located in Mobile, Alabama. The impoverished neighborhoods with lower

percentages of poverty had a population size of 8,325.

The one-way ANOVA yielded statistically significant differences ($p<.05$) between the low and high poverty threshold groups only for the number of churches ($p=.046$).

5.3.3 Low and High Extreme Poverty Groups

The third measure for the amount of poverty was the percentages of individuals living in extreme poverty within the impoverished areas of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. This term of extreme poverty is *not to be* confused with extreme poverty areas explained in Chapter One where over 40% of the neighborhood is living below the poverty threshold. This term of extreme poverty refers to the proportion of impoverished African American families with incomes less than half of the official poverty threshold. For example, a family of four has an income less than $10,000 a year, when the poverty threshold begins at $20,000 a year. The researcher calculated the average percentage of individuals living in extreme poverty for each of the twelve neighborhoods and used the average of 50.8% as the cut-off point for the two groups. The researcher categorized neighborhoods with extreme poverty percentages less than 50.8% as low and the neighborhoods with extreme poverty percentages higher than 50.8% as high. The extreme poverty measure had low variability between groups (3.52%).

Overall, five neighborhoods made up the low extreme poverty group (Snug Harbor, Harlem, Trinity, Josephine Allen, and Plateau), four of the neighborhoods were non-public housing, two of the neighborhoods were located in Prichard, Alabama and

three of the neighborhoods were located in Mobile, Alabama. The impoverished neighborhoods with low extreme poverty areas had a population size of 9,239, a median income of $15,203 a year, an average poverty rate of 51.44% and an extreme poverty rate of close to 20%.

Seven neighborhoods made up the high extreme poverty group (Martin Luther King, Oaklawn Homes, RV Taylor, Gulf Village, Alabama Village, and Roger Williams), two of the neighborhoods were non-public housing or housing not operated by the federal government, and all but two of the neighborhoods were located in Mobile, Alabama. The impoverished neighborhoods with high extreme poverty areas had a population size of 9,654, a median income of $9,654 a year, an average poverty rate of about 63%, and an extreme poverty rate of close to 40%.

The one-way ANOVA for the low and high extreme poverty groups yielded statistically significant results. The most significant difference was in regards to the reading proficiency scores (F=.008; p=.001). The low extreme poverty group had an average reading proficiency score of -1.018, where as the high extreme poverty group had an average reading proficiency score of 5.189. There were also other significant differences among these two groups for the number of old homes (F=7.192; p=.027), the average math proficiency score (F=1.984; p=.033), and the average AYP percentage of progress within the school (F=10.815; p=.045). These scores were all significantly lower for the low extreme poverty groups (*see Figure 10*).

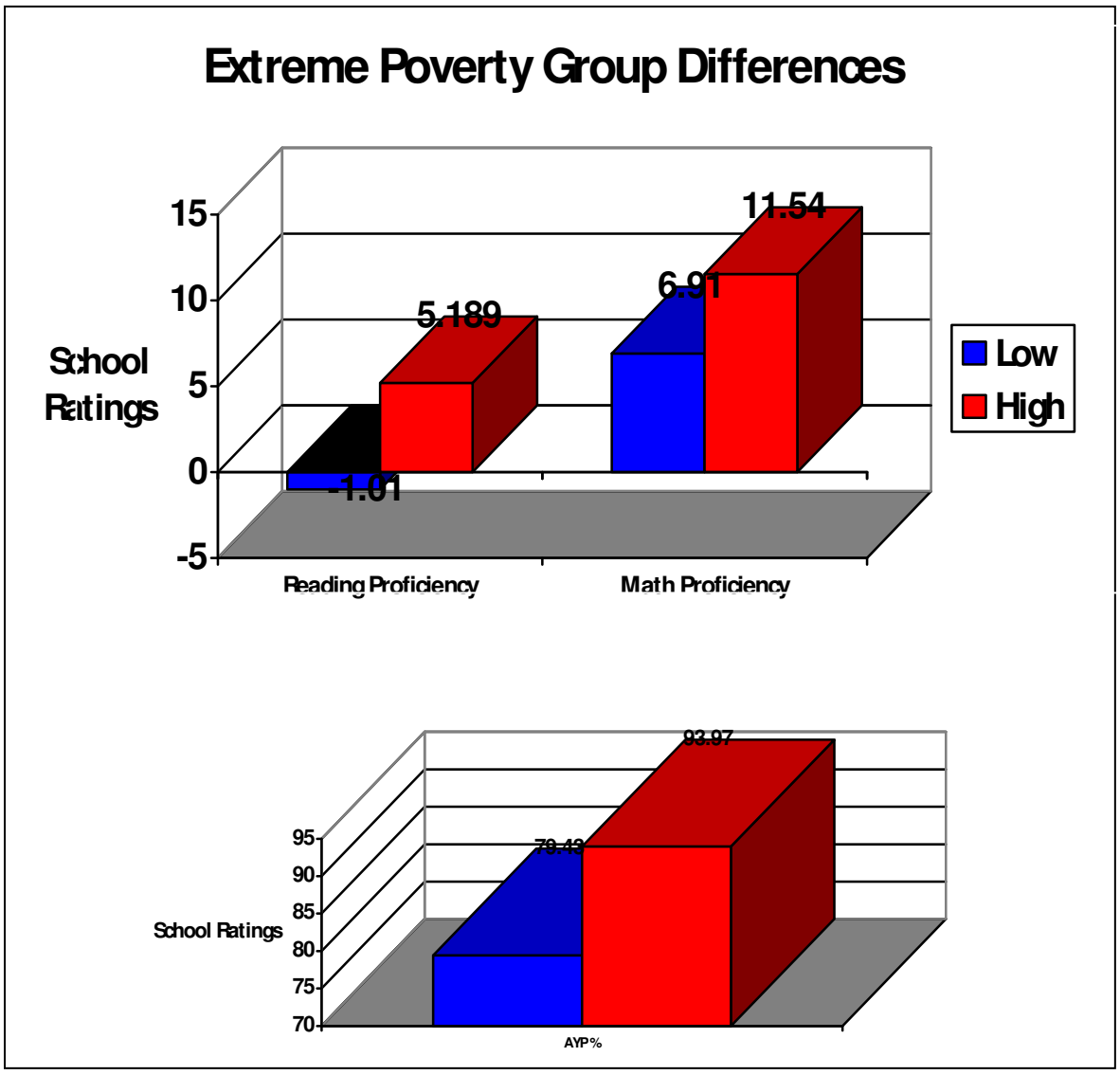

Figure 10. *Differences among Extreme Poverty Groups.*

Overall, the statistically significant differences for the median income groups, the poverty threshold groups, and the extreme poverty groups, bring about additional observation behind the inverse relationship between groups pertaining to the decline in quality education, the number of churches, and the warmth towards mother for neighborhoods in the high median income group and the low extreme poverty group.

