

“There Goes the Neighborhood”: Nonresident Perceptions
of Neighborhood Disorder

by

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of neighborhood disorder have been studied by researchers in many ways since social disorganization theory was first introduced in the 1930s. However, few studies have focused explicitly on nonresident perceptions of neighborhood disorder. Further still, investigations regarding how race/ethnicity and gender may influence this population's responses are also lacking in the present literature. This study intends to close some of the gap in this area of research. This study uses qualitative analysis to focus on Hispanic and Caucasian nonresidents' responses to a single photographic stimulus. This study focuses on the following: (1) perception of neighborhood disorder, (2) gender-specific neighborhood perceptions of disorder, (3) inclusion of race-identifying words, specifically in terms of frequency among Hispanic respondents, and (4) prevalence of negative adjective use. Previous research has discovered that nonresidents have associated race with neighborhood disorder despite the absence of people in the surveying/data collection methods. By further investigating this topic, this research aims to analyze the responses more closely regarding the response affect (i.e., positive, neutral, and negative) with negative adjectives and race-identifying words. The findings from this study may encourage future investigation into implicit and explicit biases focused on the possible unconscious connection of race/ethnicity and neighborhood disorder in individual perceptions.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Mark and Julie, whose unyielding support, encouragement, and comedic relief inspired me to complete my MS degree. The many hours of talking through tears, being on the verge of ripping my hair out, and feeling like I was in over my head was not in vain. No daughter could ask for a better set of parents.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	5
The Subjectivity of Disorder	6
Broken Windows and Open Doors	7
Social Identity Theory and Perception Considerations	10
THE CURRENT STUDY	17
Hypotheses.....	18
METHODS	19
Data	19
Analysis	23
RESULTS	28
Section I.....	28
Section II	33
Section III	40
DISCUSSION	52
REFERENCES	58

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Summary Statistics	21
2.	Universal Negative Adjectives Statistics	25
3.	Social Disorder Variable Statistics	26
4.	Theme Variable Statistics	28
5.	Response Affect (i.e., Theme) Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages	32
6a.	Positive Affect (i.e., Theme) Response – Race-ID Words Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages	35
6b.	Neutral Affect (i.e., Theme) Response – Race-ID Words Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages	36
6c.	Negative Affect (i.e., Theme) Response – Race-ID Words Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages	38
7a.	Universal Negative Adjective Frequency Distribution for Caucasian Nonresidents	43
7b.	Universal Negative Adjective Frequency Distribution for Hispanic Nonresidents	45
8a.	Caucasian, Gender, and Social Disorder Adjective Variable Summary Statistics	47
8b.	Hispanic, Gender, and Social Disorder Adjective Variable Summary Statistics	48
9a.	Caucasian, Gender, and All Negative Adjective Variable Summary Statistics.....	50

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
9b. Hispanic, Gender, and All Negative Adjective Variable Summary Statistics.....	50
9c. Negative Adjective Variable Frequency Distribution by Gender	51

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Photograph of Various Forms of Graffiti, Murals, and Street Art	22

INTRODUCTION

Social disorder and perceptual research are topics that have interested many researchers and scholars since the early 1930s. As such, our understanding of disorder and individual/group perceptions of disorder has evolved throughout the last century. Countless publications have focused on perceptions of neighborhood disorder and other related topics. Researchers began examining how characteristics within a geographic area or neighborhood may promote increases in criminality, violence, and other hostile outcomes, while also undermining different aspects of physical and social control (Gracia, 2014; Kingston et al., 2009; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Marco et al., 2015; Maimon & Browning, 2010; Park et al., 1925; Sampson et al., 1997; Shaw & McKay, 1942; Wilson, 1987). From this extensive literature one conclusion is clear: individuals' and groups' perceptions/interpretations of disorder matter, as they continue to influence our understanding of disorder across many settings.

The goal of this research is to further expand our knowledge on neighborhood disorder and perceptions of disorder. However, the population which this research targets provides a new inquiry within this topic of study, namely, nonresidents. Using data collected in 2018, this research provides a more recent qualitative analysis of nonresident perceptions and interpretations of neighborhood disorder. More specifically, the considerations of race/ethnicity and gender are analyzed with the response affect from each participant's interpretation and perception of a photographic stimulus. For this study, the sample utilizes male and female college students from a large southwestern university. Understanding nonresident perceptions and interpretations of neighborhood disorder is essential, as "Nonresidents' views of disorder have the potential to impact

neighborhoods' use patterns, and larger neighborhood conditions like the local economy and neighborhood stigma” (Wallace & Louton, 2018, p. 23; see also Permentier et al. 2007, 2008; Sampson 2012). As such, the importance of including this population in current and future neighborhood disorder research is critical. By focusing on how race/ethnicity and gender may influence participant responses, a greater understanding of implicit and unconscious bias may be obtained. Therefore, we can use the findings from this research to support the need for further education in correcting the stereotypical and stigmatic relationship that has been frequently associated with minority races/ethnicities and neighborhood disorder.

Social disorganization theory was introduced into criminological literature during the 1930s. From the Chicago School (also known as the Ecological School), Shaw and McKay (1942, 1969) developed a delinquency theory focused on the ecology of a geographical area. This theory posits that regardless of the racial and ethnic composition of the residents in the area, delinquency rates remained unchanged; thereby, placing responsibility on the environment and not the individual. According to Kornhauser (1978), Sampson and Raudenbush (1999), and Markowitz et al. (2001), social disorganization theory posits that high rates of social disorder and crime are the result of a community or neighborhood's inability to regulate behavior within the neighborhood. As more researchers and scholars began to investigate this theory, revisions and extensions were created. Such additions as structural disadvantages, lack of informal social networks and relationships within the community or neighborhood, numerous definitions of *disorder*, and visual cues (i.e., physical and social disorder) have further expanded our understanding of social disorganization theory and the many variables that

can impact victimization, crime, and perception of disorder (Bursik, 1988; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Kotabe et al., 2016; Sampson et al., 1997; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

Arguably, Shaw and McKay's (1942, 1969) social disorganization theory may have prompted Wilson and Kelling's (1982) broken windows theory, whereby Wilson and Kelling focus on social and physical disorder as direct antecedents to criminal behavior (Maskaly & Boggess, 2014). Broken windows theory highlights how physical (i.e., visual) and social cues encourage criminality, as these cues signal a lack of guardianship and neighborhood decay (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Furthermore, this perception of neighborhood decay discourages residents from engaging in community ownership (i.e., informal relationships), and crime-preventative methods (i.e., reporting to the police). When an area appears to be ignored by law enforcement and residents alike, criminals are encouraged to continue illegal and illicit activity under the perception and assumption that there is no guardianship to hinder such behavior (Skogan, 1990; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). However, research has provided mixed results regarding the plausibility of this theory and the associations between disorder and serious crime (Brisman, 2012; Gau & Pratt, 2010; Keizer et al., 2008, Snyder, 2006; Wilson & Healy, 1987). Therefore, it is essential to keep this theory in mind but with caution. The assumed pattern posited by the broken windows theory does not universally work.

A concise understanding of these two theories is beneficial when considering research that focuses, specifically, on perceptions of disorder. Indeed, there is much literature available that provides in-depth analyses regarding group and individual perceptions on topics such as risk, fear, victimization, crime, and multiple components of

disorder in the criminal justice field (Donner et al., 2019; Franzini et al., 2008; Hipp, 2010; LaGrange et al., 1992; LaGrange & Ferraro, 1989; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001, 2004; Warr & Stafford, 1983). However, when reviewing existing literature on neighborhood and disorder perceptions, one population that is consistently neglected is nonresidents. By primarily focusing on the perceptions of residents only, an essential point of view has been excluded from the research. Yes, it is critical to understand residents' perceptions of neighborhood disorder because perceptions may influence routine activities, formal and informal relationships, and criminality. However, nonresidents' perceptions may have even greater significance regarding the direct and indirect impact on a neighborhood in a variety of categories as well. Such categories include local economy, employment rates, community development, and local allocation of funds for community improvements/maintenance.

Wallace and Louton (2018) are among the first scholars who have begun to close this gap through in-depth interviews of study participants. Wallace and Louton's (2018) research sought to investigate how nonresidents perceive and interpret disorder from multiple photographic stimuli (p. 21). The importance of their research is that it shines new light on racial bias, an age-old social issue that has plagued the United States since its inception. Wallace and Louton (2018) concluded that nonresidents' perceptions and interpretations can influence multiple aspects of a neighborhood, such as the local economy, employment, and "resources flowing into neighborhoods" (p. 39) through nonresidents bringing their business to the area. They also note that nonresident perceptions and interpretations were frequently associating race/ethnicity with disorder, despite the absence of people in the photographic stimuli. As Wallace and Louton (2018)

state, “nonresidents’ perceptions of disorder contain the racial animus and stereotypes surrounding poverty and stratification that can facilitate the role of disorder perceptions in the reproduction of urban and racial/ethnic inequality” (p. 39).

Wallace and Louton’s (2018) findings suggest that there is a need to further investigate nonresident perceptions with a focus on gender and race/ethnicity. As such, this study intends to utilize the dataset from Wallace and Louton to address the following issues: (1) perception of neighborhood disorder, (2) gender-specific neighborhood perceptions of disorder, (3) inclusion of race-identifying words, specifically in terms of frequency among Hispanic respondents, and (4) prevalence of negative adjective use. In this study, I seek to determine if race/ethnicity and gender impact nonresident responses. By categorizing each response as an affect (i.e., positive, neutral, or negative), I can further examine whether an individual’s race/ethnicity and gender may influence their perception and interpretation of the photographic stimulus.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated previously, there is a vast inventory of research available that focuses on individual and group perceptions on a variety of topics in the criminal justice system. Instead of providing countless studies that focus on various populations of individuals and their perceptions, I intend to provide more content that exhibits why perceptual research and disorder is so diverse. First, disorder is extremely subjective – not only from an individual perspective, but from an academic perspective as well. To elaborate on this, I review multiple definitions of *disorder* that have been provided in existing literature and previous research. Next, I provide a brief overview of Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) broken windows theory, followed by a synopsis of multiple studies that have focused on

perceptions of disorder among specific populations. Finally, I discuss social identity theory. When conducting perceptual research, it is essential to understand that race/ethnicity and gender are part of the groups we and others use when creating our social identities. As such, we place ourselves into groups (“us” versus “them”). This understanding may benefit how we view and understand perceptions from specific races/ethnicities and genders, including cultural influence based on individual heritage.

