11-25-2020

Thou shall not steal: Assessing demographic and neighborhood predictors of shoplifting through the lens of social disorganization theory

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
in Sociology
in the Department of Sociology

Mississippi State, Mississippi

November 2020

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Date of Degree: November 25, 2020

Institution: Mississippi State University

Major Field: Sociology

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Title of Study: Thou shall not steal: Assessing demographic and neighborhood predictors of shoplifting through the lens of social disorganization theory

Pages in Study 130

Candidate for Degree of Master of Science

The crime of shoplifting has received limited scholarly attention despite millions of shoplifting arrests that occur every year. Our understanding of shoplifting is limited because of this. This study assesses whether offenders arrested for shoplifting that reside in socially disorganized neighborhoods differ from their counterparts from less socially disorganized neighborhoods. Using arrest data from the Meridian Police Department and secondary data from the 2018 American Community Survey, analyses revealed that arrestees from neighborhoods with high levels of poverty were more likely to shoplift from dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores. Demographic findings revealed few gender differences in shoplifting among the arrestees. Arrestees most frequently shoplifted at Walmart and often pilfered non-necessity items. Black arrestees were more likely to shoplift at dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores and less likely to receive a guilty adjudication. White and male arrestees were more likely to have prior offenses.

Key words: shoplifting, social disorganization theory, court outcomes, Mississippi

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband Matthew, and our amazing children Charlotte and Logan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All good things must come to an end, but before they do, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the individuals who have supported or inspired me through this project. First and foremost, I would like to thank God for his gift of salvation and for every blessing he has placed before me. To my beloved husband Matthew Loftin – I cannot fully express in words how much your patience and love means to me. Thank you for standing by me through my education; you continue to support my dreams and I am forever grateful. To my dear children Charlotte and Logan Loftin, you have shown me what true happiness is. Gary and Linda Loftin, I am not sure there are enough ways to thank you for helping me during my academic pursuit. I am grateful for every diaper you changed, every skinned knee you kissed, and every meal you made for the twins in my absence. My dear friend Bria Young, the yin to my yang, the "Meredith to my Christina," my twisted sister. Thank you for showing me how to use my voice, but most importantly, thank you for being "my person" in graduate school – you are the sun.

This thesis may not have come to fruition without the guidance and brilliance of my major professor, David May. Thank you for showing me what a true mentor looks like. You possess a rare gift – you know when to listen and when to offer advice. Thank you for believing in me. Yes, you are a grizzly bear. I would also like to extend my thanks to my committee members, Amanda Cook and Stacy Haynes, who endlessly offered me their encouragement, support, and wisdom. To the professors in the Sociology Department – I wish I would have discovered Sociology years ago. Thank you for facilitating conversations and inspiring critical

thinking. Lastly, I would like to extend my immense gratitude to my graduate cohort members, Jess Brink, Sarah Caylor, Oluwaseun Emoruwa, Kelli Gill, Robert Kolbila, Ashley Melcherts, Hunter Russell, and Bria Young. My graduate experience was elevated because of each of you. Thank you for showing me what community and friendship means. Here is to the journey ahead of us.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Shoplifting, described as an aberrant consumer behavior (Altuna et al., 2016; Babin & Babin, 1996) and sub-type of theft (Walsh, 1978), has been around for centuries (Segrave, 2001). Childhood stories, such as Aladdin, depicting a "street rat" who steals for survival, are staples in American culture. Even the biblical narrative of the seventh commandment, "Thou shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15), is a sentiment echoed among many people, whether they are religious or not. Whether people truly shoplift out of need or "frustrated wants," the "five fingered discount" remains a ubiquitous problem in America.

Millions of shoplifting arrests occur each year (Cook and May, 2019) and while retailers and the media have inflated or underreported shoplifting over the years (Segrave, 2001), it is estimated that there are 550,000 shoplifting incidents per day (National Association for Shoplifting Prevention, 2019). Official criminal justice statistics similarly misreport the true number of shoplifting cases because they only account for apprehended persons. Despite these facts, scholars continue to overlook the crime of shoplifting, likely because it is considered socially insignificant (Klemke, 1992). However, shrinkage caused by shoplifting is a socially significant issue. Retailers experience thinning revenue margins caused by shrinkage, a $394.04 burden American households must carry each year (The Global Retail Theft Barometer, 2007). While retail establishments estimate that they lose $45 million or more a day to shoplifting

(National Association for Shoplifting Prevention, 2019), the true damage caused by shoplifting is unknown.