Both the median income groups and the extreme poverty groups were similar across all variables (e.g. *see Figure 11*) and yielded interesting conclusions pertaining to the educational quality, the warmth towards the mother, and the presence and role of the church among more "advantaged" or "better off" impoverished areas within Mobile and Prichard, Alabama.

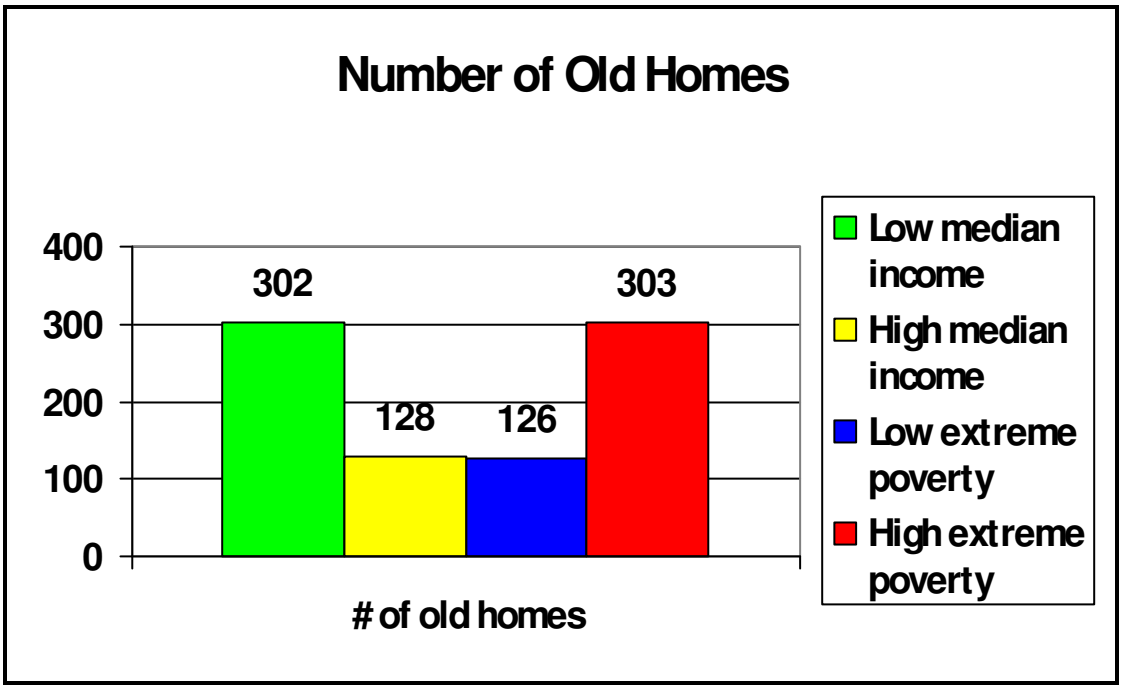

Figure 11. *Number of Old Homes.*

The overall result for the analyses helped to determine which ecological factors are most important in alleviating poverty and what poor neighborhoods in Mobile, Alabama may need priority of attention and awareness.

5.3.4 Additional Analysis: Public and Non Public Housing

There were also statistically significant differences ($p<.05$) between public and non-public housing in regards to the number of schools ($p=.031$), the attendance rate

(p=.041), the average AYP progress of the schools (p=.010) and the average AYP percentage within the school (p=.034). The only ecological factor that held significance between the public and non-public housing was the institutional factor (p<.01). This did not include the dropout rate because of the inverse relationship. Many of the public housing or government operated housing was considered as housing with more families living in state of extreme poverty. These differences between the public and non-public housing yield insight to the opportunities and resources that the government could help provide.

5.4 Limitations of Analyzed Data

Even though the findings from this study bring about new facets of consideration in terms of impoverished African American neighborhoods, especially those neighborhoods with higher rates of extreme poverty, some limitations are apparent. The main limitation pertains to the variables used to make up the geographical factor. Many of the variables used were derived from the 2000 Census and did not include many physical indications of dilapidated or destructed buildings and homes within the impoverished neighborhoods. Having more access or information to the number of red-tagged or homes that could not be lived in due to hazards would have been helpful in determining the amount of poverty within a neighborhood.

Also, having access to information pertaining to the conditions of street and roads within these neighborhoods would have been helpful, because many impoverished neighborhoods have dismal appearances such as the conditions of the roads. Having this sort of access to be a part of the geographical factor could have yielded this factor as a

better explanatory factor for the amount of poverty. In addition to the variables used to make up the geographical factor, the measure used to report the structural integrity of the impoverished neighborhoods could have been more stringent in terms of the rating qualifications. Although, the primary and secondary investigator of the MYS study provided meaningful insight in regards to the conditions of the neighborhoods, more concrete observations for ratings could have been used such as the observation of road conditions, litter, and trash.

Another limitation of this study centers on using the block group data for all of the variables making up the institutional factor. The block group data for the institutional factor created an inaccurate depiction of available resources in a close proximity to the neighborhood. Using the number of institutions in the neighborhood and the number of institutions within a five to ten mile radius could have painted a more realistic picture of the resources and opportunities accessible for these impoverished neighborhoods. However, this was not included and so the findings pertain specifically to the impoverished neighborhood, which is not a major hindrance, but still could have been done differently for better results.

Overall, these findings and limitations solidify the importance of the observed ecological factors as a whole, and provide slight suggestion regarding the most pertinent areas to focus on when developing some sort of solution for reducing poverty within poor neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

This next chapter is a discussion based on the findings and limitations of this study. The researcher based the study on findings from the empirical literature and the social and structural theories. The literature and theories helped develop five hypotheses to explain the phenomenon of neighborhood poverty in specific to African American neighborhoods. These five hypotheses included:

H_1: The geographical factor is more likely to explain the amount of poverty than the social or institutional factor

H_2: As the geographical factor increases the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood increases

H_3: As the institutional factor increases the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood decreases

H_4: As the social factor increased the amount of poverty within a poor neighborhood decreases

H_5: There is a difference between poor neighborhoods with lower amounts of poverty and poor neighborhoods with higher amounts of poverty

6.1 Discussion of Hypotheses

The following information is a discussion of each of the results for each of the five hypotheses. The results yield interesting findings and conclusions by the researcher.

6.1.1 Discussion of Hypothesis 1: Explaining the Amount of Poverty

The geographical factor did not explain the amount of poverty as well as the researcher implied. The institutional factor explained the amount of poverty at a higher percentage than the social or geographical factor. The variables making up the institutional factor mainly included the number of institutions within the twelve impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. These findings suggest the presence of institutions that can provide economic opportunities and resources is important in explaining the amount of poverty. The findings do not reject the importance of the social factor as explaining the amount of poverty, but the variables making up the social factor could have yielded higher percentages by including more scales to assess the social strength of the impoverished neighborhoods.