The Subjectivity of Disorder

Disorder is an all-encompassing word with definitions that vary widely. It has been used to describe the social conceptualization of community standards, forms of crime, neighborhood decay, fear of crime, and much more. Further still, as society changes and evolves, and more research is conducted, so too does our understanding of what is included under the broad umbrella of *disorder*, namely, neighborhood disorder. Kubrin (2008) elaborates, “Variability in how disorder is understood and conceptualized across studies is the rule rather than the exception” (p. 205).

Within the category of disorder resides the sub-categorization of *physical disorder* and *social disorder*. Skogan (1990) explains that whereas signs such as visible decay and neglect refer to physical disorder, social disorder refers to behaviors including but not limited to prostitution, vandalism, public drunkenness, and graffiti. Others consider physical and social disorder as a consequence associated with specific behaviors. Graffiti and vandalism are explained by physical disorder (i.e., neighborhood decay and dilapidation, neglect of the environment by the community and law enforcement), and as a result, encourage others to “not care.” Further still, social disorder occurs when

individuals are present for interactions, including loitering and panhandling, prostitution and solicitation, drug-dealing, and intimidation (Ross & Jang, 2000; Sampson, 2009).

In contrast to physical and social disorder definitions, other scholars refer to criminality and criminality alone as an indicator of disorder. For example, where Ross and Jang (2000) and Sampson (2009) view juveniles loitering as a cue for social disorder, Félonneau (2004) explains that these acts are more along the lines of *incivility* than *disorder*. Take for example, prostitution and drug-dealing. Both are considered criminal offenses. However, juveniles who are loitering and homeless individuals who are panhandling do not necessarily fall within the scope of illegal acts (depending on the jurisdiction).

Other scholars define disorder from a perspective of “norms.” In LaGrange et al.’s (1992) study, they explain disorder as “low-level breaches of community standards that signal an erosion of conventionally accepted norms and values” (p. 312). Additionally, Ross and Mirowsky (1999), explain that there is a continuum between order and disorder and that “cues” will shift where perceptions settle for individuals – regardless of whether these cues are physical or social in nature (p. 414). Therefore, LaGrange et al.’s (1992) and Ross and Mirowsky’s (1999) definitions of disorder support the perspective that perceptions of disorder are reflective of how individuals identify specific cues, not necessarily whether these cues are specific to physical, social, or criminal categories.

Broken Windows and Open Doors

The broken windows theory can be credited for some of the above-mentioned definitions of *disorder*. Proposed by Wilson and Kelling (1982), this theory focuses on communities (or neighborhoods) and the relationships between disorder and incivility

that influences serious crime rates. Wilson and Kelling posit that the prevalence of disorder 1) increases serious crimes, 2) encourages fear among residents and citizens, and 3) weakens informal relationships among residents and citizens within those communities. McKee (2018, para. 4) explains this theory as, “disorder causes crime, and crime causes further disorder and crime.”

Broken windows theory has inspired scholars to investigate disorder in many different aspects (i.e., fear of crime, perception, etc.) through focusing on “types” of disorder. As previously stated, disorder is generally categorized as either physical or social. Physical disorder refers to examples in the community and neighborhood such as broken windows, abandoned/vacant buildings, excessive littering, graffiti, and vandalism. Social disorder refers to examples in the community and neighborhood such as drug-dealing, prostitution, loitering youth, aggressive panhandling, and excessive noise.

Since the introduction of the broken windows theory, there have been numerous studies designed to test whether Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) theory is plausible. Among the first studies to test broken windows theory, Taylor et al.’s (1985) study found support regarding the connection between disorder and crime. Taylor et al. conducted their study in Baltimore, Maryland and compared police-recorded levels of crime with registered neighborhood-levels of physical disorder. The analysis of these data found that there was a correlation between crime and disorder. Additionally, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) tested broken windows theory in a similar fashion to Taylor et al. (1985), but within the city of Chicago. Like Taylor et al. (1985), Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) identified that crime rates and observed disorder were related, specifically “[their] results established a significant albeit relatively modest association of disorder with officially

measured robbery” (p. 637). However, these findings were challenged by Harcourt (2001), positing that the connections lacked evidentiary foundation. He continues this rhetoric by explaining that evidence of a correlation between disorder and crime does not support those relationships as being causal. Previous literature does not account for the numerous possible causal mechanisms, and dichotomies of definitions (e.g., ‘order/disorder’, ‘law-abiding/criminal’) within this area of research make findings that support the broken windows theory less plausible and hollow (Harcourt, 2001; Jones, 2003).

Sampson and Raudenbush revisited this topic in 2004 with a new intention of focusing on implicit bias and discrimination and the foundations that individuals use to form their perceptions of disorder (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004, p. 319). Among the findings, Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) denote that “social structure proved a more powerful predictor of perceived disorder than did carefully observed disorder. The data suggest that in shaping perceptions of disorder, residents supplement their knowledge with prior beliefs informed by the racial stigmatization of modern urban ghettos” (p. 336).

Other scholars and researchers have looked at disorder from the perspective of measuring its impact on fear of crime and crime rates (Kelling & Coles, 1996; Perkins & Taylor, 1996; Skogan, 1990; Taylor, 1997, 1999). From these studies, the results suggest that the more that individuals perceive disorder, the higher the rate of fear of crime. In fact, “residents [who] are fearful of crime report more disorder than do residents who experience less fear [regardless of the neighborhood they are reporting on]” (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999, p. 606; see e.g., Perkins et al., 1992; Taylor, 1999).

Research has been completed on the ethnographic composition of neighborhoods, implicit bias, and the impact of race and socioeconomic class on individual perceptions of disorder (Bobo & Massagli, 2001; Kefalas, 2003; Loury, 2002; Massey & Denton, 1993; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). Such studies have found that residents were more threatened (i.e., threats that disorder were thought to bring on the neighborhood) based on race than the acts/perceptions of disorder (Kefalas, 2003). Other studies focused on the generalized stereotypes in America through cultural narratives, examining neighborhood stratification (Bobo & Massagli, 2001, Loury, 2002; Massey & Denton, 1993). These studies provide a solid foundation for investigating the possible impact that the racial composition of the community/neighborhood has on implicit bias, racial stereotypes, and perceptions of disorder – as was then, pursued by Sampson and Raudenbush (2004). Sampson and Raudenbush provided an extensive analysis with these considerations among others related to health and psychological discomfort. The implications from their findings suggest that “It may not be the actual levels of disorder that are felt negatively, for example, but the associations of disorder with residents’ perceptions of their racial meaning” (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004, p. 336-337).

The studies reviewed in this section have alluded to the difficulty associated with studying disorder and perceptions of disorder. A variety of influences and impacts have been considered. However, this consideration has been primarily within the population of residents. Expanding investigations of neighborhood disorder perceptions to nonresidents, a largely forgotten population can provide further insight into a controversial issue on which the research findings are mixed.

Social Identity Theory and Perception Considerations

As demonstrated previously, conceptions of disorder are widely subjective. Many studies that focus on disorder include individual and group perception. Like disorder, perception is highly subjective. Vancluysen et al. (2011) elaborates on disorder and perception as “What one perceives as disorder depends greatly on the prior experiences that one brings to an encounter with potentially problematic behavior and is, therefore, different for each individual” (p. 33). Prior experiences can shape our opinions about many topics and considerations, whether politically correct or not. Many of our experiences can be generated by the situations and environments we enter due to our individual social identities. With social identities, most individuals inherently have a branch of identity that extends to their heritage and culture that is associated with their race/ethnicity and sometimes, gender, namely when we consider gender roles.

Social Identity Theory – The “Us” Versus “Them” Rhetoric

Social identity theory was introduced into the social sciences during the 1970s and 1980s (Tajfel, 1970, 1978; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tafel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1975; Turner et al., 1987). Tajfel and Turner’s (1979) social identity theory posits that groups (i.e., family, social class, organizations, vocations, etc.) create a sense of social identity in individuals that elicits the feeling of “belonging.” There are three stages that take place during the mental processes of evaluating ourselves and others regarding social identity: (1) social categorization (e.g., Black, white, Catholic, Christian, female, male, student, nurse, etc.), (2) social identification (i.e., adopting the identity of the group in which we have categorized ourselves), and (3) social comparison (i.e., comparing “our” group to “other” groups).

For most individuals, race/ethnicity and gender are staples of one's identity. Cultures and social norms can be extremely diverse based on the race/ethnicity of the individual. For example, individuals from (1) Musuo, China, (2) Minangkabau, Indonesia, and (3) Bribe, Costa Rica are part of some of the most matriarchal communities and societies in the world (Sawe, 2019). In these communities, women are revered, respected, and many times, the sole decision-maker of the family. Additionally, in these ethnicities, women receive all inheritances and are dominant in social, political, and economical matters in their societies (Sawe, 2019). Other races/ethnicities are considered more "modern-matriarchal." That is, African American women represent 29% of single-parent households and Hispanic women represent 20% of single-parent households (Damaske et al., 2017). As more single-parent women as the sole-providers for their household and children, matriarchal influences will be more present, especially in fatherless homes. Research from Hipp (2010), Sampson and Raudenbush (2004), and Wallace and Schalliol (2015) found that women not only view disorder as more problematic than men, but they also perceive disorder more. With the rate of female single-parent households increasing, it is beneficial to continue to investigate if gender holds any influence over disorder perceptions. As stated by Gaub et al. (2021),

Stay-at-home mothers are more likely to traverse their neighborhood during school hours as they transport children to and from school or use neighborhood amenities. As such, stay-at-home mothers are more likely to be exposed to disorder that occurs during the day, during working hours than their male and female working counterparts and have knowledge of daytime disorder hot spots. (p. 892)

Therefore, if gender differences of disorder perceptions are present, it is possible that these interpretations could be an inherited characteristic based on gender *and* cultural experience (i.e., growing up in a matriarchal environment). A matriarchal society or culture may place more significance and importance on the perceptions and interpretations from women than men. This consideration further strengthens the need to consider the influence of gender in neighborhood disorder research.

According to De La Torre (2009), “A comprehensive 2007 study done by Pew Hispanic Center on how Hispanics are transforming American religion showed that as a whole, Latina/os express greater commitment to religion (68%) than the overall U.S. population” (p. xx). For example, many Hispanics have “spirit-filled” religious experiences, whereby “the Holy Spirit [has] daily interventions in the lives of believers” (De La Torre, 2009, p. xx). These interventions come in the form of speaking in tongues, prophesying, and performing miracles (i.e., God will’s it). Religion and faith are so important in the Hispanic community that it influences their political thinking, social issues, and routine activities. De La Torre (2009) notes, “a majority if these Latina/os view God as an active force in the world and in their daily lives...subscribing to “prosperity gospel,” believing that God rewards the faithful with financial prosperity and good health” (p. xxi). Therefore, for individuals from a Hispanic religious home, graffiti that focuses on portraying religion (i.e., a saint or otherwise) may not elicit perceptions of disorder, but rather religious admiration and respect.

