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Examining Urban African American Adolescent Perceptions of Neighborhood and Time Spent in Risky Contexts: Cross-Sectionally and Longitudinally

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EXAMINING URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND TIME SPENT IN RISKY CONTEXTS: CROSS-SECTIONALLY AND LONGITUDINALLY

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescent time use is an important concept to explore in the context of impoverished neighborhoods and community violence. Youth living in disadvantaged neighborhoods are exposed to a multitude of adverse neighborhood effects. For example, adolescents in the current sample are generally exposed to greater levels of community violence than young people living in neighborhoods with more resources. Research shows that African American adolescents living in urban, low-income neighborhoods are more prone to exposure to community violence than any other group in the United States (Stein, Jaycox, Kataoka, Rhodes, and Vestal, 2003; Wolf, Aber, and Morris, 2015). Utilizing the same sample as the present study, Goldner, Peters, Richards, and Pearce (2010) examined protective and risky contexts. Specifically, the authors linked time spent outside and time spent with older peers with increased risk of being exposed to community violence. They also found that time spent in school and at home acted as protective factors from being exposed to community violence.

The present study intends to think backwards and discover what factors lead to youth engaging in risky contexts, as conceptualized by Goldner, Peters, Richards, and Pearce (2010). Specifically, it is not clear what effect adolescent perceptions of

their neighborhood have on what they choose to do in their "free time." While research attempts to explain the effect that neighborhoods have on various outcomes, such as crime (Sampson. 2012), little research uses youth perceptions of their neighborhood to predict to their time use, and thus potential exposure to community violence levels.

Literature Review

Adolescent Time Use

The ways in which adolescents spend their structured and unstructured time is crucial to examine so interventionists can alter the possible trajectory of exposure to community violence. American youth who engage in unstructured leisure activities were found to have greater levels of delinquent behavior, but only for adolescents that resided in more "dangerous" communities (Bohnert, Richards, Kohl, and Randall, 2009). Furthermore, time spent in unsupervised activities have been linked to poorer academic performance (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, and Lindsay, 1999), as well as antisocial tendencies (Mahoney, Stattin, and Lord, 2004).

Research also suggests that adolescents who engage in structured activities have higher levels of positive adjustment (Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, and Zarrett, 2009). Extracurricular activities, such as after school programs and school clubs and sports were positively associated with academic achievement and negatively associated with substance use (Darling 2005). Extracurricular activities were also positively associated with school engagement and self esteem (Barnett, 2007), as well as academic expectations in adolescents (Dumais, 2009).

Past research suggests that gender and parental monitoring relate to youth time use (Goldner, Peters, Richards, Pearce, 2010; Richards, Romero, Zakaryan, Caren, Deane, Quimby, Patel, Burns, 2014). Male and female adolescents are somewhat different in their patterns of time use and patterns of risky behavior (Shuster, Mermelstein, and Wakschlag, 2013; Passmore and French, 2001; Jago, Anderson, Baranowski, and Watson, 2005). Moreover, parental monitoring affects the behavior of male and female adolescents. The current study's sample contains both males and females, as well as a measure of parental monitoring; both gender and parental monitoring will be treated as moderating variables.

Exposure to Community Violence

Research in the social sciences has focused on exposure to community violence, and its adverse effects on adolescents for roughly twenty years (Pynoos, 1993). Adolescents are at a higher risk for community violence than are youth of any other age group (Voisin, 2007). According to the National Survey of Adolescents, which studies adolescents ages 12 to 17, approximately one half of boys and more than one third of girls reported having witnessed at least one act of community violence in their lifetime (Fitzgerald, Danielson, Saunders, and Kilpatrick, 2007). This demonstrates the enormous scope that exposure to community violence has on American adolescents.

The findings over the past couple of decades detail the profound effects of being exposed to community violence. Specifically, Osofsky (1995) suggests that children who are exposed to community violence develop poor attachment tendencies, negative emotions, aggressive behavior, and PTSD symptoms. Research shows that young people who witness violence in their neighborhoods are at increased risk for internalizing

behaviors, substance use, anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder (Aisneberg, 2001; Buka, Stichick, Birdthistle, and Earls, 2001). In a sample of 2,000 urban public school adolescents, witnessing community violence was associated with depression symptomology, anxiety, and somatization (Schwab-Stone, Ayers, Kasprow, Voyce, Barone, Shriver, and Weissberg, 1995; Schwab-Stone, Chen, Greenberger, Silver, Lichtman, and Voyce, 1999). Exposure to community violence has been associated with increased anxiety, specifically in adolescents (Cooley-Quille, Boyd, Frantz, and Walsh, 2001) and academic failure (Schwartz and Gorman, 2003). Farrell and Bruce (1997) found that in a sample of 436 African American adolescents, witnessing community violence was positively associated with the frequency of violent behavior in boys and girls. Furthermore, in a sample of 266 urban, African American adolescents, exposure to violence was associated with more aggressive beliefs and less pro-social peer reported behavior (McMahon, Todd, Martinez, Coker, Sheu, Washburn, and Shah, 2012). Exposure to community violence was also associated with the later perpetration of violence by young people (Halliday-Boykins, and Graham, 2001). In the National Survey of Adolescents, 32% of boys who witnessed community violence reported having engaged in delinquent behavior at some point in their life, while only 6.5% of boys who had not witnessed violence reported delinquent behavior (Fitzgerald, Danielson, Saunders, and Kilpatrick, 2007).

The extant literature demonstrates that exposure to community violence is associated with a variety of adverse social and mental outcomes. Therefore, reducing adolescents' exposure to violence would be highly constructive and healthy. One possible

way to do this is by reducing adolescent time spent in risky contexts, which could help protect young people from being exposed to community violence in the first place.

Risky Contexts

The social and physical context in which urban adolescents spend their "free time" is of paramount importance to their mental health and development, particularly in neighborhoods with high rates of violence and crime. Many adolescents experience unstructured, unsupervised time that is referred to as "wandering" or "street time" (Stoolmiller, 1994). This can include spending unsupervised free time with peers, and spending time "on the street."