When observing the median income measures, both the institutional factor and the social factor were able to explain over forty percent of the amount of poverty which aligns with prior social science studies about neighborhood poverty (Small & Stark, 2005; Algert et al., 2006; Adelman & Jaret, 2002). However, since many of the studies on neighborhood poverty have not compared specific factors, but rather focused on one or the other, the findings pertaining to the geographical factor are also supported. And although, the geographical factor was not able to explain poverty for all three measures,

it did yield small percentages for the median incomes measure and the extreme poverty measure. These findings helped the researcher to develop important implications for social work in the area of research on neighborhood poverty.

6.1.2 Discussion of Hypothesis 2, 3, 4: Directional Relationships

Though the results did not support the first hypothesis, the study's findings did support all three hypotheses that tested for directional relationships among the three ecological factors (*geographical, institutional, and social*) for each of the amount of poverty measures (*median income, poverty threshold, extreme poverty*). However, neither of the relationships had statistically significant correlations. The absence of significance may have to do with the method the researcher used to create an aggregate score for each factor. All of the empirical studies discussed within the literature review assessed correlations per variable. Since this study specifically focused on factors, the hypotheses assessing correlations were conducted on each factor rather than each variable.

When observing each variable with the amount of poverty, the researcher assessed an increase in the warmth toward mother as the amount of poverty increased. This association is important to consider with the high percentage of single parent homes within these impoverished neighborhoods. According to the US Census (2000), about 68% of the households consist of single parent households. Also, the researcher observed a decrease in the amount of medical facilities and social organizations as the amount of poverty increased. These findings contribute to the limited amount of social strength and social opportunities and resources. If impoverished neighborhoods had

more of these services provided, the reduction of poverty may begin to occur. However, since many of the impoverished neighborhoods have less than five of these types of institutions, economic and social progress becomes stagnant. More about how social workers can utilize the findings on increased warmth towards mother and limited medical facilities and social organizations is further discussed in the implications section.

6.1.3 Discussion of Hypothesis 5: Differences within Groups

For the last hypothesis assessing the differences within groups for each of the amount of poverty measures, the findings supported the researcher's expectations of finding differences. Statistically significant differences occurred with specific variables including math proficiency scores, AYP progress scores, math proficiency scores, the number of churches, and the number of old homes. Inverse relationships occurred for the reading, math, and AYP scores. The poorer neighborhoods had higher scores. After careful consideration, the researcher determined this relationship could possibly be explained by a current education legislation geared to assist impoverished neighborhoods. More about this legislation is discussed within the implications section. The researcher expected the presence of older homes in the poor neighborhoods with higher percentages in poverty, but the researcher did not expect having such a high number of churches within these poorer neighborhoods as the findings concluded.

6.1.4 Discussion of Additional Analysis: Demographic and Frequencies

The researcher ran additional analysis including basic level demographics and frequencies of all of the variables making up each of the three ecological factors. The

additional analysis also portrayed a low presence of businesses, medical facilities, and social services within most of the impoverished neighborhoods. Many of the neighborhoods had less than five of these institutions. Lastly, the researcher observed an overrepresentation of churches within these impoverished neighborhoods. A map of the location of the churches revealed relatively close proximity for many of the churches within the impoverished neighborhoods. All of these findings for each of the hypotheses along with the additional analysis helped create important implications for social work in the areas of practice, policy, and research.

The discussion includes important implications for social work and reveals thought provoking facts regarding impoverished African American neighborhoods. Although, this study focused on areas in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, many implications for the social work profession emerge from the findings on educational quality, the increased warmth towards mother for high poverty groups, and the presence of institutions such as businesses and churches. These implications center on school and church social workers, neighborhood assessment and neighborhood development, and geographical and institutional considerations for the areas of social work practice, policy, and research within impoverished neighborhoods. The implications lend themselves to exposure of imperative government initiatives that are currently providing opportunities to address the phenomenon of poverty.

6.2 Implications for Social Work

Many of the findings from this study provide credence to the discovery of the increasing quality of education occurring within many neighborhoods, where the

families are living in a state of extreme poverty (incomes less than half of the of expected poverty threshold). All seven of the impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, which had a larger number of families living in an extreme state of poverty, had schools (N=18) with teachers that utilized the Federal Perkins Loan Teacher Cancellation (FPL) compared to the other five impoverished neighborhoods (N=7). This grant is a part of C*arl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006*, stemming from the *No Left Child Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), proposed by President George W. Bush, Jr. The FPL provides teachers serving in low-income areas, such as those in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, with 100 percent cancellation of school loans. These teachers, who have ordinarily chosen to apply for a position in a less dismal environment, have agreed to teach for a minimum of two years in order to receive loan cancellation. The statistical findings from this study imply that teachers within these higher extreme poverty neighborhoods are making a difference. The high extreme poverty group had higher reading and math proficiency scores, lower dropout rates, and higher attendance rates.

6.3 Practice & Policy

Based on these educational results and the current government initiative, the social work profession must push for more political advocacy in terms of the important impact a school social worker has on the quality of the educational experience among African American children and the impoverished neighborhoods in which these children reside. This effort includes networking with other social workers and working with the neighborhood in all aspects. Although the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* is making

monumental efforts in educational equality and has even increased the amount of funds to close to $500 million for the 2009 school year in Title I School Improvement grants, the government needs to give more consideration to the importance a school social worker has in the lives of these impoverished families. If the government really wants to make more of an educational difference within poor neighborhoods, it will have to begin by addressing the whole child, which school social workers are equipped to do. School social workers enhance the impact of education in the home lives of these impoverished children by increasing familial involvement, home visits, phone calls, and through involvement with neighborhood leaders and stakeholders.

In addition to addressing the educational quality difference, the study's findings also indicate an increase in the child attachment to the mother as the rate of poverty increased. School social workers can use this increase in child attachment to the mother to provide more attention to and contact with the single mother. This attention and contact with the single mother has more precedence within the school system and has a greater impact on the impoverished family. School social workers need to involve mothers more in the progression of their child's education and help equip the mothers with different skills that enhance the mother-child relationship and increase the likelihood of the family getting out of poverty. School social workers also need to provide other activities to help influence single mother involvement, such as flyers, calendars, monthly phone calls, and free supplements promoting self-efficacy and social control. The school social workers need to develop relationships with businesses, inside

and outside of the impoverished neighborhood, which could help these neighborhoods financially with promotional resources for the child to take home.

In view of the findings on the educational quality of schools in extreme poverty neighborhoods and the increase in child attachment to the mother in neighborhoods with extreme poverty rates, this study has found an apparent limitation of existing institutions within the parameters of the impoverished neighborhoods such as businesses, medical facilities, schools, and social services (*see Figure 12*).