For African Americans, their culture has a long history of racial oppression at the hands of federal, state, and local governments of the United States (Spillers, 2006, p. 18). This history has inherently become part of Black culture. However, Black culture is far

more than the oppression experienced in the past and in the present. Black culture is seen in religion, liberal arts, language, family structure, and more (Spillers, 2006). However, despite the many positive aspects that Black culture brings to a variety of topics, their history of suffering may influence their perceptions differently. In Wilson et al.'s (2021) study of Black and Latino women's perceptions of the police, their analysis found that "the narrative data revealed that women do not view the police positively and suggests that personal and vicarious experiences with the police through friends, family members and the media operated as influential factors that shaped their perceptions of police" (p. 360). Furthermore, Blacks are disproportionately likely to be victims of lethal use of force by law enforcement in comparison to their white counterparts, "with a fatality rate 2.8 times higher among Blacks than whites" (DeGue et al., 2016). Therefore, whereas Caucasians may view law enforcement patrolling as a benefit and a sign of *order*, African Americans may perceive it as a threat or sign of disorder (e.g., "the cops are looking to harass people").

While these are just a handful of examples, they do lend support toward the importance of considering race/ethnicity and gender in research that focuses on perceptions of disorder. Social identity can have a large impact on individual perceptions when considering the cultural, religious, gender-oriented, and historical implications of identifying as a group member of a specific race and/or ethnicity.

My study includes race/ethnicity and gender variables to provide more insight into the impact that one's race, ethnicity, and gender may have on individual perceptions. If the data reflects perceptual differences with these variables, further investigation into correlations between social identity and disorder perception may be warranted. Next, I

review the limited research that focuses on groups' perceptions (from a multicultural and race/ethnicity standpoint) of disorder – though not explicitly neighborhood disorder.

Group Threat Perceptions

Blalock's (1967) and Blumer's (1958) research has contributed to group threat theory, frequently focusing on competition, group threat, prejudice, and group preservation. That is, when subordinate groups disrupt the dominant group's social norms or environment, prejudice and ethnic conflict increases based on the perception of the "threat" by the dominant group (King & Wheelock, 2007). As such, a perception of disorder may differ based on how threat is perceived at the group level versus the individual level.

Vancluysen et al.'s (2011, p. 32) study is among the limited literature that focuses on majority (Flemish) versus minority groups (Moroccan and Turkish) perceptions of neighborhood disorder and fear of crime in a multicultural setting. Their study expands on previous research that focused on perceived disorder and fear of crime (e.g., Latkin et al., 2009; Reisig & Cancino, 2004; Ross & Jang, 2000; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Taylor et al., 1985; Wyant, 2008). Vancluysen et al.'s (2011) findings indicate that there are variations in the interpretation of disorder between the minority groups and the majority group which could possibly be explained by the frequency of which each group experienced disorder – is it the "norm" for one group compared to "new" for another group. Furthermore, "the analyses supported the broken windows theory for all three ethnic groups. Those of Flemish, Moroccan, and Turkish descent had higher levels of fear in the neighborhoods where they live the more [they noticed and were] bothered by disorder" (Vancluysen et al., 2011, p. 45). This finding denotes that those who recognize

disorder are inherently more bothered by it than those who do not – meaning, disorder is not universal. Disorder is perceived differently depending on the individual’s culture and ethnicity (Vancluysen et al., 2011, p. 46; see also Vancluysen et al., 2009).

Vancluysen et al.’s (2011) study provides an example of how group perceptions can vary when considering cultural/ethnicity differences between the groups. King and Wheelock’s (2007) study investigates groups in the category of race, namely whites’ perceptions of African Americans. Their study sought to answer questions regarding white resident perceptions of racial threat, fear of crime, economic threat, and punitive attitudes regarding African Americans (King & Wheelock, 2007, p. 1262). Their findings state, “whites are more punitive if they [(whites)] reside in counties that recently experienced an increase in African American population size,” whereas the reverse effect was seen for African Americans who were less punitive when they experienced an increase in white population size (King & Wheelock, 2007, p. 1267-1269). It is possible that the white respondents associated disorder, crime, and delinquency with increases in the African American populations. The influx of African Americans moving into “their” area or neighborhood may signal that these individuals will disrupt the community standards, norms, and values (e.g., see LaGrange et al.’s (1992) *disorder* definition). Perceptions of racial threat are explained by the association between punitive attitudes and aggregate demographics, though less supported regarding economic conditions (King & Wheelock, 2007, p. 1270-1271). Though this study does not explicitly focus on how this type of “disruption” impacts their sample’s perception in association with disorder, readers can infer this from the terminology such as “influx of population.” The authors also comment that white respondents display a type of “laissez-faire racism” (Bobo et al.,

1997) – meaning letting things (e.g., racism) take its course without interference – regarding their perception of threat and attitudes of punitiveness toward African Americans (i.e., outsiders).

Discussions from King and Wheelock’s (2007) study highlight that the respondents may hold preconceived resentment toward African Americans, supporting that race may be influencing the perception of threat, disorder, and disruption of their neighborhood/area more than any other variable. This discussion supports the need for more research to explore individual and group perceptions based on race and gender. It is curious that the perception of threat was not generated by the increase in population, but rather the increase in population of African American individuals. Could the same be said from a standpoint of nonresidents? Does a primarily Black or Hispanic neighborhood impact Caucasians’ perception of safety, crime, and fear of victimization? Would these perceptions influence the decision of relocating or venturing *into* an area? The first step to answer these questions involves examining whether race/ethnicity and gender influence nonresident perceptions of disorder.

THE CURRENT STUDY

Wallace and Louton (2018)’s study was the first to confirm that “Nonresidents’ perceptions of disorder contain the racial animus and stereotypes surrounding poverty and stratification that can facilitate the role of disorder perceptions in the reproduction of urban and racial/ethnic inequality” (p. 39). The goal of this study is to expand on Wallace and Louton’s (2018) findings by examining their data from one of the three photographic stimuli. Specifically, I am focusing on the frequency of negative adjective use and race-identifying words based on the affect from the response (i.e., positive, neutral, and

negative) with considerations of the nonresidents' race/ethnicity and gender. Wallace and Louton (2018) primarily focused on the perceptions and interpretations of nonresidents to three photographic stimuli, whereas my study is focusing on nonresident responses to a single photographic stimulus with a new focus on the frequency of negative adjectives and race-identifying words used by individuals to discuss the photograph who differ in terms of gender and race/ethnicity (Caucasians and Hispanics). By examining responses from a single photographic stimulus of neighborhood disorder, I can conduct a more extensive review of the nonresidents' responses to determine if variables such as gender and race/ethnicity influence the affect (positive, neutral, negative) of the response. Little research is available that considers whether a nonresident's race/ethnicity and gender impact their perceptions and interpretations of neighborhood disorder. To address this limitation, I ask the following three questions. First, are negative-themed perceptions more prevalent among Hispanic or Caucasian respondents, and do these perceptions (positive, neutral, or negative) vary between males and females regardless of race/ethnicity? Second, Are Hispanic respondents more likely than Caucasian nonresidents to mention race/ethnicity, particularly their own race/ethnicity, in negative-themed responses regarding neighborhood perceptions – is there any variation based on gender between the race/ethnicity of the nonresidents? Third, do Hispanic or Caucasian nonresidents provide a higher rate of negative adjectives in their perceptions of neighborhood disorder, and are there differences based on gender between the race/ethnicity of the nonresidents? Throughout the manuscript the word *theme* or *themes* may be used to represent the negative adjective coding and respective affect category.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for each research question are as follows:

Research Question #1

- a. Among nonresidents, negative-themed perceptions will be more prevalent among Caucasians than Hispanics.
- b. Females will provide more positive- and neutral-affect perceptions than males.

Research Question #2

- a. Hispanic nonresidents will be more likely than Caucasian nonresidents to use race-identifying words – particularly words that reference their own race/ethnicity – in negative-affect interpretations and perceptions of neighborhood disorder.
- b. Hispanic and Caucasian females will mention fewer race-identifying words than Hispanic and Caucasian males.

Research Question #3

- a. Caucasian nonresidents will use negative adjectives in describing their perceptions of neighborhood disorder more than Hispanic nonresidents.
- b. Caucasian females will use more negative adjectives in their responses than Caucasian males, and Hispanic males and females.

In the following section, a detailed explanation of the research design and methods is provided. This is followed by a discussion of the project’s findings, limitations, and recommendations for future inquiries.

METHODS

Data

Data for this study are from a larger project on nonresident perceptions of disorder conducted by Dr. Danielle Wallace (Wallace & Louton, 2018). The dataset originated from the Perceptions of Neighborhood Disorder and Interpersonal Conflict Project. The original sample consisted of 1,056 students from a large southwestern university, and it included students who attended classes in-person and through an online platform. The students responded to three photographic stimuli. The sample included males and females from ages 18 to 60 and older. Races and ethnicities that were included in the sample were Caucasian, Black, Hispanic, and other. Other demographic variables included the respondent's marital status and whether the respondent had dependents (i.e., children).

For the current study, I elected to focus on responses to one photographic stimulus (Photo 1). From Wallace and Louton's (2018) study, 941 individuals responded to the question for Photo 1 (p. 27-28). Because my study focuses on Hispanic and Caucasian respondents, the sample was reduced to only include Hispanic and Caucasian males and females.

Roughly 90% of respondents were born between the years of 1985 and 1992. All respondents that were born outside this range were excluded from the sample for generalizability purposes and with generational spending patterns in mind. By removing the 10% of respondents who are considered outliers in my study, I can generalize the results, specifically to individuals between the ages of 26 through 33. These individuals fall under the umbrella of "millennials," born between 1981 and 1996. Millennials rank second in spending in numerous categories – primarily in the apparel and personal care categories – compared to "Gen X'ers," born between 1965 and 1980 (BLS, 2020).

Because Wallace and Louton’s (2018) study stated that nonresident perceptions can impact local economy, consideration regarding a high-spending population was utilized for the current sample’s age range. Respondents who fell within the highest spending generation (i.e., Gen X’ers) represented 7.97% of the original sample (77 respondents). This sample would not be sufficient for the purposes of the current study. Therefore, there are two reasons for this age range: 1) the original sample had about 90% of respondents that were born between 1985 and 1992, and 2) this year of birth range reflects the second highest generational spenders, namely millennials.