Adolescents in the United States experience large amounts of unstructured free time compared to youth internationally (Larson & Verma, 1999). Researchers have shown that the more time young people spend in risky contexts, the more likely they are to be exposed to community violence (Richards, Larson, Miller, Luo, Sims, Parella, and McCauley, 2004**;** Goldner, Peters, Richards, and Pearce, 2011). Similarly, Lanctot and Smith (2001) found that time spent with "risky friends" were associated with increased status offenses. This means that young people committed status offenses at a greater rate when they spent more time with peers who were involved in gangs, substance use, or early engagement in sexual activity. Miller, Wasserman, Neugebauer, Gorman-Smith, and Kamboukos (1999) found that being exposed to community violence predicts greater antisocial behavior in urban male adolescents, while witnessing violence in the community has been linked to behavioral difficulties in young adolescent girls (Farrell and Bruce,

1997). In summary, risky contexts are an important construct to examine due to its adverse consequences for adolescents.

Risky Contexts and Adolescent Free Time

Adolescents are at a life stage that makes them more likely than children to participate in health risk behavior (Wolff and Crockett, 2011). However, being exposed to a risky context varies depending on an adolescent's particular circumstances, even in similar neighborhoods. At the individual level, gender, the extent of parental monitoring and participation in supervised activities affects adolescent behavior, including exposure to risky contexts.

Goldner and colleagues (2010) examined risky and protective contexts for exposure to community violence among urban African American adolescents. The authors utilized the Experience Sampling Method to gather in vivo information from 233 adolescents. Analyses showed that the time that boys spent with girls, as well as the time that girls and boys spent outside in private areas were associated with less exposure to violence. Additionally, parents emerged as a promotive factor, across time, from being exposed to community violence, for both genders. On the subject of gender and exposure to violence, longitudinal studies have found different relationships between witnessing community violence and adverse outcomes for boys and girls.

In a sample of 692 urban adolescents, high parental monitoring was associated with less alcohol use and consistent condom use, for males, but no effect was found with females. However, perceived parental trust was associated with lower levels of sexual activity, tobacco and marijuana use in females, and alcohol use in males (Borawski, Ievers-

Landis, Lovegreen, and Trapl, 2003). This elaborates the link between the role of the parent and adolescent behavioral outcomes.

Moreover, research shows that mother and father support were negatively associated with having deviant friends, which may place a youth in a risky context (Wolff and Crockett, 2011). Often, violence and therefore being exposed to violence occurs when a young person experiences unsupervised, idle time (Stiffman, Dore, and Cunningham, 1996). Parental monitoring has been shown to be a protective factor for youth from engaging in risky contexts, and being exposed to violence.

Active engagement, such as structured extracurricular activities, contributes to adolescent positive mental health (Gilman, Meyers, & Perez, 2004). Time spent with parents, in school, and in private spaces, such as inside the home, was associated with less exposure to community violence for boys and girls. Time spent with girls was also associated with less exposure to community violence for boys (Goldner, Peters, Richards & Pearce, 2011).

The Neighborhood Context

Neighborhood-level explanations help illuminate what leads to adolescents experiencing time in risky contexts, as well as what protective factors help youth reduce time in risky contexts. It is important to examine the neighborhood context due to the existence of disparities between neighborhoods. Firstly, there is considerable social inequality among neighborhoods in terms of racial and socioeconomic segregation. Second, many social problems tend to be grouped at the neighborhood level, including, crime, adolescent delinquency, low birth weight, school dropout, infant mortality, and

social and physical disorder. The ecological concentration of poverty appears to have increased significantly during recent decades, as has the concentration of affluence at the upper end of the income scale (Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley, 2002). These differences highlight the importance of examining social problems at the neighborhood level.

Sampson shows how characteristics of the neighborhood, particularly a quality he named "collective efficacy," affects residents, especially adolescents. "Collective efficacy" is comprised of two social mechanisms: "*social cohesion* (the 'collectivity' part of the concept) and *shared expectations for control* (the 'efficacy' part of the concept)" (Sampson, 2012 p. 127). Sampson and colleagues (1997), hypothesized that collective efficacy is linked to reduced violence. Multilevel analyses of a 1995 survey of 8,782 residents of 343 neighborhoods in Chicago showed that collective efficacy is negatively associated with variations of violence. This means that increased levels of social cohesion with shared expectations for control was associated with a smaller variety of crimes committed. The analyses performed by Sampson showed that collective efficacy varied greatly between neighborhoods in Chicago, and was associated with lower rates of violence.

To further elaborate the buffering effects of collective efficacy on the negative effects associated with exposure to violence, Jain, Buka, Subramanian, and Molnar (2012) used multiwave data from 1,166 adolescents and found that neighborhood-level cohesion was helpful. Specifically, neighborhood cohesion, as an individual measure or as a composite of collective efficacy did not increase resilience at any single time point, but fostered resilience over time, especially for victims. This sample was from Chicago, and

found that longitudinally, resilience was increased due to high measures of neighborhood cohesion.

Aneshensel and Sucoff (1996) found that greater levels of social and neighborhood cohesion were associated with less depression in a sample of 877 adolescents in Los Angeles County. Importantly, the authors also found that the perception of the neighborhood as a dangerous context influenced the mental health of adolescents. Specifically, the perception of the neighborhood as dangerous was associated with depression, anxiety, oppositional defiant disorder, and conduct disorder (Aneshensel and Sucoff, 1996). Furthermore, perceived neighborhood problems and perceived neighborhood disorder were found to be associated with depressive symptoms and general negative mental health effects, which are increased by exposure to violence and decreased by a supportive environment Stiffman, Hadley-Ives, Elze, Johnson, and Dore, 1999; Ross, 2000). The supportive environment that these authors discuss is a combination of perceived support from the immediate family, as well as the neighborhood.

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CHAPTER TWO

DESIGN AND METHODS

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Research Question and Hypothesis 1

In the present study, the first question posed was: do adolescent perceptions of neighborhood danger influence their time spent outside or time spent with older peers? It was hypothesized that adolescents who perceive their neighborhood to be safe are more likely to spend more time outside. Additionally, it was expected that adolescents who perceive their neighborhood to be safer would spend more time with older peers.