Problem Statement

Researchers have estimated that as many as 60% of people have shoplifted in their lives (Klemke, 1982; Klemke 1992; Kraut, 1976), while others estimated that 1 in every 12 shoppers shoplift (Ray, 1987). Today, it is reported that 1 in 11 people have shoplifted at some point (The National Association of Shoplifting Prevention, 2019). The lack of consensus among data continues to impact our understanding of shoplifting (Blanco et al., 2008). Interestingly, almost no research has examined the relationship between socially disorganized neighborhoods and the shoplifting experiences or court processing of shoplifters. The purpose of this study, then, is to expand the current body of literature on shoplifting by examining neighborhood and demographic predictors of the crime. This work may help scholars gather additional insight into the social significance of shoplifting.

In this study, I begin by defining the term shoplifting, followed by a brief discussion of its origin and the development of shops. Next, I dive into the gendered and social significance of shoplifting, which have significantly changed over time. I then elaborate on how the state of Mississippi classifies the crime of shoplifting and the data sources commonly used to measure shoplifting. Next, mechanisms used to shoplift and to deter shoplifting are outlined. Juvenile shoplifting behavior is briefly analyzed, along with two benchmark studies that established shoplifter typologies. While few studies discuss the current demographics of shoplifting, I also present data on gender, race, social class, and age, as well as arrests. Next, I discuss theoretical explanations of shoplifting and apply social disorganization theory to shoplifting. Hypotheses will then be presented, followed by a description of the methodology, analyses, and results. I will

conclude this study by outlining the limitations of my research and presenting recommendations for the future of shoplifting research.

This analysis used data from 361 arrested shoplifters whose offense occurred in Lauderdale County, Mississippi in 2018. From these data, I describe valuable demographic information about shoplifting offenders, as well as the types of items shoplifted, the amount stolen, and plea and disposition information. I also used the 2018 American Community Survey data to assess whether shoplifting offenders from socially disorganized neighborhoods differ from shoplifting offenders from less socially disorganized neighborhoods. To my knowledge, this is the first known study to examine demographic and neighborhood predictors of shoplifting. My goal is to not only expand the current body of shoplifting literature, but also to cultivate important conversations about the data sources used to measure shoplifting, as well as the true significance of the crime.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Shoplifting

Shoplifting is commonly referred to as the theft of concealed goods from a retail establishment (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020). The term "shoplifting" was first introduced in 1673 in England and later defined in the preamble of the Act of Parliament 10 William III c. 12 (1698) as, "The Crime of stealing Goods privately out of Shops and Warehouses" (Walsh, 1978, p. 22). While the term is considered to have originated in the 17th century, the term itself does not necessarily particularize a new behavior. In fact, the practice of shoplifting has likely occurred since the genesis of shops (Davis, 1966). Walsh (1978) noted that the development of shops stemmed from mobilized medieval fairs and street markets, which involved various social activities and the buying and selling of food and livestock. Merchants or stallholders placed large collections of accessible items on temporary displays that became targets for prowling thieves. Over the years, the medieval market developed more organized transactions to reduce theft where customers began to stand on one side of the merchant stall and the seller on the other. Merchants quickly learned to not leave their inventory unattended and to keep a watchful eye on customers due to theft concerns. Likewise, customers learned to never lean over the counter of the merchant stand because they would likely be accused of thievery. However, shoplifters, most of whom were male, often worked in teams where one person would attempt to distract the merchant by posing as a customer so his partner could steal goods.

Over the years, medieval markets would become more modernized and permanent fixtures in the medieval community. Merchants built roofs and walls around their goods to conduct business; however, theft remained a substantial problem because goods remained stationary. As shops became less mobile, thieves became aware of where to find valuable and easily targeted goods. However, early medieval shops remained windowless and thieves could easily pilfer by leaning over the merchant's counters. When windows were installed in early shops, windows were set in lead or wooden frames, obscuring natural light, presumably making it easier for thieves to steal.

In England, Walsh (1978) noted that nineteenth century shops in large urban areas brought new retailing opportunities. These businesses were also often exclusive to members of the upper class and strove to reflect the values and beliefs of their customers. Storekeepers attempted to keep members of the lower class, who were perceived to be responsible for shoplifting, out of their shops to appease their affluent clientele. While smaller urban shops mirrored larger urban shops, they had higher theft occurrences because they were unable to selectively cater to exclusive customers.