As shown in Table 1, the new sample resulted in 638 participants, which includes 312 males (48.90%) and 326 females (51.10%). Regarding the race and ethnicity of respondents, 63.48% were Caucasian, and 36.52% were Hispanic. Cases with missing data on relevant variables were also excluded.

Table 1. Sample Summary Statistics

	Percent (%)
Male	48.90
Female	51.10
Caucasian	63.48
Hispanic	36.52
Age 26	8.15
Age 27	16.61
Age 28	24.45
Age 29	20.85
Age 30	13.48
Age 31	4.23
Age 32	6.43
Age 33	5.80

n=638.

According to the original study, participants were provided photographs of neighborhoods, and their perceptions of neighborhood disorder was assessed through their interpretative responses to both online and in-person – paper and pencil – surveys. Respondents were asked to provide their immediate reaction by completing the following

statement, “Based on this photo, I get the sense that this neighborhood is ...” This response format enables an open-ended, descriptive interpretation of the neighborhood photos from respondents in their own words. Each photo was taken using a digital camera with a range from 8 to 12 megapixels. All participants viewed the photographs in color to avoid the “grittiness” that black and white photographs tend to express (Wallace & Louton, 2018, p. 29-30).



FIG. 1. Photograph of Various Forms of Graffiti, Murals, and Street Art (Wallace & Louton, 2018).

For this study, only interpretative responses from Photo 1 (shown above) were included in the project. Of the three photographs, Photo 1 was selected because it was used as a portrayal of a “physical disorder cue.” Photo 1 is considered the physical

disorder image, and interpretations could vary based on the individual. Three elements in the photo could be seen as disorderly: the two tags on the back of the vans and the street art or graffiti to the left side of the metal gate door. Participants may perceive the graffiti to be expressionistic art, a mural related to community values, among other neutral or positive interpretations. Because of the variety of possible interpretations as well as the focus of this study, Photo 1 appeared to best meet the most requirements of the study.

Analysis

I elected to use qualitative coding because the responses to the photographic stimulus are qualitative. Qualitative coding allows for large amounts of information to be coded to identify patterns or themes from the data, allowing for both inductive and deductive conclusions to be drawn. This method also increases the validity and auditability of the data's findings (St. John & Johnson, 2000). To execute qualitative coding, a plan for the variable and response categorization was established: (1) race-identifying words, (2) negative adjectives, and (3) themes (i.e., response affect categories).

First, each response was carefully examined for race-identifying words (i.e., Hispanic, Latino, Mexican, Spanish, Caucasian, Black, and Minority). Human error can occur in participant responses. These errors appear, most commonly, as grammatical errors (i.e., spelling and capitalization). The process of transcribing data from paper and pencil surveys also provides opportunity for human error. These errors may impact the frequency of specific phrases or terms being identified if they are not considered during the data organization and coding phase. Therefore, each response was carefully examined

for variations in spelling, capitalization, and slang. This thoroughness allows for most, if not all, errors to be identified and accounted for prior to analyzing the data.

For example, when looking for race-identifying words, six variations were found for the word “Hispanic,” four variations were found for the word “Mexican,” four variations were found for the word “Latino,” five variations were found for the word “minorities,” and four additional slang terms were found in participant responses. Without this extensive review of the responses, the reliability and validity of the findings would be in question because observations would have been missed or unknowingly excluded from the finalized variable. After the initial review, all responses were examined up to two more times to ensure no race-identifying words were excluded or missed.

Next, all responses were examined with an explicit focus on identifying all words that were used as negative adjectives, regardless of the context of the response. All possible negative adjectives were listed during the initial examination of responses. A second and third review was executed to ensure that all negative adjectives were included that may have been missed during previous reviews of the responses. The final list of negative adjectives (shown in Tables 2 and 3) was, then, organized into two categories: (1) universal negative adjectives (i.e., bad, dirty, unkempt, etc.) and (2) negative adjectives that are frequently used when identifying or associating social disorder (i.e., gang-related, vandalized, crime, violence, etc.). By adding an additional layer of organization to the negative adjectives, the analysis is more thorough and complete. The frequency of specific types of adjectives within participant responses provides further

details about individual responses that reflect use of social disorder variables versus universal negative adjectives.

It is important to keep this difference of adjectives in mind because these perceptions, in combination with racial-identifying words, may provide further insight into implicit bias when asking individuals about neighborhood disorder. In other words, when race is included in the response, how many universal negative adjectives versus social disorder adjectives are present in the responses of the individuals? Further analyses may provide further support for disorder perceptions being associated with implicit bias versus explicit bias.

Table 2. Universal Negative Variable Statistics

	Percent (%)
not safe	18.61
ghetto	10.67
bad	10.42
low income	9.43
poor	8.93
infest	5.71
dangerous	5.21
unkept	4.71
dirty	2.73
rundown	2.48
negative descriptors	2.23
not care	1.99
scary	1.74
sketchy	1.74
rough	1.74
broken	1.49
curse words	1.49
trouble	1.24
old	1.24
low education	1.24
abandoned	0.99
no respect	0.74
intimidating	0.74
lack	0.74
suffer	0.74
uneasy	0.74
slum	0.25
n=403.	99.98

(Note: due to rounding, sum is less than 100)

Table 3. Social Disorder Variable Statistics

	Percent (%)
crime	35.61
problem	21.21
gang related	17.42
issue	7.58
vandalism	7.58
violence	7.58
ignored	3.03
n=132. (Note: due to rounding, sum is greater than 100)	100.01

Respondents were informed that the study was focused on understanding interpersonal reactions to disrespect and how people perceive their neighborhoods. The term “disorder” was not used in describing the purpose of the study. Therefore, the interpretations and responses were not influenced by the original researchers. Wallace and Louton (2018) purposefully did not mention terms such as disorder, fear, or other phrases to ensure that researchers were not leading the participants to respond in a particular way.

The final step of data organization required assigning each response to an “affect” category (i.e., positive, neutral, or negative). This step required extra care due to the context. Like perception, context can be subjective based on the individual. Therefore, I utilized a tally-check system to assist with the assignment of whether a response was positive, neutral, or negative. The tally-check system refers to tallying the frequency of adjectives (i.e., positive, neutral, and negative) in each response. If responses contained mostly negative adjectives, then the affect would be categorized as “negative.” If a response contained a mixture of both negative and positive adjectives (i.e., “artistic,” “lively, a community”), then the response would be categorized based on the prevalence of positive and negative adjectives in congruence with the context of the overall statement. Other responses were more complex – neither being directly negative nor

positive. For these responses, context was considered carefully with the tally-check system to ensure that all responses that were more “neutral” were categorized correctly. Reviewing the data in this way helps to prevent researcher bias from interfering with the response affect identification and categorization. Indeed, what may appear to be positive or negative to one individual may appear neutral to another. By following this pattern and considering the context of each response, I believe that all responses have been assigned to the correct theme group.

Next, each response was read individually and assigned to an initial theme. Based on my initial perception of the individual’s response, I labeled it as either “0” to indicate a positive response affect, “1” to indicate a neutral response affect, or “2” to indicate a negative response affect. After this labeling, each response was grouped by response affect category (i.e., positive, neutral, or negative) number with the respondent’s identification number. That is, all the positive-themed responses were in one group (labeled “0”), all the neutral-themed responses were in one group (labeled “1”), and all the negative-themed responses were in another group (labeled “2”).

Next, a thorough examination of each group was completed. However, during this process, negative, positive, and neutral adjectives were tallied. Looking at the final count of adjectives for each response either affirmed or rejected the original labeling of the response’s affect. Following the tally-check system, all responses were organized to be in the correct theme group, completing this rigorous review.

Table 4. Theme Variable Statistics

	Percent
Positive	0.94%
Neutral	10.19%
Negative	88.87%
n=638.	

With this platform of organization for the qualitative data, frequency distribution evaluation becomes more feasible to analyze. The thoroughness of the variable identification and organization provides further reliability and validity to the findings of this study. The results are discussed below.

RESULTS

When attempting to examine perceptions of neighborhood disorder, frequency distribution tables allow researchers to view large quantities of data conveniently (Manikandan, 2011). All research questions for this study revolve around frequency of specific variables: response affect (i.e., theme), race-identifying words, and negative adjectives. For this reason, all results are interpreted and analyzed based on the frequency distribution in the sample. This section is organized into three sections. Within each section the corresponding research questions and hypotheses are discussed.

Section I

Perception is a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something, but more importantly, it is how individuals assign meaning and context from senses and experiences. While this study focuses on perceptions of nonresidents, the first research question considers two variables that have not been examined thoroughly in previous literature. Are negative-themed perceptions more prevalent among Hispanic or Caucasian

respondents, and do these perceptions (positive, neutral, or negative) vary between males and females regardless of race/ethnicity?

Given the discussion in the literature review about how cultural differences may influence individual perceptions, the findings of this study are somewhat unexpected. By analyzing the frequency of observations for each theme by race/ethnicity and gender, there is a nearly equal distribution between Hispanics and Caucasians and males and females in all categories of themes (positive, neutral, and negative). Below, I discuss the findings organized by theme.

Positive

In total, six respondents provided a positive-themed perception of the photographic stimulus. Positive-themed responses account for less than one percent (~0.94%) of the total sample (n=638). One Hispanic male and two Hispanic females interpreted the photographic stimulus as positive. Two Caucasian males and one Caucasian female interpreted the photographic stimulus as positive. For positive-themed responses, the perceptions and interpretations of the photographic stimulus among nonresidents is not influenced by race, ethnicity, or gender. Below are a few examples of positive-themed responses from the respondents.

“6 Artistic”

“28 rich with culture and doesn’t adhere to social norms. secure with camera and front of building is probably well kept. this is probably an ally way where it was easy to express art”

“789 Religious, creative, collective, safe,”

“974 a little worn down. Lively, a community.”

Neutral

In total, 65 respondents provided a neutral-themed perception of the photographic stimulus. Neutral-themed responses account for about ten percent (~10.19%) of the total sample (n=638). Fourteen Hispanic males and 17 Hispanic females interpreted the photographic stimulus as neutral. Nineteen Caucasian males and 15 Caucasian females interpreted the photographic stimulus as neutral. For neutral-themed responses, again, it appears that the perceptions and interpretations of the photographic stimulus among nonresidents is not influenced by race, ethnicity, or gender.

Among the neutral-themed responses, many include one-to-two-word answers referencing race, ethnicity, or religion. These responses were categorized as neutral because the context of each is neither negative nor positive. Below are a few examples of these types of responses.

“52 hispanic”

“331 Mexican.”

“259 Religious (Catholic)”

“269 a mostly Hispanic neighborhood”

“899 Predominantly hispanic catholics”

Other neutral-themed responses included a mix of positive, neutral, and negative adjectives. For these responses, positive and negative adjectives were tallied. If both were equal, the response was assigned as “neutral.” Below are a few examples of these types of responses.