Research Question and Hypothesis 2

The second research question posed was: do adolescent perceptions of neighborhood support relate to the time they spend outside, or with older peers? It was hypothesized that adolescents who perceive their neighborhoods to be more supportive would be more likely to spend their free time outside, as well as with older peers. Conversely, if adolescents believe that their neighborhood environment is dangerous, they will likely spend less time outside. It was also hypothesized that youth who perceived their neighborhood to possess little support would spend less time outside, and less time with older peers. Again, adolescents who perceived

their neighborhood to be dangerous and have low support would spend less time outside, and less time with peers, due to the threat of victimization or fear of violence and crime.

Research Question and Hypothesis 3

The third research question was: does gender or parental monitoring moderate the relationships between perceptions of neighborhood support and neighborhood danger and youth engaging in risky contexts? It was hypothesized that both gender and parental monitoring would moderate these relationships. Specifically, it was thought that males would engage in risky contexts at a greater rate than female respondents. Also, it was hypothesized more parental monitoring would decrease the time spent in risky contexts for females and males, regardless of how an adolescent perceived their neighborhood.

Participants

The participants and data were collected as a result of a larger project at Loyola University Chicago in 1999. Specifically, data were collected from 250 African American students over three years. The first wave of data collection began when the students were in 6th grade and proceeded through 8th grade. Only 6th and 7th grade time points were examined in the current study. The sample was taken from six low-income urban Chicago public schools, which were chosen due to their location in high crime, high violence neighborhoods. Of all students asked to participate, 58% agreed, while 42% declined. Signatures on both the parent consent, as well as the child's assent were required for participation. Students were rewarded with games, gift certificates, and sports equipment at the end of data collection.

The vast majority of the sample came from low-income households. Specifically, parents of the children reported that their median household income ranged from $10,000-$20,000. Forty-eight percent of the participants lived in single-parent households, and the median household size was five people. The average age of participants at T1 was 12, while 59% of the sample was female. According to the 2000 Census data, the median family income for those who reside in the same community as the current sample is $20,266.

Procedure

Longitudinal data were collected for over 3 years, for 1 week each year. Data collection began when the students were in 6th grade (T1) and continued through 7th grade (T2), and concluded in 8th grade (T3). Only times 1 and 2 were analyzed in the current study. The Experience Sampling Method (ESM) was used to collect in vivo information from the students, including their location, emotions, thoughts, companionship, and activities (Larson and Verma, 1999). The students were required to carry watches and notebooks with them for 1 week. When school was not in session, the timed-indicator beeped and signaled participants every 90 minutes. This method of signaling was utilized in order to minimize school interruptions and increase the likelihood of capturing a child's exposure to community violence. When the watch signaled, participants were asked to complete a self-report form, including information such as where they were, what they were doing, and whom they were with, as well as how they were feeling and what they were thinking about.

Research assistants trained the participants as to how to accurately and properly complete the self-report form. Additionally, research assistants were available each day at school to ensure the ESM standards were being upheld, as well as to answer any questions

the participants may have. During the week, participants received 51 signals and any student who responded to fewer than 15 of these signals was omitted from the analyses. Of all the students, 82% responded to more than 15 signals. Of 51 signals, the median number responded to was 42. The students and parents were also asked to complete questionnaires during the week of ESM responding. The same sample of students were asked to participate during all years of this study, and the same procedures were practiced during all years.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Time Spent Outdoors. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on all the measures used in this study. The outcome of primary interest was the time spent by youth during their free time. More specifically, the present study is concerned with whether or not the youth engaged in "risky contexts," defined as time spend outdoors and time spent with older peers. Risky contexts have been shown to increase youths' exposure to community violence (Goldner, Peters, Richards, Pearce, 2011). There were 250 adolescents whose data could be used for the ESM question that asked their current location when prompted by the timer. The youth were signaled about 7 times throughout the day. They received 3-4 signals during the day and about 3-4 during the night, including a beep the participants received around bedtime. In total, the adolescents received 51 signals over a 7-day period. They received 37 beeps on weekdays, during 7:30 a.m. through 9:30 p.m. On weekends, they received 14 signals during 8:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m. The mean of the percent time

spent outdoors (time 1) was 10.12%, while the standard deviation was 13.12%. The mean percent time spent outdoors (T2) was 11.26%, and a standard deviation of 15.68%.

Time Spent with Older Peers. For the second component of "risky contexts," percent time spent with older peers (time 1), the sample consisted of 246 adolescents. The mean percent time spent with older peers was 11.22%, and the standard deviation was 15.59%. The mean percent time spent with older peers (time 2) was 7.68%, and the standard deviation was 12.73%, with an N of 223 adolescents.

Independent Variables

Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger. Neighborhood danger was measured using the Neighborhood Environment Scale (NES; Elliot, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985). The NES asked participants to answer statements relating to the danger of their neighborhood on a scale of one to five, one being "not at all true," and four being "very true." Samples from items on the Neighborhood Environment Scale are: "There are plenty of safe places to walk or spend time outdoors in my neighborhood" and "I feel safe when I walk around my neighborhood by myself at night." For all items on the Neighborhood Environment Scale, refer to Figure 1. The N of the mean of the NES (T1) was 271, the mean of the sum of the selected number of items was 18.21, and the standard deviation was 12.10. The N of the mean of the NES (T2) was 252, the mean of the sum of the selected number of items was 16.84, and the standard deviation was 12.84.

Neighborhood Support. Perceptions of neighborhood support was measured was through the Neighborhood Youth Inventory (NYI; Chipuer, Pretty, Delorey, Miller, Powers, Rumstein, Barnes, Cordasic, and Laurent, 1999). The NYI is measured on a five-point scale,

ranging from one (not at all true) to five (completely true). An example of what the NYI questioned was, "people are there for each other in my neighborhood," and "I feel okay asking for help from my neighbors." The number of respondents for the Neighborhood Youth Inventory (T1) was 218. Like the NES, the NYI scores were summed and the mean was 5.42, and the standard deviation was 3.80. The N for Time 2 was 244, the mean was 5.19, and the standard deviation was 3.74.