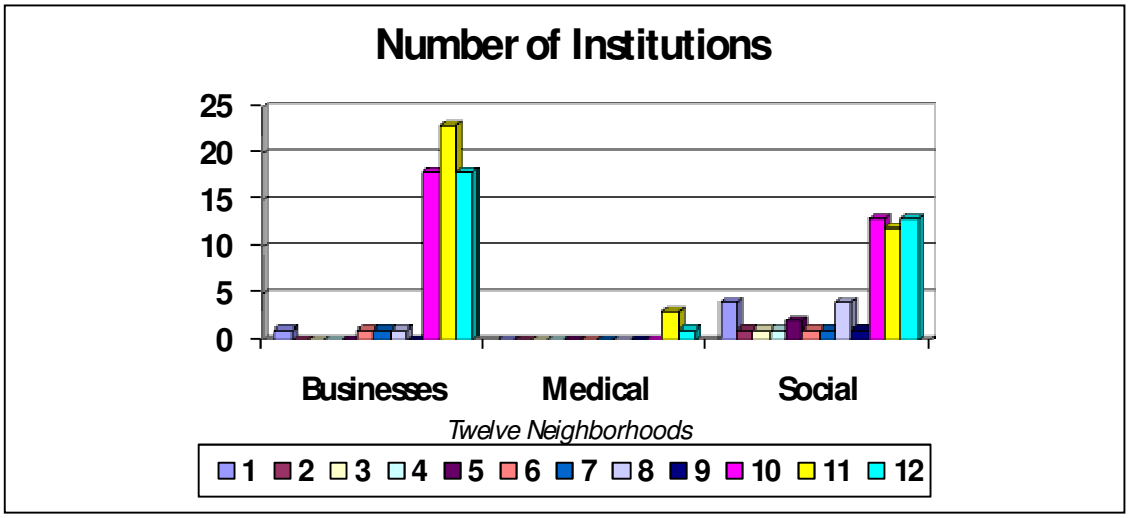

Figure 12. *Limited Number of Institutions within Impoverished Areas of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama.*

Those institutions need to involve their available social workers with these impoverished neighborhoods through assessment and economic development initiatives. These assessment initiatives need to receive input from the impoverished families regarding what they think would benefit their neighborhood in terms of opportunities and resources. The apparent limited number of resources and opportunities from businesses, medical facilities, schools, and social organizations within these areas

emphasize the need for effective neighborhood development procedures that increase the number of institutions present, in addition to the number of resources and opportunities these institutions can provide.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) offered through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provides various opportunities for grants funding impoverished neighborhoods. The most important asset of CDBGs is the opportunity for economic advancement within impoverished urban neighborhoods, such as Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. However, these neighborhoods need an organization or to apply for such a grant. Due to the complexity of paperwork and limited number of possible institutions in many of the impoverished neighborhoods, locating an adequate organization, along with staff to maintain the resources, could pose a hindrance, but the government does provide a way to access funds to help impoverished African American neighborhoods. More importantly, the state must first access CDBG monies which sometimes are a difficult task. However, each region has a Field Community Planning and Development Officer through HUD that the neighborhood can contact for detailed information and assistance. The few businesses and social organizations accessible to the neighborhood could take on this responsibility of accessing the funds through the state and locating a stakeholder within the community to help manage a neighborhood development project.

Even more important than the available businesses and social organizations becoming more involved is involving the accessible and active churches within these impoverished areas that will benefit these neighborhoods. Over seventy churches serve

the twelve neighborhoods observed in the study (*see Figure 13*). These churches have the ability to request available monies to refurbish these impoverished areas by addressing the geographical, institutional, and social factors examined in this study. The US government also provides available monies through the Faith Based Community Initiative, also established under President Bush in 2001. President Bush recognized the importance of the government's role regarding equality among grassroots and faith-based organizations such as churches.

Figure 13. *Churches within Impoverished Neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama*.

In an effort to extend the current method of providing social services, President Bush sought to even the "playing field" among organizations eligible to receive funding within certain areas such as impoverished neighborhoods. As Bush states,

The paramount goal is compassionate results, and private and charitable community groups, including religious ones, should have the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete on a level playing field, so long as they achieve valid public purposes, such as curbing crime, conquering addiction, strengthening families and neighborhoods, and overcoming poverty. (Executive Order, 2001, p.1)

The most recent publication about the legislation-*Quiet Revolution* developed by Jay Hein (2008), director of the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives-assesses the positive impact of the FBCO initiative. Within this publication President Bush acknowledges that the "government has a solemn responsibility to help meet the needs of poor Americans and distressed neighborhoods" (Hein, 2008, p. 1). Through the faith-based initiative, churches have various opportunities to receive large amounts of funding for impoverished neighborhoods (*see Figure 14*).

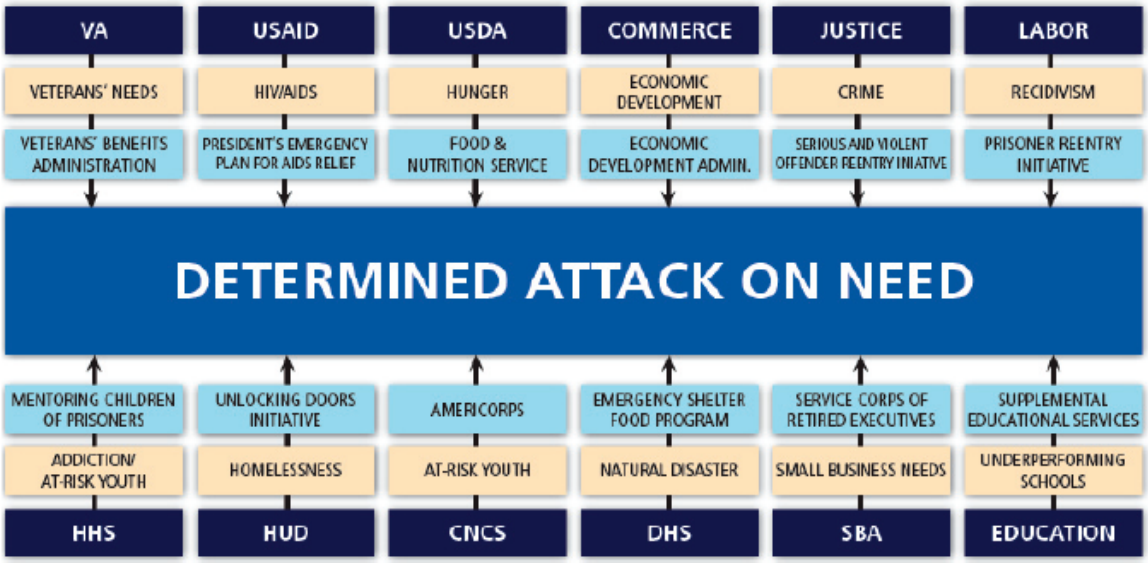

Figure 14. *Chart of US Executive Department Centers for Faith Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI).*

These opportunities include funds from the US government through the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the US Department of Labor (USDL), and the US Department of Commerce (USDC). All of these governmental departments have faith-based provisions and provide opportunities ranging from grants for training to establishing and providing employment supporting the economic strength in underprivileged neighborhoods. This information is extremely vital for the large number of churches that could provide more services within the impoverished areas of Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, not to mention in other impoverished areas within the United States.