“324 Predominately Hispanic, relatively quiet & safe, with a small population of bored, troublesome, delinquent youth but nothing too serious.”

“268 I get a sense that the neighborhood is run down, but based on the specific graffiti, the people are not all bad, and are somewhat religious.”

“948 may be a poorer neighborhood; however, that doesn't necessarily mean it's bad. Seems religious.”

Negative

In total, 567 respondents provided a negative-themed perception of the photographic stimulus. This theme accounts for about 89% (~88.87%) of the total sample (n=638). Eighty-four Hispanic males and 115 Hispanic females interpreted the photographic stimulus as negative. One hundred ninety-two Caucasian males and 176 Caucasian females interpreted the photographic stimulus as negative. With 276 males and 291 females providing a negative-themed interpretation, there appears to be no influence of gender on the theme interpretation of the photographic stimulus. Next, I discuss the findings of the response themes based on the respondents' race. Examples of negative-themed responses are displayed below.

“238 In a poor area where kids have [a lot] of free time. Probably a minority black neighborhood with low education rates.”

“644 Extremely unsafe. Graffiti and security camera are proof.”

“917 unsafe, and if I found myself in it I would turn around and not stop at stop signs.”

“954 This neighborhood is sketch. I would [definitely] avoid walking down it at night and would never want to live here.”

“1037 majorly Hispanic, has high gang activity, and is more likely to be suspect to drug and alcohol abuse.”

“1050 ..infested with gangs and may not be safe during the day/night because of the security camera.”

From the sample, 368 negative-themed perceptions were from Caucasian respondents. These observations account for roughly 91% (~90.86%) of the entire Caucasian population. Among the 199 Hispanic respondents, about 85% (~85.41%), provide negative-themed perceptions. Based on the frequency distribution of the data, it appears that race/ethnicity does not influence negative-themed perceptions or interpretations of the photographic stimulus between Caucasians and Hispanics.

Table 5. Response Affect (i.e., Theme) Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages

	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)	Total (%)
Caucasian (n=405)				
Male	2 (0.49)	19 (4.69)	192 (47.41)	213 (52.59)
Female	1 (0.25)	15 (3.70)	176 (43.46)	192 (47.41)
Total (Caucasian pop. %)	3 (0.74)	34 (8.40)	368 (90.86)	405 (100)
Hispanic (n=233)				
Male	1 (0.43)	14 (6.01)	84 (36.05)	99 (42.49)
Female	2 (0.86)	17 (7.30)	115 (49.36)	134 (57.51)
Total (Hispanic pop. %)	3 (1.29)	31 (13.31)	199 (85.41)	233 (100)
Total Sample (n=638)				
Males (n=312)	3 (0.96)	33 (10.58)	276 (88.46)	312 (48.90)
Females (n=326)	3 (0.92)	32 (9.82)	291 (89.26)	326 (51.10)
Total (Sample pop. %)	6 (0.94)	65 (10.19)	567 (88.87)	638 (100)

Therefore, the answer to the first research question, “Are negative-themed perceptions more prevalent with Hispanic or Caucasian nonresidents and do these positive-, neutral-, and negative-themed perceptions vary based on gender regardless of race/ethnicity” is quite straightforward. Hispanic and Caucasian nonresidents have nearly equal rates of providing positive-, neutral-, and negative-themed responses in accordance with the prevalence of responses to the sample population. Furthermore, in all three

themes, gender and race/ethnicity does not appear to influence nonresidents' interpretations and perceptions of the photographic stimulus toward any specific theme. Thus, hypothesis 1a and 1b are rejected. Neither Caucasian nor Hispanic nonresidents provided a higher rate of negative-themed perceptions of neighborhood disorder, indicating that race/ethnicity does not influence individual perceptions and interpretations. The distribution of positive-themed and neutral-themed responses was either equal or nearly equal (differing by less than one percent) between males and females. Further research with a larger sample is recommended for testing the second hypothesis of RQ1.

Section II

Following the focus on respondent themes, I sought to investigate the details of said themes, specifically the frequency of using race-identifying words. Are Hispanic respondents more likely than Caucasian nonresidents to mention race/ethnicity, particularly their own race/ethnicity, in negative-themed responses regarding neighborhood perceptions – is there any variation based on gender between the race/ethnicity of the nonresidents? Like research question #1, frequency distribution tables were utilized for the analysis of the data.

Among the 638 respondents, 405 are Caucasian and 233 are Hispanic. From the responses, racial identifying words were split into five groups: “0” No race-identifying words used in the response, “1” Hispanic race-identifying words used, “2” Minority (term “minority” or “minorities”) race-identifying words used, “3” Black race-identifying words used, and “4” Caucasian race-identifying words used. To view this large amount of data, the sample was organized first by race/ethnicity, then by gender. Next, the

frequency of each race-identifying word group was displayed according to the frequency within each theme of the response. Below the frequency distribution results. For the ease of explanation, the results are organized by response affect (i.e., theme).

Positive Affect (Theme)

Between all three response affect categories, “positive affect” had the lowest frequency of using race-identifying words. The findings for this theme are organized by race/ethnicity and gender below.

Caucasians. When looking at the division of observations, Caucasian respondents did not use any race-identifying words in the positive-themed responses to the photographic stimulus. This theme displays three observations under the “0. No Race-IDs” group – two from males (~0.49%) and one from a female (~0.25%). These three observations account for less than one percent (~0.74%) of the entire Caucasian population.

Hispanics. Like the Caucasian respondents, Hispanic respondents did not use any race-identifying words in the positive-themed responses to the photographic stimulus. Three observations – one male (~0.43%) and two females (~0.86%) – are present under the “0. No Race-IDs” group. These observations account for less than two percent (~1.29%) of the entire Hispanic population.

Gender. When looking at the entire sample, organized only by gender, equal observations are present for males and females – three each. The variation based on population size differs by less than five hundredths (~0.04%) of one percentage point. As previously stated, these six observations show that less than one percent (~0.94%) of the entire sample population provided a positive-affect response. Interestingly, no

respondents associated race or ethnicity in this response theme category. Therefore, there are no gender differences regarding the frequency of using race-identifying words in positive-affect responses. See Table 6a for frequency distribution of race-identifying words in the positive-affect category of responses.

Table 6a. Positive-Affect (i.e., Theme) Response - Race-ID Words Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages

	0. No Race-IDs (%)	1. Hispanic Race-IDs (%)	2. Minority Race-IDs (%)	3. Black Race-IDs (%)	4. Caucasian Race-IDs (%)	Total (%)
Caucasian (n=405)						
Male	2 (0.49)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	2 (0.49)
Female	1 (0.25)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	1 (0.25)
Total (Caucasian pop. %)	3 (0.74)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	3 (0.74)
Hispanic (n=233)						
Male	1 (0.43)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	1 (0.43)
Female	2 (0.86)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	2 (0.86)
Total (Hispanic pop. %)	3 (1.29)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	3 (1.29)
Total Sample (n=638)						
Males (n=312)	3 (0.96)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	3 (0.96)
Females (n=326)	3 (0.92)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	3 (0.92)
Total (Sample pop. %)	6 (0.94)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	6 (0.94)

Neutral Affect (Theme)

Neutral affect responses with racial identifying words accounted for five percent (~5.49%) of the entire sample. The findings for this theme are organized by race/ethnicity and gender below.

Caucasians. Among the Caucasian sample that used race-identifying words in their responses, 34 provided neutral-affect responses. Twenty of these observations did not mention any race-identifying words. The remaining 14 observations mention Hispanic race-identifying words. Caucasian males mention these words in ten of the 14 observations, accounting for less than three percent (~2.47%) of the entire Caucasian sample. The remaining four observations are from Caucasian female respondents, accounting for less than one percent (~0.99%) of the entire Caucasian sample.

Hispanics. The Hispanic population provided 31 responses that fell into the neutral-affect category. Of these responses, 20 mentioned Hispanic race-identifying

words and one mentioned minority race-identifying words. Eight observations of using Hispanic race-identifying words are from Hispanic male respondents, accounting for about 3.43% of the entire Hispanic population. Hispanic females provide the remaining 12 observations, accounting for 5.15% of the entire Hispanic population.

Gender. Like the positive-affect category, minimal differences are present between males and females in the neutral-affect category. In total, 65 observations fall under this theme. However, of the 65 responses, 30 did not use any race-identifying words, 34 used Hispanic race-identifying words, and one used minority-identifying words. Only one female mentioned minorities in her response, accounting for less than one percent (~0.31%) of the entire female population. Eighteen males and 16 females mention Hispanic race-identifying words in their responses. The difference between genders is less than one percent (~0.86%). Regarding the frequency of using race-identifying words in neutral-affect responses, there is no difference between genders. See Table 6b for frequency distribution of race-identifying words in the neutral-affect category of responses.

Table 6b. Neutral-Affect (i.e., Theme) Response - Race-ID Words Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages

	0. No Race-IDs (%)	1. Hispanic Race-IDs (%)	2. Minority Race-IDs (%)	3. Black Race-IDs (%)	4. Caucasian Race-IDs (%)	Total (%)
Caucasian (n=405)						
Male	9 (2.22)	10 (2.47)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	19 (4.69)
Female	11 (2.72)	4 (0.99)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	15 (3.70)
Total (Caucasian pop. %)	20 (4.94)	14 (3.46)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	34 (8.40)
Hispanic (n=233)						
Male	6 (2.58)	8 (3.43)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	14 (6.01)
Female	4 (1.72)	12 (5.15)	1 (0.43)	-- (--)	-- (--)	17 (7.30)
Total (Hispanic pop. %)	10 (4.30)	20 (8.58)	1 (0.43)	-- (--)	-- (--)	31 (13.31)
Total Sample (n=638)						
Males (n=312)	15 (4.81)	18 (5.77)	-- (--)	-- (--)	-- (--)	33 (10.58)
Females (n=326)	15 (4.60)	16 (4.91)	1 (0.31)	-- (--)	-- (--)	32 (9.82)
Total (Sample pop. %)	30 (4.70)	34 (5.33)	1 (0.16)	-- (--)	-- (--)	65 (10.19)

Negative Affect (Theme)

Negative affect responses with race-identifying words accounted for 22% (~22.26%) of the entire sample. Negative-themed responses contain the highest prevalence of using race-identifying words of the three theme groups. The findings for this theme are organized by race/ethnicity and gender below.