Moderators

Parental Monitoring. Participants completed a brief questionnaire using the parent component taken from an intimacy measure created by Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Steinberg (1996). A sample item from this questionnaire is "How often do you know if your child comes home by curfew on weekend nights?" Parents responded on a five-point scale from 1 *(almost never)* to 5 *(almost always*). The mean of the sum of number of items in the parental monitoring measure (T1) was 10.10, the standard deviation was 2.28, and the N was 263. The mean of the parental monitoring measure for time 2 was 10.04, the standard deviation was 2.44, and the N was 249.

Analysis Procedure

Regression analyses were performed with the percent time spend outdoors, and the percent time spent with older peers as separate outcomes, in order to ascertain the effects the independent variables and moderators, gender and parental monitoring, had on the "risky contexts." The SPSS-17 macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2012), model 2 was utilized in order to examine the relationship between adolescent perceptions of neighborhood danger and support and time spent in risky contexts (indicated by time spent outside and time spent

with older peers). The model also included the potential moderating effects of parental monitoring and gender. This macro simultaneously performs regression analyses and provides conditional indirect effects at the different values of the moderator in addition to bootstrap standard errors. Indirect effects were considered significant at $p < .05$ for the 95% bootstrap confidence intervals. As recommended by Mallinckrodt (Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei, & Russell, 2006), 10,000 bootstrap iterations were performed for each analysis.

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CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

Correlations

Dependent Variable Correlations

Table 2 presents the bivariate correlations for the variables in this study. Correlational analyses indicated that that there was a positive correlation between the percent time spent outside in time 1 and the percent time spent outside in time 2. There was also a positive correlation between the percent time spent with older peers during time 1 and the percent time spent with older peers during time 1. Additionally, the percent time spent with older peers during time 1 was positively correlated with youth perceptions of neighborhood support in time 1. In other words, adolescents spent more time with older peers when they considered their neighborhood to have higher levels of support.

Independent Variable Correlations

Several correlations emerged between parental monitoring and another variable. Specifically, parental monitoring in time 1 was negatively correlated with perceptions of neighborhood danger in time 1. Parental monitoring in time 1 was positively correlated with youth perceptions of neighborhood support in time 1.

During time 2, parental monitoring was correlated with adolescent perceptions of neighborhood support. Furthermore, parental monitoring during time 1 was positively correlated with perceptions of neighborhood support during time 2.

Cross-Sectional Analyses Time 1

Both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses were conducted. For models where statistically significant effects were found, the model coefficients are presented in Tables, followed by the output from the SPSS Process procedure, and a graph illustrating the significant interaction effects. The variables used to create each graph were mean centered only in the graphs, and not in the analyses. Table 3 shows the estimates for cross-sectional analyses in Time 1. There were *no significant effects* on the percent time spent with older peers by perceived neighborhood support, parental monitoring. Similarly, the relationship between the percent time spent with older peers and perceptions of neighborhood danger, moderated by gender and parental monitoring, was not found to be significant.

However, *two significant interaction effects* were found in time 1 cross-sectional analyses of percent time spent outside. Specifically, Table 3 shows that there was a significant interaction effect between the percent time spent outside and the perception of neighborhood support, moderated by parental monitoring, but only for youth with low and somewhat low parental monitoring. At Time 1 (6^{th} grade), among youths with low and somewhat low parental monitoring, there was a significant relationship between viewing the neighborhood as supportive and spending less time outside. The more they saw the neighborhood as supportive, the less time they spent outside.

Table 4 indicated that here was also a significant interaction between the percent time spent outside and neighborhood danger, moderated by parental monitoring. At Time 1 (6th grade), among youth with high parental monitoring, there was a positive relationship between perceived neighborhood safety and time spent outside. The more they viewed the neighborhood as safe, the more time they spent outside.

Cross-Sectional Analyses Time 2

There were no significant findings for the relationship between the percent time spent with older peers in time 2 and perceptions of neighborhood danger, moderated by parental monitoring and gender in time 2. Again, with the outcome of percent time spent with older peers in time 2, there were no significant relationships found with the predictor variable of perceived neighborhood support, with moderators of parental monitoring and gender.

However, there was one relationship that approached significance. Specifically, the main effect of perceptions of neighborhood danger in time 2 approached a significant negative relationship with the percent of time spent outside. There were however, no significant relationships found between the percent time spent outside in time 2 and perceptions of neighborhood support, moderated by parental monitoring and gender.

Longitudinal Results between Time 1 and Time 2

There was a trending interaction effect found between the percent time spent with older peers in time 2 and perceptions of neighborhood support in time 1, moderated by gender, which was not presented in a figure. Table 5 indicated that there was however, a significant interaction effect between the percent time spent with older peers in time 2, and

perceived neighborhood danger in time 1, moderated by gender. Specifically, males who perceived their neighborhood to be more dangerous during time 1, spent more time with older peers in time 2. Furthermore, females who perceived their neighborhood to be more dangerous in time 1 spent less time with older peers in time 2.

There were also 2 significant main effects found in my longitudinal analyses. Specifically, in the relationship between the percent time spent outside (T2) and perceptions neighborhood danger (T1), moderated by gender and parental monitoring (T1); Table 6 showed a significant main effect emerged between parental monitoring in time 1 and percent time spent outside in time 2, while controlling for the percent time spent outside in time 1. Results indicated that increased levels of parental monitoring during time 1 was associated with increased time spent outside during time 2.

The second longitudinal main effect that emerged was in the relationship between the percent time spent outside (T2), perceived neighborhood support in time 1, moderated by parental monitoring (T1) and gender. Specifically, Table 7 showed that the significant main effect was between parental monitoring in time 1 and the percent time spent outside in time 2, controlling for the percent time spent outside in time 1. Similar to the first main effect, the results indicate that increased levels of parental monitoring during time 1 significantly predicated to increased time spent outside in time 2.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Study Overview and Major Findings

The purpose of the current study was to cross-sectionally and longitudinally examine the relationship between adolescent perceptions of their neighborhood and time spent in "risky contexts." Specifically, the relationship between adolescent perceptions of neighborhood danger and the percent of time spent with older peers or outside was examined. In addition, this study analyzed the relationship between youth perceptions of neighborhood support and the percent time they spent with older peers or outside. All these relationships were also explored in regard to the moderating impact of gender and parental monitoring. Overall, results of the analyses demonstrated that more positive perceptions of neighborhood support and perceptions of neighborhood danger were significantly associated with more time spent in risky contexts. The relationships that emerged were additionally found to vary by gender and parental monitoring.