The role of the church is one of compassion and service, and leaders representing the churches in these poor neighborhoods should not take this responsibility lightly. These churches and their leaders have a responsibility to its neighborhood, which leads to the important role of a church social worker who has the ability to network with other social workers, such as in those working in the schools. Specific to practice and policy, social workers in the school and church setting can assist these impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama, to access resources for alleviating the extreme amount of poverty that exists. Establishing relationships between social work communities increases effective networking among social work professionals and addresses the seriousness of poverty among the African American population. Most important is the tremendous amount of opportunity the government is providing to these poor neighborhoods. These opportunities, if accessed, can prove to positively affect impoverished neighborhoods.

6.4 Research

Lastly, the study's findings on the insignificance of the variables making up the geographical factor indicate the need for more rigorous study regarding the geographical factor within impoverished neighborhoods. This study included a limited access to certain geographical measures, such as the number of dilapidated homes, the percentage of litter and trash control, and street construction. Observing these geographical measures lends more insight into the significance of variables making up the geographical factor. The physical conditions of the impoverished neighborhoods are factors for consideration *(see Figure 15 and Figure 16*).

Figure 15. *Conditions of Occupied Homes within Mobile and Prichard, Alabama.*

By including more variables to make up the geographical factor for impoverished neighborhoods, along with a comparison to middle and upper class neighborhoods, future researchers could help to solidify the impact of the geographical factor. Future research needs to also compare the geographical and institutional factor within these different types of neighborhoods to identify and solidify the major

inequalities that exist in impoverished African American neighborhoods. Doing so increases the likelihood of impoverished neighborhoods receiving CDBG funds for development. Through the US Department of Commerce, CFBCI funds are also available to help faith-based and community organizations to assess statistical information about their impoverished neighborhood. This collected information further assists with applying for additional grants that could help with revitalization of the neighborhood.

Figure 16. *Conditions of Impoverished Neighborhoods in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama*.

Overall, the social worker carries a heavy burden of networking and collaborating with other social work professionals within these impoverished neighborhoods to help reduce the amount of poverty incurred by many African American families. These findings lend themselves to a suggested macro model for effective use of social work practice, policy, and research in addressing the ecological factors that impact these impoverished African American neighborhoods (*see Figure 17*).

6.4 Suggested Macro Model

The main purpose of the study included creating a macro model of working in poor African American neighborhoods with the goal of helping reduce the prevalence of poverty. The researcher developed the model based on the results of the data analysis. The main findings utilized for the development of the macro model included, the educational quality in schools, the prevalence of churches within the impoverished neighborhoods, the limited presence of institutions such as businesses, medical facilities, and social services, and the role of the single mother as poverty increased.

The model is mainly for social work practitioners, but is also helpful for others interacting with impoverished neighborhoods in a helping capacity. The model serves the purpose of understanding different factors surrounding poor neighborhoods. Although some components of the model have been tested, the model in its entirety is not empirically validated and has not been tested. As stated earlier many of the implied components include the ecological factors observed during this study. The components are mainly suggestions for social workers to consider. The researcher strongly encourages researchers to consider this model for understanding important mechanisms correlated with impoverished neighborhoods and more importantly to continue testing ecological variables rather than focusing on individual characteristics and deficiencies.

The macro model developed by the researcher integrates with Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) who, in addition to individual approaches, also focused on ecological approaches to troubled or impoverished neighborhoods. They created a similar strategy entitled “asset-based community development” where the development begins with

internal efforts from the neighborhood including residents, stakeholders, and community leaders similar to the macro model developed for this study. Because the asset-based model is relationship driven, this component intertwines fairly well with the social work mandate of building rapport and establishing relationships.

Since the most significant results of the study centered on educational quality within the schools, the macro model developed for this study begins with the social work within the school. In addition to the role of the school social worker, the heavy presence of churches implies the importance of including church social workers as well. Both the schools and the churches are internal assets for the neighborhood and have the opportunity to establish effective trustworthy relationships with the so-called "community." These social workers are pivotal in collaborating and working with the community leaders, parents, and possibly landlords in creating realistic and comfortable strategies for conducting a neighborhood assessment similar to the ones conducted by the residents of Hull House and WEB Dubois.

Neighborhood assessment is more than assessing the deficits within the neighborhood, but also includes assessing the strengths and resources. As this study assessed the geographical, institutional, and social factors, school and church social workers would also need to assess these types of ecological factors along with observing the strengths and resources pertaining to each. All proved to explain some percentage of the amount of poverty within poor neighborhoods. The neighborhood assessment has to incorporate the geographical considerations such as dilapidated buildings, unoccupied units, litter and trash, ethnic concentration, residential mobility, and poverty

concentration to begin to understand the neighborhood. Also, observations of the institutional factors such as the number of institutions within the neighborhood and most importantly the role of the social factor and beginning to understand the social strength of the impoverished neighborhood in terms of social efficacy, social resources, and social opportunities.

Social workers have to network and collaborate with the entire neighborhood. Similar to the asset-based strategy, the macro model from this study developed for social workers to consider also incorporates and places a heavy emphasis on community development and community reorganization and should involve the local businesses, organizations, and other primary institutions in the development process.

The macro model clearly depicts relying on such entities for providing services, resources, and opportunities, to pour inside of the impoverished neighborhood. However, the findings from the study indicate a limited presence of institutions available within these poor neighborhoods. The role of the school and more so, church social worker is networking and collaborating with the available institutions for providing manageable services. The role of the social worker is a continuous role in order to maintain stability and for the development process to have a source for accountability.

This macro model suggests that through networking and collaboration among social work professionals in churches, medical facilities, schools, and social service organizations, effective change is likely to take place. Social workers will need to conduct detailed neighborhood assessments similar to Jane Addams (1895) and WEB Dubois (1899) that include the residents of the neighborhood in the development

process. Since the findings indicated increased warmth towards the mother as the amount of poverty increased, the model incorporates networking with the single mother as well. The social work professionals will then be able to use those assessments to locate resources that could help to reduce the rate of poverty in these neighborhoods.