Caucasians. Of the 405 Caucasian respondents, 60 provided negative affect responses that included race-identifying words. Fifty responses mentioned Hispanic race-identifying words out of the 60 observations, accounting for roughly 83.33% of all Caucasian responses that mention race-identifying words and 12% (~12.35%) of the entire Caucasian sample population. The distribution difference between Caucasian male and female responses is small, with 28 observations coming from males and 22 observations coming from females. Caucasian males who mention Hispanic race-identifying words in their responses account for 7% (~6.91%) of the Caucasian sample, and Caucasian females account for about 5% (~5.43%). There is only one observation of Caucasian race-identifying words being used. This one observation is from a male and represents less than one percent (~0.25%) of the Caucasian sample.

Hispanics. Like the Caucasian respondents, Hispanic respondents provided more negative-themed responses with race-identifying words than any other theme group. Hispanic respondents provided 82 responses that mentioned race-identifying words. These 82 responses account for 35.19% of the entire Hispanic population. Of the 82 responses, 77 mention Hispanic race-identifying words – 27 male responses and 50 female responses. The Hispanic race-identifying word group accounts for 33% (~33.05%) of all responses from the Hispanic sample, with males contributing 11.59% and females contributing 21.46%. Hispanic males and females had a difference of about

ten-percentage points (~9.87%) regarding using race-identifying words – specifically words referring to their own race/ethnicity – in the responses. Therefore, Hispanic females use race-identifying words more, but the difference is not substantial.

Gender. In the negative-affect category, minor differences are present between genders. Males provided 63 responses that mention race-identifying words – about 20% (~20.19%) of the entire male sample. Females provided 79 responses equally about 24% (~24.23%) of the entire female sample. Both genders provided the highest number of observations under the “Hispanic race-identifying words” group with 55 from males (17.63% of male sample) and 72 from females (22.09% of female sample). The difference between these two genders is less than five-percentage points (~4.04%). These findings indicate that there are no gender differences between males and females regarding the frequency of using race-identifying words in negative-affect responses. See Table 6c for frequency distribution of race-identifying words in the negative-affect category of responses.

Table 6c. Negative-Affect (i.e., Theme) Response - Race-ID Words Frequency Distribution & Population Percentages

	0. No Race-IDs (%)	1. Hispanic Race-IDs (%)	2. Minority Race-IDs (%)	3. Black Race-IDs (%)	4. Caucasian Race-IDs (%)	Total (%)
Caucasian (n=405)						
Male	159 (39.26)	28 (6.91)	3 (0.74)	1 (0.25)	1 (0.25)	192 (47.41)
Female	149 (36.79)	22 (5.43)	4 (0.99)	1 (0.25)	-- (--)	176 (43.46)
Total (Caucasian pop. %)	308 (76.05)	50 (12.35)	7 (1.73)	2 (0.49)	1 (0.25)	368 (90.87)
Hispanic (n=233)						
Male	54 (23.18)	27 (11.59)	3 (1.29)	-- (--)	-- (--)	84 (36.05)
Female	63 (27.04)	50 (21.46)	2 (0.86)	-- (--)	-- (--)	115 (49.36)
Total (Hispanic pop. %)	117 (50.21)	77 (33.05)	5 (2.15)	-- (--)	-- (--)	199 (85.41)
Total Sample (n=638)						
Males (n=312)	213 (68.27)	55 (17.63)	6 (1.92)	1 (0.32)	1 (0.32)	276 (88.46)
Females (n=326)	212 (65.03)	72 (22.09)	6 (1.84)	1 (0.31)	-- (--)	291 (89.26)
Total (Sample pop. %)	425 (66.62)	127 (19.91)	12 (1.88)	2 (0.31)	1 (0.16)	567 (88.87)

Overview

According to the data, Caucasian respondents did not use race-identifying words in 331 of the responses. The results indicate, that of the 405 Caucasian respondents, about 82% (~81.73%) did not associate race/ethnicity with their perception and interpretation of the photographic stimulus. Hispanic respondents did not use race-identifying words in 130 of the responses, indicating that of the 233 Hispanic respondents, 55.79% did not associate race/ethnicity with their perception and interpretation of the photographic stimulus. Furthermore, between males and females in the Caucasian sample, race-identifying words from groups 1-4 were mentioned nearly identically for each theme, accounting for less than a two percent variance in each group. Hispanic respondents had a greater percentage point difference between genders, though not extreme. The greatest difference in frequencies between Hispanic males and females was evident in the negative-affect category in the prevalence of using Hispanic race-identifying words – ten-percentage points. Hispanic males accounted for 11.59% of the Hispanic population in this group. Hispanic females accounted for 21.46% of the Hispanic population in this group. Though there is a ten-percentage point difference, this is not substantial. To determine whether these results are valid and reliable, it is recommended to repeat the test with a larger sample.

For RQ2, the findings from this data indicate that Hispanic nonresidents use race-identifying words – specifically, words referring to their own race/ethnicity – more than Caucasian nonresidents in their interpretations and perceptions of the photographic stimulus. Therefore, hypothesis 2a, “Hispanic nonresidents will have a higher frequency of using race-identifying words than Caucasians, specifically their own race/ethnicity, in negative-themed responses” is supported with this data. Caucasian respondents referred

to their own race/ethnicity in one response in negative-themed category, accounting for less than one percent (~0.25%) of Caucasian sample. Whereas Hispanic respondents referred to their own race/ethnicity in 77 responses – about 33% of the Hispanic sample – in the negative-themed category.

The findings also displayed minor differences (less than 2% and 10%) between genders for Caucasians and Hispanics. Hispanic females mention race-identifying words 65 times in their responses. These observations account for 28% (~27.90%) of the Hispanic sample. Hispanic males mention race-identifying words 38 times in their responses, accounting for 16% (~16.31%) of the Hispanic sample. Caucasian females mention race-identifying words 31 times in their responses, accounting for about eight percent (~7.65%) of the Caucasian sample. Caucasian males mention race-identifying words 43 times in their responses, accounting for about 11% (~10.62%) of the Caucasian sample. Therefore, hypothesis 2b, “Hispanic and Caucasian females will mention fewer race-identifying words than Hispanic and Caucasian males,” is partially supported. Hispanic females mention race-identifying words more than Hispanic and Caucasian males. Whereas Caucasian females mention race-identifying words less than Hispanic males and females and Caucasian males. When only considering gender and not race/ethnicity, 25.96% of the male sample use race-identifying words (groups 1-4), and 29.45% of the female sample use race-identifying words (groups 1-4). Males and females use race-identifying words at a similar rate with a less than four-percentage point difference (~3.49%). To confirm these findings, it is recommended that future attempts focus on repeating this research with the same process, but with a larger sample.

Section III

From the data thus far, I have identified that gender and race/ethnicity do not influence nonresident interpretations and perceptions of negative-themed neighborhood disorder. Additionally, most respondents provide a negative-themed interpretation and perception, accounting for roughly 89% of the entire sample (n = 638). Further examination of the responses also showed that Hispanic respondents have a higher rate of using race-identifying words, specifically words referencing their own race/ethnicity, in negative-themed responses. Gender differences are partially mixed regarding frequency of mentioning race-identifying words, as previously explained.

This section will focus on examining the respondents' responses further, specifically the frequency of negative adjective use. For this section, the results are divided into two parts: universal negative adjectives, and social disorder adjectives. It is essential to separate the adjectives in such a way as to discern how many respondents are identifying social disorder versus a simple negative perception of the photographic stimulus. Wallace and Louton (2018) highlighted how perceptions can impact a neighborhood's local economy and stigma (p. 23). Therefore, it is beneficial to explore how often nonresidents associate the photographic stimulus with social disorder versus universal negative adjectives. Indeed, a neighborhood may appear "dirty," "worn down," or "unkempt," but that does not necessarily mean that individuals would inherently avoid the area. On the other hand, individuals may be less likely to venture into areas that are viewed as socially disorganized, vandalized, full of crime, and ignored by local law enforcement. Here, I investigate if there are differences in Hispanic and Caucasian nonresidents' use of negative adjectives in their responses. Nonresident gender is also considered in congruence with their race/ethnicity.

Universal Negative Adjectives. Within the dataset, 27 universal negative adjectives were identified. This list includes but is not limited to negative descriptive words such as rundown, scary, poor, dangerous, unkempt, abandoned, old, bad, dirty, and curse words. In this section, the results are organized by race.

Caucasians. Among the sample of 405 Caucasians, 271 observations were recorded with the use of universal negative adjectives, accounting for roughly 67% (~66.91%) of all universal negative adjectives. Of these observations, none fell into the positive-themed category of responses, two observations were categorized as neutral, and the remaining 269 observations were categorized as negative. The most prevalent negative adjectives that were used are “not safe” (52 observations) “bad” (31 observations), “ghetto” (27 observations), “poor” (26 observations), “low income” (23 observations), “dangerous” (14 observations), “unkempt” (12 observations) and “infest” (12 observations). These eight adjectives make up 73% (~72.69%) of all observations with universal negative adjectives. The remaining examples of universal negative adjectives were used fewer than ten times and make up the remaining observations among the Caucasian sample. Furthermore, regarding gender, both females and males used “not safe” more than any other negative adjective in their responses – 18 observations (~13%) for males and 34 observations (~25%) for females. See Tables 7a for Caucasian frequency distribution statistics.