The first hypothesis of the present study was that adolescents who perceive their neighborhood to be less dangerous would feel safe, and therefore spend more time outside**.** While regression analysis did not find main effects of neighborhood danger, it did find interaction effects. During 6th grade (time 1), perceptions of

of time spent outside, and perceptions of neighborhood danger interacted with parental monitoring to predict the percent time spent outside. Youth with lower levels of parental monitoring perceived their neighborhood to be more supportive and spent more time outside. In contrast, youth with high parental monitoring, who perceived their neighborhood to be more dangerous, spent less time outside.

It was also hypothesized that youth who perceive their neighborhood to be safe would spend more time with older peers. Time 1 and 2 analyses were unable to confirm this hypothesis. However, longitudinal results suggest that perceptions of neighborhood danger does relate to the percent time spent with older peers. Surprisingly, the youth who had higher perceptions of neighborhood danger in time 1 were actually found to have spent more time with older peers during time 2, disproving the second portion of the described hypothesis.

The second hypothesis of the present study was that youth, who perceive their neighborhood to be supportive, or possess supportive qualities, would be more likely to spend time outside. This was supported in a cross-sectional interaction, moderated by parental monitoring. Specifically, youth with low levels of parental monitoring spent less time outside in time 1 when they viewed their neighborhood as more supportive during time 1. In sum, youth who perceived their neighborhood to be more supportive did spend more time outside when including parental monitoring as a moderating variable.

It was also hypothesized that adolescents who perceived their neighborhood to be supportive would spend more time with older peers. This, however, was not supported through the analyses.

The third hypothesis was that parental monitoring and gender would moderate the relationships between youth perceptions of their neighborhood and the percent time they spent with older peers and the percent time spent outside. These hypotheses were confirmed through interaction effect results. Specifically, perceptions of neighborhood support in time 1 interacted with parental monitoring to predict the percent time spent outside in time 1. Again, parental monitoring interacted with perceptions of neighborhood danger in time 1 to predict the percent time spent outside in time 1. Furthermore, gender interacted with perceptions of neighborhood danger in time 1 and predicted to the percent time spent with older peers during time 2.

Furthermore, parental monitoring in time 1 had a significant direct relationship with the percent of time youth spent outside during time 2. Specifically, two analyses with different independent variables indicated that greater levels of parental monitoring were associated with a larger percent time spent outside. This initially seems counterintuitive, however, it is plausible to suggest that youth with high parental monitoring also have their parents' trust, and thus is allowed to spend time outdoors, even though known risks may be involved. Another explanation of this relationship is the areas in which the youth are from may differ, in terms of the perceived and actual threat of violence outside.

These results are implicated in a broader discussion of adolescent time use, risky contexts, and exposure to community violence. Clearly, the analyses show an association between parental monitoring and youth time use, which is supported by past research (Borawski, Ievers-Landis, Lovegreen, and Trapl, 2003; Coller, Coyne, Rasmussen, Hawkins, Padilla-Walker, Erickson, and Memmott-Elison, 2016).

The present study extends the literature of how perceptions of neighborhood support and danger relate to how youth spend "free time." American adolescents spend large amounts of time in unstructured, unsupervised time, which has been linked to greater levels of exposure to community violence (Larson & Verma, 1999; Richards, Larson, Miller, Luo, Sims, Parrella, and McCauley, 2004). The developmental period of adolescence has been shown to be one of the most permeable times for youth, including when they begin forming an individual identity (Havinghurst, 1984).

Goldner, Peters, Richards, and Pearce (2010) examined risky companionships and locations for exposure to community violence among African American youth. The authors' aim was to discover which locations and companionships act as protective and risky factors for exposure to community violence. Using the same sample as the present study, the authors found that spending increased time outside and with older peers placed the adolescents in a risky context, meaning they were more prone to being exposed to community violence. They also found that being at school and at home acted as protective contexts, which was associated with less exposure to community violence.

The present study relates to the assertions made by Sampson and Groves (1989) in reference to Social disorganization theory. In their study, Sampson and Groves (1989) posited that unstructured free time is highly problematic in areas with fewer resources because high levels and effective methods of parental monitoring are less prevalent. Interestingly, this sample yielded different results. Youth with high parental monitoring actually spent more time outside, which has shown to be a composite measure of "risky contexts." Using Sampson and Groves' (1989) logic, it would be expected that this sample

would yield results that suggest youth who have high levels of parental monitoring would spend less time outside. Perhaps this paradox is due to the current study's sample, or due to problems in thinking about how parental monitoring is conceptualized and operationalized.

Limitations of the Current Study

The R^2 of these models is very low, only 1 to 4% at the most. So the explained variance in the outcomes is very modest. More complete models, with more relevant variables might be needed to get a better overall explanation of adolescent time use. One of the limitations of this study was the sample. Since the sample was comprised of low income urban African Americans, generalizations about the analyses can not be made to demographically different samples or populations. Another limitation was the use of ESM data collection method. Since the ESM data relied on the students' dedication to completing a questionnaire every time the beeper sounded, the data may be incomplete or somewhat inaccurate because youth may have forgot or were unable to complete the survey, or their current situation prevented them from fully committing to taking time out of their day to complete questionnaires.

Although the current study was able to examine these relationships between time 1 and time 2, the potential use of time 3 would have provided a better, richer understanding to the relationship between adolescent perceptions of their neighborhoods and their time use. Moreover, the current study's sample size was relatively small, and a larger N would provide greater generalizability, and most likely more variance, and thus perhaps altered results.