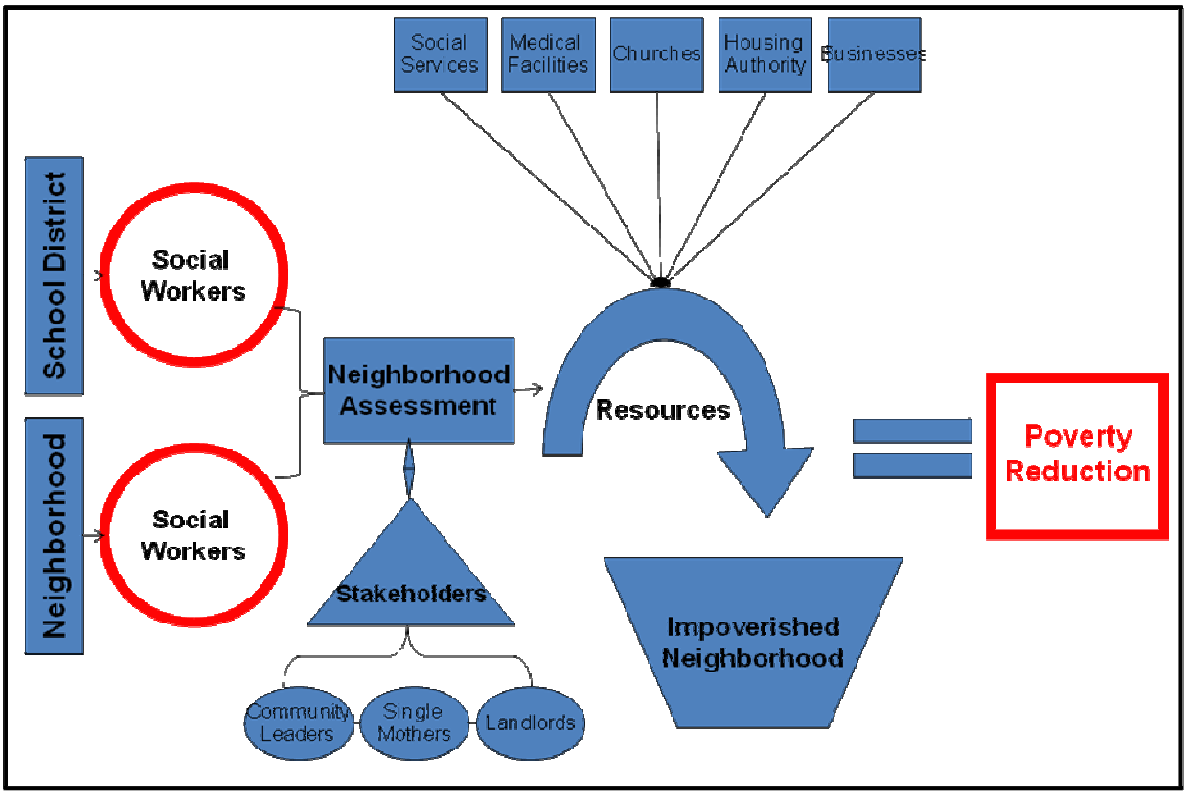

Figure 17. *Ecological Model for Reducing Poverty within Impoverished African American Neighborhoods.*

Actions speak louder than words. So as social work professionals desire to increase family dynamics among impoverished families in order to help them rise out of poverty, social workers must also put these words into action through practice, policy, and research to provide the expected resources and opportunities geared for impoverished families and neighborhoods. Social workers must take into consideration their culture, their values, and their morals, and create meaningful ways to reach

impoverished families to impact their lives for the better. The findings from this study only shed a portion of light of the role of ecological factors within impoverished African American neighborhoods. As the social work profession increases its engagement in research and politics, these efforts to address aspects of the ecology of poverty can positively transform impoverished neighborhoods.

The most important consideration focuses on beginning the development process within the neighborhood instead of relying on outside entities to provide neighborhood development. As stated earlier, the government is attempting to assist through financial provisions within current and future legislation, but having the neighborhood take responsibility for management and accountability is a crucial piece of the puzzle. The role of the social worker initiates such responsibility, because social workers are expected to advocate and assist oppressed populations and groups. Since school social workers and church social workers are already placed within many impoverished neighborhoods, this presence automatically places them in a position for political and social advocacy on behalf of the impoverished neighborhood. However, many schools and churches within impoverished neighborhoods do not have social workers and in these cases the entire social work profession is accountable for political advocacy and action to provide awareness and education to policy makers of the effectiveness of social work practice.

APPENDIX A

IDENTIFIED ARTICLES RELATED TO NEIGHBORHOODS EXPERIENCING POVERTY

1. Kobetz, Daniel, & Earp, 2003;
2. Barr, Diez-Rouz, Knirsch, & Pablos-Mendez, 2001;
3. Nowlin, Colder, & Craig, 2007;
4. Galea, Ahern, Nandi, Tracy, Beard, & Vlahov, 2007;
5. Caughy & O'Campo, 2006;
6. Robbins & Webb, 2004;
7. Sampson & Morenoff, 1997;
8. Hannon, 2005;
9. Noonan, 2004;
10. Sawicki & Moody, 2000;
11. Elliott & Sims, 2001;
12. Ohmer & Beck, 2006;
13. Leventhal, Fauth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2005;
14. Saporito & Sohoni, 2007;
15. Natsuaki, Ge, Brody, Simons, Gibbons, & Cutrona, 2007;
16. Algert, Agrawal, & Lewis, 2006;
17. Lichtenwalter, Koeske, & Sales, 2006;
18. Brisson & Usher, 2005;
19. Hannon & DeFina, 2005;
20. Stewart & Simons, 2006;
21. Turner & Hayes, 1997;
22. Solomon, 2006;
23. DeVerteuil, 2005;
24. Strait, 2006;
25. Sherman, 2006;
26. Paschall, & Hubbard, 1998;
27. Kaiser & Delaney, 1996;
28. Hashima, & Amata, 1994;
29. Harding, 2003;
30. Geis & Ross,1998;
31. Fresithler, Bruce, & Needel, 2007;

32. Datta, Subramanian, Colditz, Kawachi, Palmer, & Rosenberg, 2006;
33. Crowder & South, 2003;
34. Albrecht, Albrecht, & Albrecht, 2000;
35. Schafft, 2006;
36. Miller & Macintosh, 1999;
37. Hammack, Robinson, Crawford, & Li, 2004;
38. Grant, Koon, Davis, Roache, Poindexter, Armstrong, Minden, & McIntosh, 2000;
39. Rankin & Quane, 2002;
40. Holloway & Mulherin, 2004;
41. Snyder & McLaughlin, 2004;
42. Valles, Zimmerman, & Juarez, 2002;
43. Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Coll, 2001;
44. Galster, Quercia, Cortes, & Malega, 2003;
45. Cotter, 2002;
46. Small & McDermott, 2006;
47. Small & Stark, 2005;
48. Quillian, 1999;
49. Zenk, Schulz, Israel, James, Bao, & Wilson, 2005;
50. Subramanian, Chen, Rehkopf, Waterman, & Krieger, 2005;
51. Rankin & Quane, 2000;
52. South, Crowder, & Chavez, 2005;
53. Morenoff & Tienda, 1997;
54. Adelman & Jaret, 1999;
55. Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997;
56. Caughy, O'Campo, & Muntaner, 2003;

57. de Groot, Auslander, Williams, Sherranden, & Haire-Joshu, 2003;

58. McBrode, Bordy, Brown, Wisenbaker, Curtona, & Simons, 2002;

59. Pinderhughes, Nix, Foster, Jones, Bierman, Cole, Dodge, Greenberg, Lochman, McMahon, & Pinderhughes, 2001;

60. South & Crowder, 1999;

61. Quane & Rankin, 1998

APPENDIX B

EMPIRICALLY REVIEWED ARTICLES.