Table 7a. Universal Negative Adjective Frequency Distribution for Caucasian Nonresidents

Caucasian (n=405)								
Univ. Negative Adjective	Response Theme & Frequency Distribution By Gender						Total (% per gender)	
	Positive		Neutral		Negative		Male	Female
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
not safe	--	--	1	--	17	34	18 (13.43)	34 (24.82)
ghetto	--	--	--	--	16	11	16 (11.94)	11 (8.03)
bad	--	--	--	--	15	16	15 (11.19)	16 (11.68)
poor	--	--	--	1	13	12	13 (9.70)	13 (9.49)
low income	--	--	--	--	13	10	13 (9.70)	10 (7.30)
infest	--	--	--	--	9	3	9 (6.72)	3 (2.19)
dangerous	--	--	--	--	7	7	7 (5.22)	7 (5.11)
rundown	--	--	--	--	7	2	7 (5.22)	2 (1.46)
unkempt	--	--	--	--	5	7	5 (3.73)	7 (5.11)
sketchy	--	--	--	--	4	2	4 (2.99)	2 (1.46)
dirty	--	--	--	--	4	4	4 (2.99)	4 (2.92)
old	--	--	--	--	3	--	3 (2.24)	--
not care	--	--	--	--	3	2	3 (2.24)	2 (1.46)
rough	--	--	--	--	3	3	3 (2.24)	3 (2.19)
curse words	--	--	--	--	3	--	3 (2.24)	--
negative descriptors	--	--	--	--	3	5	3 (2.24)	5 (3.65)
trouble	--	--	--	--	2	1	2(1.49)	1 (0.73)
abandoned	--	--	--	--	1	1	1 (0.75)	1 (0.73)
slum	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (0.75)	--
intimidating	--	--	--	--	1	1	1 (0.75)	1 (0.73)
broken	--	--	--	--	1	1	1 (0.75)	1 (0.73)
lack	--	--	--	--	1	2	1 (0.75)	2 (1.46)
suffer	--	--	--	--	1	1	1 (0.75)	1 (0.73)
scary	--	--	--	--	--	4	--	4 (2.92)
no respect	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2 (1.46)
low education	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2 (1.46)
uneasy	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	3 (2.19)
Caucasian Sample Total	--	--	1	1	133	136	134 (100.02)	137 (100.01)

Note: due to rounding, sums are over 100%

Hispanics. There are 233 Hispanics in the sample for this study. Of the 233 Hispanics, 132 used universal negative adjectives in their responses, accounting for 57% (~56.65%) of all universal negative adjectives. Five observations fall into the neutral-theme category, while the remaining 127 observations fall into the negative-theme category. The most prevalent negative adjectives that were used among Hispanics include “not safe” (23 observations), “ghetto” (16 observations), “low income” (15 observations),

“bad” (11 observations), “infest” (11 observations), and “poor” (10 observations). These five adjectives make up 65% (~65.15%) of all universal negative adjective use among the Hispanic nonresidents in the sample. Furthermore, regarding gender, females used “not safe” more than any other negative adjective in their responses – 20 observations (~25%). Whereas for Hispanic males, the most used negative adjective was “bad” – eight observations (~15%). These findings suggest that there may be differences between genders for Hispanics – not regarding the prevalence of themes, but the perception of safety versus disorder. See Table 7b for Hispanic frequency distribution statistics.

Table 7b. Universal Negative Adjective Frequency Distribution for Hispanic Nonresidents

Univ. Negative Adjective	Response Theme & Frequency Distribution By Gender						Total (% per gender)	
	Positive		Neutral		Negative		Male	Female
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
bad	--	--	1	--	7	3	8 (15.38)	3 (3.75)
poor	--	--	--	--	7	3	7 (13.46)	3 (3.75)
infest	--	--	1	1	6	3	7 (13.46)	4 (5.00)
ghetto	--	--	--	--	6	10	6 (11.54)	10 (12.50)
low income	--	--	--	--	5	10	5 (9.62)	10 (12.50)
not safe	--	--	--	1	3	19	3 (5.77)	20 (25.00)
dangerous	--	--	--	--	3	4	3 (5.77)	4 (5.00)
broken	--	--	--	--	2	2	2 (3.85)	2 (2.50)
trouble	--	--	--	--	1	1	1 (1.92)	1 (1.25)
rundown	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (1.92)	--
old	--	--	--	--	1	1	1 (1.92)	1 (1.25)
abandoned	--	--	--	--	1	1	1 (1.92)	1 (1.25)
unkempt	--	--	--	--	1	6	1 (1.92)	6 (7.50)
intimidating	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (1.92)	--
not care	--	--	--	--	1	2	1 (1.92)	2 (2.50)
low education	--	--	--	--	1	2	1 (1.92)	2 (2.50)
suffer	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (1.92)	--
rough	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (1.92)	--
curse words	--	--	--	--	1	2	1 (1.92)	2 (2.50)
scary	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	3 (3.75)
sketchy	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (1.25)
slum	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
no respect	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (1.25)
dirty	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	3 (3.75)
lack	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
uneasy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
negative descriptors	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1 (1.25)
Hispanic Sample Total	--	--	1	2	50	78	52 (99.97)	80 (100.00)

Note: due to rounding, sum under 100%

Social Disorder Adjectives. While reviewing the nonresidents' responses, many negative adjectives were noted. The prevalence of negative adjectives that are commonly associated with social disorder required that these adjectives be organized into a separate group. The reason for doing this allows for more detailed analysis. Indeed, not all respondents may associate a negative interpretation or perception with social disorder or crime-like adjectives. For these reasons, seven social disorder adjectives were identified. These adjectives include words such as problem (often used in conjunction with gangs,

graffiti, crime, and drugs), gang-related, issue (i.e., drug or gang issue), ignored (often used in the context of no law enforcement patrol), vandalism, violence, and crime. Respondents provided many variations when mentioning these seven adjectives; therefore, these seven words represent the grouping of the interpretative variations. As in the previous section, the results are organized by race.

Caucasians. Eighty-nine observations of social disorder variable use were identified from the 405 Caucasian nonresidents. Of these observations, only one fell into the category of positive-themed. The 88 observations that remained were in the negative-theme group and accounted for about 22% (~21.98%) of the Caucasian sample. The highest number of observations were with “crime” (36 observations), “problem” (17 observations), “gang-related” (13 observations), and “violence” (9 observations). These four words account for 84% (~84.27%) of all observations that use social disorder variables to describe the photographic stimulus. All remaining words were used seven or fewer times in the sample. Regarding gender, both Caucasian males and females used “crime” most in their responses – 18 observations each, accounting for 35.29% of the Caucasian male sample and 47.37% of the Caucasian female sample. See Table 8a for social disorder variable distribution statistics.

Table 8a. Caucasian, Gender, and Social Disorder Adjective Variable Summary Statistics

Caucasian					
Male					
Social Disorder Adjective	Response Theme & Social Dis. Adj. Freq.			Total	Percent (Approx. %)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
crime	--	--	18	18	35.29
problem	--	--	14	14	27.45
gang-related	1	--	5	6	11.76
issue	--	--	5	5	9.80
violence	--	--	4	4	7.84
ignored	--	--	2	2	3.92
vandalism	--	--	2	2	3.92
Total	1	--	50	51	99.98

Female					
Social Disorder Adjective	Response Theme & Social Dis. Adj. Freq.			Total	Percent (Approx. %)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
crime	--	--	18	18	47.37
gang-related	--	--	7	7	18.42
violence	--	--	5	5	13.16
problem	--	--	3	3	7.89
vandalism	--	--	3	3	7.89
issue	--	--	2	2	5.26
ignored	--	--	--	--	--
Total	--	--	38	38	99.99

Note: due to rounding, sums are under 100%

Hispanics. The Hispanic sample had 43 total observations that used social disorder variables in the responses. Two of these observations fell into the neutral theme, while the remaining 41 observations fell into the negative theme of responses. The 43 responses account for 18% (~18.45%) of the 233 Hispanic nonresidents. The highest number of observations were with “crime” (11 observations), “problem” (11 observations), and “gang-related” (10 observations). These three words account for 74% (~74.42%) of all observations that include a social disorder variable used to describe the photographic stimulus. All remaining words were used five or fewer times in the sample.

Regarding gender, Hispanic males used “crime” most in their responses – seven observations, accounting for 36.84% of the Hispanic male sample. Hispanic females used “problem” and “gang-related” a total of six times for each in their responses. These observations compose 50% (25% for “problem” and 25% for “gang-related”) of the Hispanic female sample. See Table 8b for social disorder variable distribution statistics.

Table 8b. Hispanic, Gender, and Social Disorder Adjective Variable Summary Statistics

Hispanic					
Male					
Social Disorder Adjective	Response Theme & Social Dis. Adj. Freq.			Total	Percent (Approx. %)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
crime	--	--	7	7	36.84
problem	--	1	4	5	26.32
gang-related	--	1	3	4	21.05
issue	--	--	2	2	10.53
ignored	--	--	1	1	5.26
vandalism	--	--	--	--	--
violence	--	--	--	--	--
Total	--	2	17	19	100

Female					
Social Disorder Adjective	Response Theme & Social Dis. Adj. Freq.			Total	Percent (Approx. %)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
problem	--	--	6	6	25.00
gang-related	--	--	6	6	25.00
vandalism	--	--	5	5	20.83
crime	--	--	4	4	16.67
issue	--	--	1	1	4.17
ignored	--	--	1	1	4.17
violence	--	--	1	1	4.17
Total	--	--	24	24	100.01

Note: due to rounding, sum is over 100%

From the analysis of this data, a few conclusions can be drawn. For one, high percentages of both Caucasians and Hispanics used negative adjectives in their interpretations and perceptions of neighborhood disorder. Specifically, 67% of the Caucasian population and 57% of the Hispanic population used universal negative

adjectives. Twenty-two percent of the Caucasian population and 18% of the Hispanic population used social disorder adjectives. The total for each race/ethnicity is 89% (~88.89%) of Caucasian nonresidents and 75% (~75.10%) of Hispanic nonresidents. These statistics loosely support hypothesis 3a for the third research question, “Caucasian nonresidents will use negative adjectives in describing their perceptions of neighborhood disorder more than Hispanic nonresidents.” However, the difference of 14-percentage points is not substantial. Therefore, before strongly supporting hypothesis 3a, further research with a larger sample is recommended.

Additionally, nonresident gender appears to have no relationship regarding the response affect (i.e., theme), but further consideration is recommended. For Caucasians, females who used universal negative adjectives account for 34% (~33.83%) of the entire Caucasian sample, and males who used universal negative adjectives account for 33% (~33.09%) of the entire Caucasian sample. For social disorder variable use, Caucasian females represent less than 10% (~9.38%) and Caucasian males represent about 13% (~12.59%) of the Caucasian sample. For Hispanics, females who used universal negative adjectives account for 34% (~34.33%) of the entire Hispanic sample, and males who used universal negative adjectives account for 22% (~22.32%) of the entire Hispanic sample. Regarding the Hispanic population of the sample and social disorder variable use, females represent about 10% (~10.30%) and males represent less than 10% (~8.15%). Therefore, for hypothesis 3b, “Caucasian females will use more negative adjectives in their responses than Caucasian males, and Hispanic males and females,” is only supported in one group. Caucasian females only outrank Hispanic males in prevalence of using negative adjectives. Regarding the rankings, Caucasian males use negative

adjectives the most, accounting for 45.68% of the entire Caucasian sample. Whereas Caucasian females' use of negative adjectives account for 43.21% of the entire Caucasian sample. Hispanic females use negative adjectives at the second highest rate, accounting for 44.64% of the entire Hispanic sample. Whereas Hispanic males use negative adjectives the least, accounting for 30.47% of the entire Hispanic sample.