Strengths of the Current Study

The current study is strengthened due to its focus on the population most affected by the problems presented. Unstructured free time is more problematic is areas with concentrations of chronic poverty and fewer resources (Richards, Larson, Miller, Luo, Sims, Parella, and McCauley). Thus, the current study is particularly applicable and appropriate for changes to be made in communities plagued by state neglect and poverty. Another strength of the study is that it is one in a limited literature on neighborhood perceptions and youth free time. Little research has focused on how adolescents spend their free time, however, even fewer have examined how youth perceptions of their neighborhood may relate to how leisure time is spent.

Although there are faults in the Experience Sampling Method, such as relying solely on the participants' willingness to comply, there are also advantages to using this method. Specifically, ESM limits recall bias (Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli, 2003). Assuming the participants complied with all requested instructions, ESM provides a unique insight into a young person's daily experiences, including what they experienced during the day, who was with them, what they were doing, and how they were feeling at those specific moments.

Implications

The results of the current study has lead to a better understanding of how gender and parental monitoring affect the relationship between adolescent perceptions of neighborhood support and danger and time spent outside, and with older peers. With this information, appropriate interventions can be funded and implemented. For example, the

current study's results suggest that if youths' perceptions of neighborhood danger were altered, they may spend less time outside, thus being exposed to less community violence, which would lessen the adverse effects of violence exposure on adolescents (Goldner, Peters, Richards, and Pearce, 2011).

Future Research Directions

Future studies should address the present studies' limitations. Specifically, future studies can gather a larger sample. They can also utilize additional time points, giving it more longitudinal validity. Analyzing data that ranges beyond time 1 to time 2 would provide a better idea of neighborhood influencers over time. It would also be beneficial to examine a more heterogeneous sample to examine racial differences, for example. Since the current sample is comprised of all African Americans living in low income areas, gathering a sample of different races, socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, and neighborhoods would provide a unique view of how these social categories vary in terms of time spent in risky contexts, with regards to neighborhood perceptions of support and danger. Very few studies have documented the differences of time use between races (Lleras, 2008).

A mixed-method approach could also be beneficial. Including qualitative data, such as interviews and observations to detail the nuances of parental monitoring and perceptions of neighborhood danger. Since the present study relies of youth perceptions, qualitative data can expand upon, and show the differences and similarities between adolescents' perceptions. For example, interviewing youth participants about how exactly

they perceive neighborhood support, and why they view the conditions that way they do can provide a richer story.

The research findings from the present study suggest that youth perceptions of their neighborhood do matter and have implications on how they spend their leisure time. If more research is dedicated to determining what factors influence the free time of adolescents, perhaps the effects of exposure to community violence can be remedied.

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1. Univariate Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Perceptions of neighborhood danger T1	18.2111	12.10337	271
Percent time with older peers T1	11.223	15.5892	246
Percent time spent outside T1	10.119	13.1207	250
Perceptions of neighborhood support T1	5.4174	3.79759	218
Parental monitoring T1	10.1004	2.27511	263
Perceptions of neighborhood danger T2	16.8375	12.84232	252
Percent time with older peers T2	11.264	15.6790	223
Percent time spent outside T2	7.697	12.7349	223
Perceptions of neighborhood support T2	5.1926	3.74383	244
Parental monitoring T2	10.0402	2.44422	249

Table 2. Correlations.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perceptions of neighborhood danger T1	1									
2. Percent time with older peers T1	.059	1								
3. Percent time spent outside T1	-.027	-.103	1							
4. Perceptions of neighborhood support T1	-.077	.151*	-.068	1						
5. Parental monitoring T1	-.139*	-.082	.042	.206**	1					
6. Perceptions of neighborhood danger T2	.342**	-.051*	-.090	.061	.082	1				
7. Percent time with older peers T2	.104	.290**	-.038	.058	-.140	.026	1			
8. Percent time spent outside T2	-.109	-.015	.480**	.029	.133	-.063	-.076	1		
9. Perceptions of neighborhood support	-.179**	.025	.018	.354**	.185**	-.020	.008	.043	1	
10. Parental monitoring T2	-.097	.099	-.057	.079	.294**	-.049	-.083	.041	.165*	1
M	18.21	11.22	10.11	5.4	10.10	16.83	11.26	7.69	5.19	10.04
SD	12.10	15.58	13.12	3.79	2.27	12.84	15.67	12.73	3.74	2.44

Table 3. Cross Sectional (T1), Outcome (% of time spent outside T1)

Model	Coeff	SE	t	p	R2-chng
Constant	8.2167	.8880	9.2535		
Gender	.3797	1.9488	.1949		
Parental Monitoring T1	-.3419	.3987	-.8576		
Perceptions of Neighborhood Support	-.2968	.2368	-1.2532		
Perceptions of Neighborhood Support T1 X Parental Monitoring T1	.3480	.1073	3.2429	.0014	.0429
Perceptions of Neighborhood Support T1 X Gender	-.4954	.5571	-.8893		

Table 4. Cross-sectional (T1), Outcome (% of time spent outside T1)

Model	Coeff	SE	t	p	R2-chng
Constant	9.7007	.8803	11.0192		
Gender	.6731	1.8654	.3609		
Parental Monitoring T1	-.3328	.4183	-.7956		
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1	-.0425	.0694	-.6134		
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1 X Parental Monitoring T1	-.0699	.0282	-2.4762	.0140	.0203
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1 X Gender	-.0893	.1538	-.5808		

Table 5. Longitudinal Results, Outcome (% of time with older peers T2)

Model	Coeff	SE	t	p	R2-chng
Constant	8.7892	1.5157	5.7986		
Gender	3.5055	2.9706	1.1801		
Percent of Time Spent with Older Peers T1	.2982	.1141	2.6131	.0098	
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1	.0784	.0952	.8233		
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1 X Gender	-.4704	.2210	-2.1281	.0348	.0231
Parental Monitoring T1	-1.0834	1.0334	-1.0484		
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1 X Parental Monitoring T1	.0364	.0550	.6614		

Table 6. Longitudinal Results, Outcome (% of time spent outside T2)

Model	Coeff	SE	t	p
Constant	2.7506	.8151	3.3745	
Gender	.2390	1.6736	.1428	
Percent of Time Spent Outside T1	.4110	.0796	5.1597	
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1	-.1111	.0596	-1.8635	
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1 X Gender	-.0718	.1392	-.5157	
Parental Monitoring T1	.7508	.2915	2.5753	.0109
Perceptions of Neighborhood Danger T1 X Parental Monitoring T1	-.0157	.0195	-.8077	