Author (*Data Analysis*)	Research Design (*Theoretical Base*)	Sampling	Data Collection (*Venue*)	Operationalization of Neighborhoods
Subramanian et al., 2005 block *Multilevel Analysis*	Cross sectional *Contextual Heterogeneity*	1307 census tracts	Mass. Dept,. of Mental Health (*Massachusetts*)	Census tracts & groups
Zenk et al., 2005 *Spatial Regression*	Cross sectional *No Theory mentioned*	869 Neighborhoods	2000 Decennial Census Data (*New York*)	Census tracts
Cotter, 2002 *Multilevel Analysis*	Cross sectional *Market Ecology Perspective*	1990 <100,000; 394 areas	Individual level data; Census Public Use Microdata Labor Market Area Files (*National*)	County tracts
Galster et al, 2003 *Multivariate*	Longitudinal *No Theory mentioned*	1980-1990 <10,000; 37,994 areas	Underclass Database (UDB) (*National*)	Census tracts
Small & Stark, 2005 *Logistic Regression*	Cross sectional *Social Disorganization*	2160 Census tracts <3500	Address matched listing 2000 Census Population & Housing; Data (*New York*)	Census tracts
Small & McDermott, 2006 *HGLM;*	Cross sectional *Social Disorganization*	331 MSAs & PMSAs	Dept. of Commerce & 2000 Census Data (*National*)	Zip codes
Quillian, 1999 *Black Out Migration Thesis*	Longitudinal data Census	1970, 1980, 1990 from Panel Study of Income Dynamics	Geocoded data	Census tracts

Author (*Data Analysis*)	**Research Design** (*Theoretical Base*)	**Sampling**	**Data Collection** (*Venue*)	**Operationalization of Neighborhoods**
South et al., 2005	Longitudinal data *No Theory mentioned*	1990-1995 10, 122 PSID	Panel Study of Income Dynamics (*National*)	Census tracts
Rankin & Quane, 2000 *HLM*	Cross sectional data *Social Isolation*	Residents from poor Chicago 62 census tracts (<500)	Urban Poverty & Family Life Study; 1990 Census of Population and Housing (*Chicago*)	Census tracts
Morenoff & Tienda, 1997	Longitudinal *Social Transformation*	1970-1990 825 census tracts	N/A (*Chicago*)	Census tracts
Adelman & Jaret, 2000 *Multiple Regression Analysis*	Cross sectional *No Theory mentioned*	112 Metropolitan	Farley & Frey (1992) data areas; MSAs & PMSAs (*National*)	Metro areas
Sampson & Raudenbush *Multilevel Analysis*	Cross sectional *Collective Efficacy*	N=8,782 847 census tracts Development in Chicago Neighborhoods	PHDCN; Project on Human (*Chicago*)	Geographical boundaries
Strait, 2006 *Longitudinal*	Longitudinal *Spatial Concentration*	92 MSAs	Vital Statistics of US; 1982-1984, 1992-1994, & 1999-2001 Census of Population data (*National*)	Census tracts
Holloway & Mulherin, 2004 *Multivariate Analysis*	Longitudinal *Spatial Concentration*	12,686 residents	National Longitudinal Survey Youth (NLSY); 1980 & 1990 Census data	Census tracts

Author (*Data Analysis*)	**Research Design** (*Theoretical Base*)	**Sampling**	**Data Collection** (*Venue*)	**Operationalization of Neighborhoods**
Ohmer & Beck, 2006 *Multilevel* *Analysis*	Cross sectional *Collective Efficacy*	4 neighborhood 50-100 members	Census Data organizations (*National*)	Census tracts
DeVerteuil, 2005 *Cluster* *Analysis*	Cross sectional *Concentrated poverty*	37 zip codes in New York	2000 US Census (*New York & Los Angeles*)	Zip codes
Solomon, 2006 receipt *Qualitative* *Institutional* *Ethnography*	Cross sectional *Social Correction &* *Social Control*	Five women	Individual level data; (*New York*)	By TANF
Turner & Hayes, 1997 *Demographic analysis*	Longitudinal *Spatial Perspective*	1980-1990	Census Data (*Washington*)	Census tracts
Stewart & Simons, 2006 *Regression based* *techniques*	Cross sectional *Code of the Street*	720 African Americans from 259 neighborhoods	1997 & 1999 Family & Community Health Study data (*Georgia*)	Block groups
Hannon & DeFina, 2005 *Robust Regression* *Based techniques*	Cross sectional *Social Disorganization*	133 tracts in Cleveland	Census Data, Cleveland Police Dept., & Cleveland Area Network on Data & Organizing (CANDO) (*Cleveland*)	Census tracts
Brisson & Usher, 2005 *HLM*	Longitudinal data *Social Capital*	6,551 residents from 413 neighborhoods from ten cities	2000 US Census (*AECF Cities*)	Census blocks
Albrecht et al., 2000 *Linear regression*	Cross sectional *Structural Perspectives*	2,390 non Metropolitan cities	1990 Census of Population & Housing	Counties

Author (*Data Analysis*)	**Research Design** (*Theoretical Base*)	**Sampling**	**Data Collection** (*Venue*)	**Operationalization of Neighborhoods**
Lichtenwalter et al., 2006 threshold *Multiple Regression & Mediation*	Cross sectional *Spatial Mismatch*	62 single mothers	Pittsburg Human Service Agencies (*Pittsburg*)	200% poverty (no neighborhood def.)
Algert et al., 2006 threshold *Spatial Cluster Analysis*	Cross sectional *No Theory mentioned*	84 food pantries	California Nutrition Network Database (*California*)	130% poverty (no neighborhood def.)
Elliott & Sims, 2001 (*Multivariate Analysis*)	Cross sectional	7,360 individuals	Multi city survey of Urban Inequality; 1990 Census of Population & Housing (*Atlanta, Boston, & Los Angeles*)	Block groups
Saporito & Sohoni, 2007 *Multiple Regression*	Longitudinal *Social capital & Concentration Poverty*	21 schools districts	2000 Census (*National*)	Blocks groups
Stoll, 2001 Logistic models *Poisson Regression*	Longitudinal *Ethnic Community*	4,025 housing units	LA Survey of Inequality US Census data (*Los Angeles*)	Census tracts
Morenoff & Sampson, 1997 *Multivariate Analysis*	Cross sectional *Spatial Perspectives*	826 census tracts	1970, 1980, 1990 Census & Homicide data (*Chicago*)	Census tracts
Hannon, 2005 *Robust regression*	Cross sectional *Social Disorganization*	2,042 census tracts from 227 neighborhoods	1988-1994 Homicide data; US Census data (*New York*)	Census tracts
Noonan, 2004 groups *Linear regression*	Cross sectional *No Theory mentioned*	N/A	2000 Chicago Census (*Chicago*)	Census block

Author (*Data Analysis*)	**Research Design** (*Theoretical Base*)	**Sampling**	**Data Collection** (*Venue*)	**Operationalization of Neighborhoods**
Sawicki & Moody, 2000 *Descriptive Analysis*	Cross sectional *No Theory mentioned*	417 census tracts	Georgia Department of Labor Statistical data (*Georgia*)	Census tracts
Leventhal et al., 2005 *Two stage least squares Regression*	Longitudinal *No Theory mentioned*	425 children from MTO sites	California Nutrition Network Database (*New York*)	Census tracts

APPENDIX C

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTEDNESS (GLYNN, 1981; PERKINS, 1990).

FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Please agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your neighborhood.

		Agree	Disagree
385.	I feel I am an important part of my neighborhood.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
386.	If I moved away from my neighborhood, I would be sorry to leave.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
387.	Very few of my neighbors know me.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
388.	I have friends in my neighborhood who know they can depend on me.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
389.	I do not like living in my neighborhood.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
390.	There are people in my neighborhood, other than my family, who really care about me.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
391.	I have friends in my neighborhood I can depend on.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
392.	If you don't look out for yourself in my neighborhood, no one else will.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
393.	No one in my neighborhood takes any interest in what their neighbors are doing.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
394.	It is hard to make good friends in my neighborhood.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ
395.	If I am upset about a personal problem, there are people in my neighborhood I can turn to.	Ⓐ	Ⓓ

APPENDIX D

PEER SUPPORT (BOLLAND, 1998).

114. How many of your friends think you are a punk if you don't drink alcohol?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

115. How many of your friends think you are a punk if you don't use drugs?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

116. How many of your friends think you are a punk if you don't carry a weapon?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

117. How many of your friends think you are a punk if you don't want to fight when you are insulted or dissed or called out?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

118. How many of your friends think you are a punk if you do well in school?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

119. How many of your friends think you are a punk if you don't have sex?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

120. How many of your friends think it's cool if you don't drink alcohol?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

121. How many of your friends think it's cool if you don't use drugs?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

122. How many of your friends think it's cool if you don't carry a weapon?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

123. How many of your friends think it's cool if you don't want to fight when you are insulted or dissed or called out?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

124. How many of your friends think it's cool if you do well in school?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

125. How many of your friends think it's cool if you don't have sex?
Ⓐ . . Most of them Ⓑ . . Some of them Ⓒ . . Almost none of them

APPENDIX E

MOTHER FIGURE SUPPORT
WARMTH TOWARDS MOTHER, QUESTIONS 30-35 (LAMBORN ET AL., 1991).

Please tell us about this person who is most like a mother to you.

30. I can usually count on her to help me out if I have some kind of problem.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a mother to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

31. She usually keeps pushing me to do my best in whatever I do.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a mother to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

32. We do fun things together.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a mother to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

33. She usually helps me if there is something I don't understand.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a mother to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

34. When she wants me to do something, she usually explains the reasons why.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a mother to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

35. She spends time just talking with me.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a mother to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

APPENDIX F

FATHER FIGURE SUPPORT
WARMTH TOWARDS FATHER, QUESTIONS 38-43, (LAMBORN ET AL., 1991).

Please tell us about this person who is most like a father to you.

38. I can usually count on him to help me out if I have some kind of problem.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a father to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

39. He usually keeps pushing me to do my best in whatever I do.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a father to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

40. We do fun things together.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a father to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

41. He usually helps me if there is something I don't understand.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a father to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

42. When he wants me to do something, he usually explains the reasons why.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a father to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

43. He spends time just talking with me.

Ⓐ . . I don't have anyone who is like a father to me
Ⓑ . . Agree
Ⓒ . . Disagree

APPENDIX G

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

17. About how often do you go to church, worship services, or other religious activities?

Ⓐ . . Never
Ⓑ . . Once in a while
Ⓒ . . About once a month
Ⓓ . . About 2 or 3 times a month
Ⓔ . . Once a week or more

18. How important is religion to you?

Ⓐ . . Not important Ⓑ . . Somewhat important Ⓒ . . Very important

19. How often do you read or study a Holy Book (such as The Bible)?

Ⓐ . . Never
Ⓑ . . Once in a while
Ⓒ . . About once a month
Ⓓ . . About 2 or 3 times a month
Ⓔ . . Once a week or more

APPENDIX H

CORRELATIONS FOR AMOUNT OF POVERTY MEASURES

Correlations

		regular poverty standards/not extreme	lastinstitutional	geo5	Socialv	Percentage in extreme poverty	Medianincome
regular poverty standards/not extreme	Pearson Correlation	1	-.404	.122	-.341	.482	-.882**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.193	.705	.279	.112	.000
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
lastinstitutional	Pearson Correlation	-.404	1	.178	.082	-.351	.247
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.193		.580	.801	.263	.439
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
geo5	Pearson Correlation	.122	.178	1	-.508	.349	-.373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.705	.580		.091	.266	.232
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
Socialv	Pearson Correlation	-.341	.082	-.508	1	-.417	.497
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.279	.801	.091		.177	.100
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
Percentage in extreme poverty	Pearson Correlation	.482	-.351	.349	-.417	1	-.609*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.112	.263	.266	.177		.036
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
Medianincome	Pearson Correlation	-.882**	.247	-.373	.497	-.609*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.439	.232	.100	.036	
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

"I have loved my work, I have loved people and my play, but always I have been uplifted by the thought that what I have done well will live long and justify my life, that what I have done ill or never finished can now be handed on to others for endless days to be finished, perhaps better than I could have done."
-WEB Dubois

Ebony Hall has her Bachelor (2004) and Master degree (2005) in Social Work from Baylor University in Waco, Texas and is a member of the social work honor society, Phi Alpha. Ebony Hall received the highest honor of the President's Award for her oral presentation of foster care research during the 2005 UT Arlington Annual Celebration of Excellence by Students and had the opportunity to present at the 2007 Council of Social Work Education APM in San Francisco, California. She served as Vice President for the National of Association of Social Workers Student Chapter in 2006 and 2007, and has been a student representative on the PhD Committee, the Research Committee, and the Council of Undergraduate Studies Committee during her time at UT Arlington.

Ms. Hall has also been a research assistant, helping conduct over sixty interviews with Dr. James W. Callicutt, in his endeavor to publish an oral history book over UT Arlington's School of Social Work. She is currently working on a study about spiritual

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In addition to the many duties and accomplishments, Ebony Hall has been an undergraduate advisor for the School of Social Work and has had several nominations including a nomination for the Patricia K. Cross Future Leaders of America, the Who's Who among Students in American Universities and Colleges, and was also nominated for Outstanding Academic Advisor in 2008.

Ms. Hall is currently seeking a Masters of Divinity with the Brite Divinity School on the campus of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas and has plans to obtain her LMSW during the summer of 2008. While working on her second masters, Ebony currently serves as Co-Facilitator for the Tarrant County Disproportionality Committee and is a Research Consultant for Baylor Healthcare's Oncology Department.