Table 9a. Caucasian, Gender, and All Negative Adjective Variable Summary Statistics

Caucasian (n=405)					
Male					
Negative Adjectives	Response Theme & Frequency			Total	Percent Total (%)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
Universal Negative Adj.	--	1	133	134	33.09
Social Disorder Adj.	1	--	50	51	12.59
Out of Total Caucasian Sample	1	1	183	185	45.68
Female					
Negative Adjectives	Response Theme & Frequency			Total	Percent Total (%)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
Universal Negative Adj.	--	1	136	137	33.83
Social Disorder Adj.	--	--	38	38	9.38
Out of Total Caucasian Sample	--	1	174	175	43.21

Table 9b. Hispanic, Gender, and All Negative Adjective Variable Summary Statistics

Hispanic (n=233)					
Male					
Negative Adjectives	Response Theme & Frequency			Total	Percent Total (%)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
Universal Negative Adj.	--	2	50	52	22.32
Social Disorder Adj.	--	2	17	19	8.15
Out of Total Hispanic Sample	--	4	67	71	30.47
Female					
Negative Adjectives	Response Theme & Frequency			Total	Percent Total (%)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
Universal Negative Adj.	--	3	77	80	34.33
Social Disorder Adj.	--	--	24	24	10.30
Out of Total Hispanic Sample	--	3	101	104	44.64

Additionally, when only considering gender and not race/ethnicity, the greatest frequency difference is between males and females who use universal negative adjectives in their responses. Males account for 59.62% of the entire sample, and female account for 66.56% of the sample – about a seven-percentage point (~ 6.94%) difference. This difference is not large, but it may allude to gender differences in linguistic markers regarding interpretative and perceptive descriptions. According to Newman et al. (2008), women tend to use language to express internal processes (e.g., expressing emotion descriptively), and men tend to use language for instrumental purposes like conveying information (p. 212). However, when looking at the frequency of *all* negative adjectives (i.e., universally negative adjectives, and social disorder adjectives combined), the difference reduces to less than four-percentage points, changing the outcome to no gender differences regarding the prevalence of negative adjective use in perceptual responses. To confirm the reliability of the findings, it is recommended that the research be repeated with a larger sample size. Refer to Table 9c for negative adjective frequency distribution organized by gender.

Table 9c. Negative Adjective Variable Frequency Distribution by Gender

Total Sample (n=638)					
Male (n=312)					
Negative Adjectives	Response Theme & Frequency			Total	Percent Total (%)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
Universal Negative Adj.	--	3	183	186	59.62
Social Disorder Adj.	1	2	67	70	22.44
Total	1	5	250	256	82.06
Female (n=326)					
Negative Adjectives	Response Theme & Frequency			Total	Percent Total (%)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative		
Universal Negative Adj.	--	4	213	217	66.56
Social Disorder Adj.	--	--	62	62	19.02
Total	--	4	275	279	85.58

DISCUSSION

As Wallace and Louton (2018) noted, “nonresidents likely impact neighborhoods in consequential ways, yet their presence in neighborhood research is remarkably lacking” (p. 37). This study attempted to contribute toward filling this gap in the research by using the dataset that originated from Wallace and Louton’s (2018) study and building on and extending their analysis. Below, I briefly discuss the results from this study.

Results indicate that there are few differences in nonresidents’ perceptions and interpretations of photographic depictions of neighborhood disorder. This is evident in the fact that most responses are negative. Roughly 89% of all nonresidents who were surveyed provided a response that includes context and adjectives affirming a negative theme. Ninety-one percent (~90.86%) of the Caucasian sample provided responses with a negative theme, and 85% (~85.41%) of the Hispanic sample provided responses with a negative theme. The difference of 5.45% between Caucasians and Hispanics alludes to the conclusion that race/ethnicity does not influence respondents’ interpretations and perceptions of neighborhood disorder. Like race/ethnicity, the perceptions and interpretations from the nonresidents do not vary based on gender. In fact, both males and females, Caucasians, and Hispanics, perceived and interpreted neighborhood disorder in similar frequencies for each theme. However, race/ethnicity may have some impact on individual perception and interpretation of the neighborhood disorder outside the realm of theme and affect.

Hispanic nonresidents are more likely than Caucasian nonresidents to use/associate race-identifying words – words that refer specifically to their own ethnicity which may be influenced by cultural differences associated with race/ethnicity. Hispanic

respondents mentioned race-identifying words in 130 of their responses, accounting for roughly 56% (~55.79%) of the entire Hispanic sample. Among these observations, 97 responses (~41.63% of the Hispanic sample) mention words that refer specifically to their own ethnicity. Caucasians mention race-identifying words in 74 responses, accounting for 18.27% of the entire Caucasian sample. Caucasian respondents only mentioned their own race one time in the responses, accounting for less than one percent (~0.25%) of the entire Caucasian sample. When considering gender differences, the hypothesis 2b, “Hispanic and Caucasian females will mention fewer race-identifying words than Hispanic and Caucasian males,” was partially supported. Though there is a less than 2% difference between the genders for Caucasians and Hispanics, further analysis revealed that Hispanic females mention race-identifying words 65 times in their responses (~27.90% of the Hispanic sample), and Caucasian females mention race-identifying words 31 times in their responses (~7.65% of the Caucasian sample). Hispanic and Caucasian females are at both ends of the spectrum (highest and lowest prevalence). Hispanic males mention race-identifying words 38 times in their responses (~16.31% of the Hispanic sample), and Caucasian males mention race-identifying words 43 times in their responses (10.62% of the Caucasian sample). Caucasian females used race-identifying words fewer times than Hispanic females, Hispanic males, and Caucasian males. However, Hispanic females displayed the highest frequency of using race-identifying words – making hypothesis 2b partially supported. Further research is needed to determine whether cultural differences and gender roles among races/ethnicities may have any impact on associating race/ethnicity to neighborhood disorder from respondent perceptions and interpretations. Furthermore, the photographic stimulus may contribute

to this difference between Hispanic and Caucasian females. When investigating the wall mural, *The Virgin of Guadalupe*, a few concerning details were identified. For one, the *Virgin of Guadalupe* is one of the most visited Catholic shrines in the world, and this shrine resides in Mexico City. Therefore, respondents may have unconsciously associated the shrine with Hispanic culture due to the religious and geographical context that the image may provoke in individuals who are familiar with it. For these reasons, it would be beneficial to use a photographic stimulus that is either multicultural in nature or absent of any universally recognized symbols or idols. This photographic stimulus may have prompted a higher frequency of associating the Hispanic/Latino community, potentially biasing the results.

Finally, Caucasians use more negative adjectives (in both universal and social disorder categories) than Hispanics. Use of negative adjectives in Caucasian responses accounted for 88.89% of the entire Caucasian sample. Whereas only 75.11% of the Hispanic sample included negative adjectives in their responses. This finding lends support that Caucasians, even as recently as 2018, may be showing higher rates of negative interpretations and perceptions than other races and ethnicities, specifically Hispanics in the case of the present study. It may be beneficial to incorporate "...and why?" to the surveying methods of the photographic stimulus to identify what cues are deliberately perceived as positive, neutral, and negative, with a specific focus on the use of negative adjectives. Furthermore, when considering race/ethnicity and gender, the rankings are as follows (in order of highest to lowest use of negative adjectives): 1) Caucasian males (45.68% of the Caucasian sample), 2) Hispanic females (44.64% of the Hispanic sample), 3) Caucasian females (43.21% of the Caucasian sample), and 4)

Hispanic males (30.47% of the Hispanic sample). When race/ethnicity is not considered, there is a 3.52% difference between the genders for negative adjective use. If looking at the groups of negative adjectives, the greatest difference among genders is between the use of universal negative adjectives – 59.62% for males and 66.56% for females, a nearly 7% (~6.94%) difference. While this difference of seven-percentage points is not substantial, it does prompt considerations about how gender differences, specifically linguistic use, varies between males and females when they interpret and perceive neighborhood disorder. To test the reliability and validity of these findings, a larger sample size should be obtained for further analysis of frequency distributions.

Overall, the results confirm the findings from Wallace and Louton’s (2018) study. Both Caucasians and Hispanics associate racial stereotypes with neighborhood disorder, many times portraying racial animus in their responses despite the absence of individuals in the photographic stimulus. While some responses demonstrate a deliberate racial bias, most responses display implicit bias by including race/ethnicity in their descriptions. Below are some of the responses that show deliberate racial animus in the responses.

“65 overrun by blacks & Mexicans, very poor, poorly educated and hopeless”

“184 A shit hole, reminds me of East Elmhurst, N.Y. Safe until dark then stay out if you're not Hispanic”

“487 Ghetto, has a lot of Mexicans”

“276 Ghetto! Also filled with Mexicans. Mexicans are usually into religion like that and have beat up vans. It also appears to be inner cit, which means minorities. All of the graffiti really depleats the setting; along with the vans.”

“164 Based on this photo, I get a sense that this neighborhood is filled with gang activity & criminals, most of which are hispanic, Not that it really matters, but the graffiti gives me a sense that no one there is neighborhood friendly.”

“144 filled with hispanics whose kids vandalize property”

While this study sought to expand on the work already conducted by Wallace and Louton (2018), it was not without the challenges that come from working with qualitative data that focuses on perception. Both the data and the topic include subjectivity and descriptive content; therefore, analysis of such data and topic can inherently become subjective and impact the validity and reliability of the findings. Keeping this in mind, I attempted to avoid researcher bias and subjectivity by remaining objective, performing multiple reviews/examinations of the data during the organization and coding process, and applying a tally-check accountability system for response affect categorization.

Despite these attempts, the findings of this study are limited. For one, the sample only included Caucasian and Hispanic students, between the ages of 26 and 33 (at the time of data collection). Furthermore, this study only includes 638 participants. For these reasons, the generalizability of the results is limited. Future research should focus on inclusivity of all races with equal distribution in the sample population. It may also be beneficial to include a larger population of varying age, socioeconomic status, and education ranges. The current study’s population included only university students which prompts the consideration of whether levels of education positively or negatively impact the rate of implicit versus explicit racial bias.

Additionally, this study prompted a consideration for future research revolving around response affect. This interest did not originate from the sample but from the

photographic stimulus. Prior to completing this study, I noticed that there were light fixtures above the wall mural, leading me to interpret that the mural of the Virgin of Guadalupe was either commissioned art or purposefully placed on the wall with no malicious intent or vandalism. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate the interpretations and perceptions of the photographic stimulus with the image in a nightscape lighting setting. Would the themes of the responses shift from negative to primarily positive? Curiously, of the 638 nonresidents that were surveyed, only one respondent mentioned the fixtures in their response.

Indeed, research within the criminal justice field has sought to be inclusive and avoid negating any group of individuals. However, nonresidents have remained a largely forgotten population in previous and current literature. Though scholars and researchers have little data regarding the impact, perceptions, and interpretations that nonresidents can have in numerous categories in the criminal justice field, this study sought toward taking another step in closing the gap.

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