Table 7. Longitudinal Results, Outcome (% of time spent outside T2)

Model	Coeff	SE	t	p
Constant	1.8592	.8848	2.1014	
Gender	-1.0401	2.1601	-.4815	
Percent of Time Spent with Outside T1	.4634	.1058	4.3799	
Perceptions of Neighborhood Support T1	.2178	.2941	.7408	
Perceptions of Neighborhood Support T1 X Gender	-.9064	.8646	-1.0484	
Parental Monitoring T1	.8494	.3274	2.5941	.0106
Perceptions of Neighborhood Support T1 X Parental Monitoring T1	-.1153	.1130	-1.0200	

APPENDIX B

FIGURES

Figure 1. Revised version of Elliot, Huizanga, and Ageton's (1985) Neighborhood Environment Scale (NES)

The following statements are asked about perceptions of the neighborhood(s) you live in/spend a lot of time in. Answer to the best of your ability and as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

Respondents used the following numbering system:

1- Not at all true
2- A little true
3- Sort of true
4- Very true

1. There are plenty of safe places to walk or spend time outdoors in my neighborhood.

2. Every few weeks, some kid in my neighborhood gets beat-up or mugged.

3. Every few weeks, some adult gets beat-up or mugged in my neighborhood.

4. I have seen people using or selling drugs in my neighborhood.

5. In the morning or later in the day, I often see drunk people on the street in my neighborhood.

6. Most adults in my neighborhood respect the law.

7. I feel safe when I walk around my neighborhood by myself during the day.

8. People who live in my neighborhood often damage or steal each other's property.

9. I feel safe when I walk around my neighborhood by myself at night.

10. In my neighborhood, the people with the most money are the drug dealers.

Figure 2. Longitudinal Interaction between Neighborhood Danger, Gender and Percent Time Spent with Older peers.

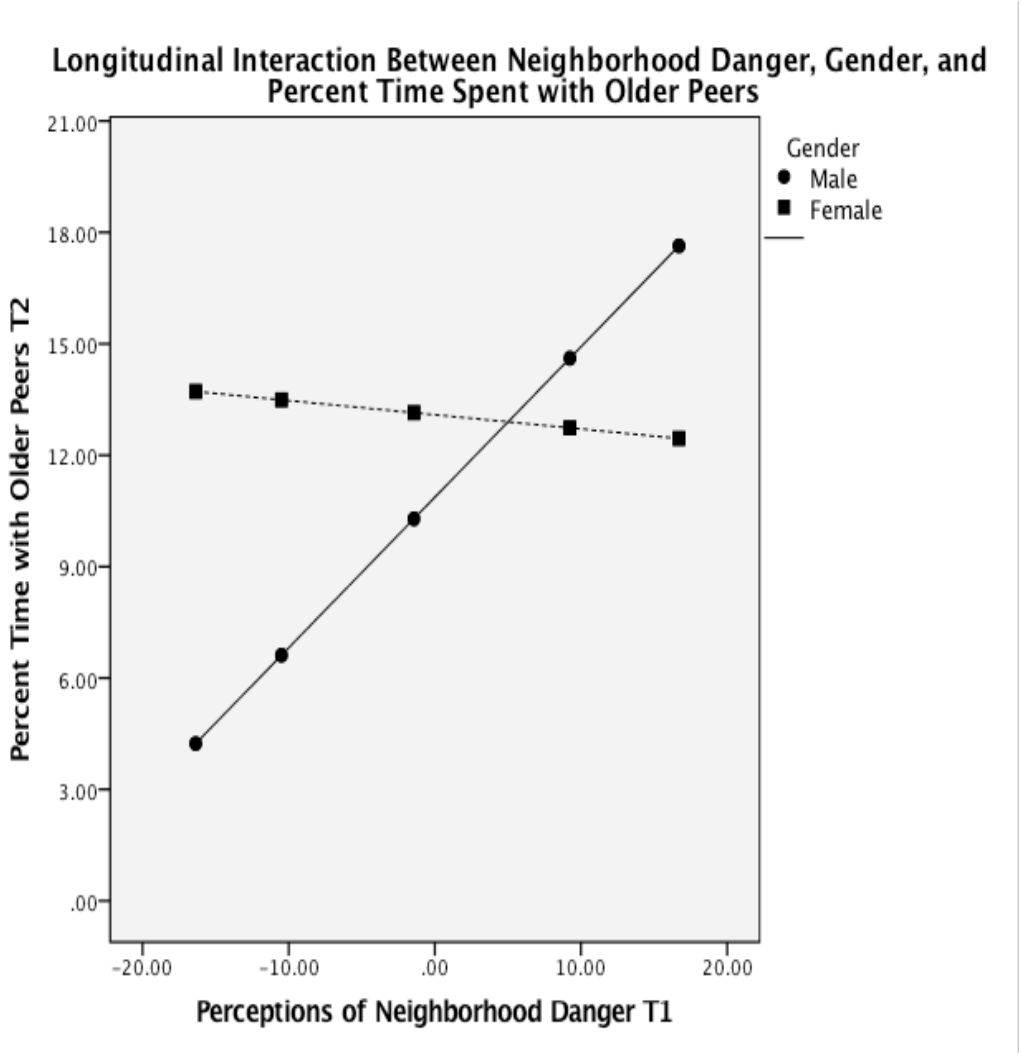


Figure 3. Cross-Sectional Interaction between Neighborhood Support, Parental Monitoring, and Percent Time Spent Outside.

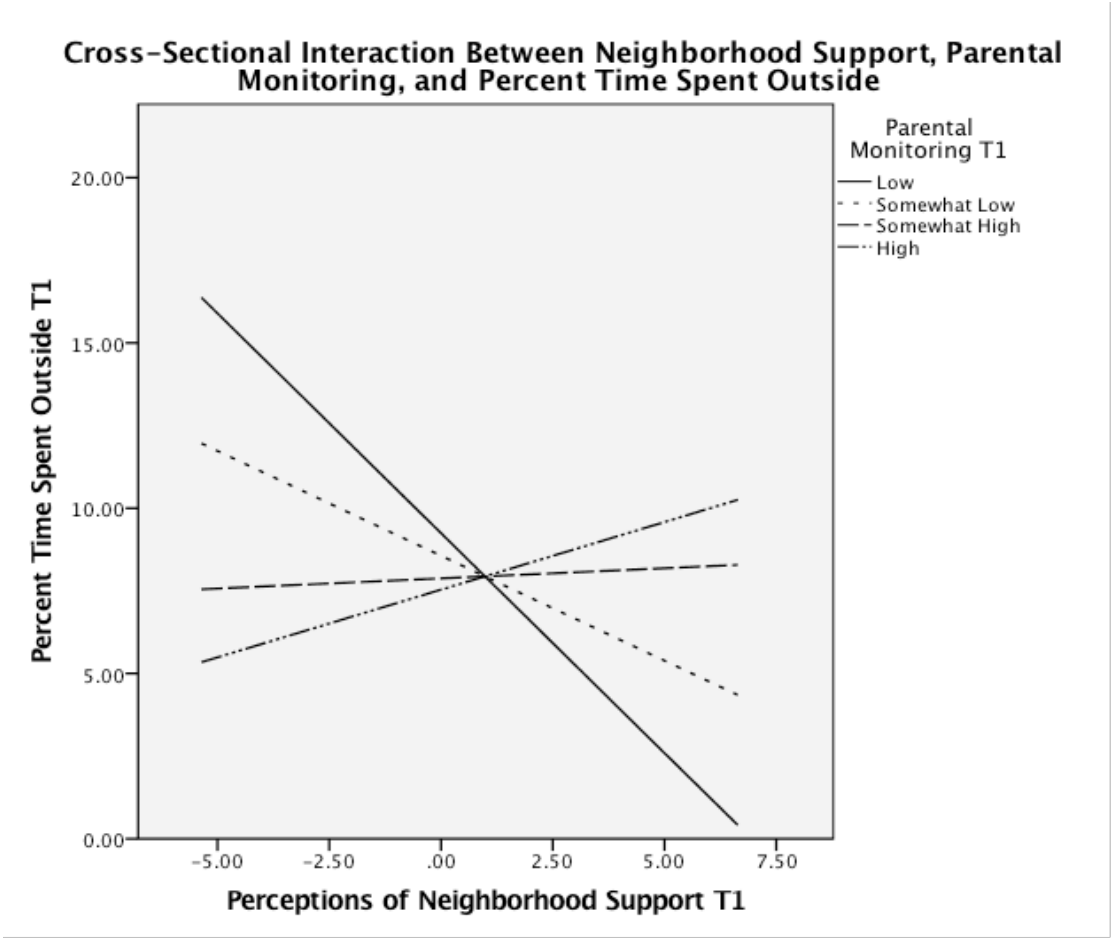
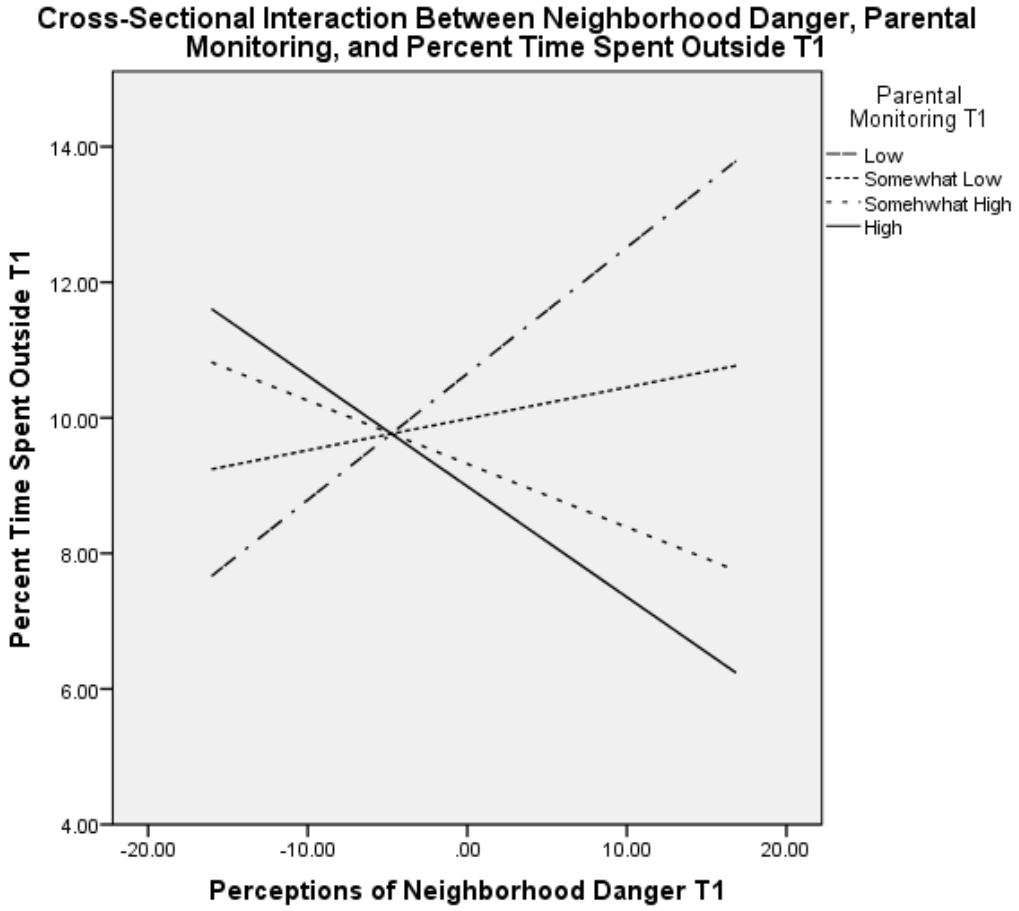


Figure 4. Cross- Sectional Interaction between Neighborhood Danger, Parental Monitoring, and Percent Time Spent Outside T1



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