Walsh (1978) also asserted that around 1875, department stores, designed to be "one stop shops" to purchase multiple commodities under a single roof, were developed to meet the needs of the middle and upper classes. Large department stores were primarily located in populated urban communities until the end of World War II because they relied on the large number of patrons found in urban areas for business. However, as department stores integrated self-service and bought goods at wholesale prices, they found that they could cater to smaller communities because they could limit overhead costs by purchasing products at a reduced price and by

limiting their number of staff. Shoplifting then became not only a significant problem for small and large shops, but it also plagued department stores in both urban and rural areas.

Segrave (2001) argued that the large size of department stores, coupled with mass retailing, consumption patterns, and browsing customers, made it difficult for storeowners and store assistants to monitor the shop. By the end of the 1800s, Segrave (2001) noted that shoplifting was occurring primarily in department stores, and similar to England, shoplifting quickly became a concern in the United States. While shops have architecturally and functionally changed (i.e., from medieval markets to large department stores), the practice of shoplifting has continued to be a ubiquitous problem.

Kleptomania: The Gendered Significance of Shoplifting

Just as shopping and shoplifting are socially significant, early research noted the gendered significance of shoplifting. By the 1870s, most shoplifters were female, in part because women arguably had more hiding spaces on their person (Segrave, 2001). Objects such as large dresses, and ornamental accessories (e.g., purses or bags, shawls, scarves, muffs, and gloves) offered an advantage to hide pilfered items. What is interesting about shoplifting during this era is that those who were arrested were not lower-class women. In fact, they were often upper-class women with no known prior offenses. This new social phenomenon quickly grabbed the attention of the medical and legal community, and instead of calling these women "thieves," the term "kleptomaniac" was to be used instead.

Elaine Abelson (1989) argued that 'kleptomania' was a gendered and classist term used to describe shoplifting behavior in privileged women. Abelson noted that shopping offered women freedom outside of the home. Because women did the majority of shopping, it was no surprise that women were apprehended for shoplifting by retailers and law enforcement more

often than were men. In fact, Abelson noted that department stores often offered women childcare so they could shop, browse, or otherwise entertain themselves; by the 19th century, the term 'kleptomania' also encompassed middle class women. Interestingly, middle- and upper-class women were labeled by the justice system and the community as kleptomaniacs, while lower class women were labeled thieves and legally sentenced to prison for shoplifting. In many ways, the gendered and classist term was used to protect the purity of wealthy white womanhood.

Kleptomania, while not a new social phenomenon, was first introduced by Dr. Andrè Matthey in 1816. For Matthey, *klopemanie* referred to a monomania describing a compulsory and pathological form of stealing (Shteir, 2011). While reported in men in earlier cases (O'Brien, 1983), kleptomania quickly became a diagnosis for the privileged white woman as it gained momentum in the medical and legal community. In Patricia O'Brien's (1983) analysis of over 200 19th century shoplifting cases, she found documentation of women's deviant behavior inextricably linked with the female sex. O'Brien (1983) stated that, "[d]eviant behavior… can be traced to physiological origins – women were diseased by their sexuality…" (O'Brien, 1983, p.68). She further noted, "the argument is most extreme at the turn of the century… that all menstruating, lactating, ovulating, newly delivered, newly sexually initiated, and menopausal women were prone to crime" (O'Brien, 1983, p.68). While women in this era were perceived to have a higher propensity for shoplifting, women's shoplifting behavior was essentially a product and disease of women's reproduction.

Medical and legal professionals debated whether kleptomania was "mad or bad" (Witlock, 2009, p.418). In the cases O'Brein examined, she recognized that "the published cases [of kleptomania] were the consequences of court requests for medical examinations of

defendants and reflected increased judicial reliance on the medical specialist in the process of judgement" (O'Brien, 1983, p.66). O'Brein also found that descriptions of women's shoplifting were linked to sexual gratification. In one case study, a woman stated that "she got more pleasure from her thefts than the 'father of her children'" (O'Brien, 1983, p.68). Whether kleptomania was a physiological or psychological description of feminine weakness, it quickly became a novel way to decriminalize bourgeoise women's theft in which privileged women were deemed "mad" instead of "bad."

The term kleptomania was rarely used after 1920. Segrave (2001) noted that the "class-based filter" began to fade because it was "applied earlier in the process" (Segrave, 2001, p.26). In other words, as retailers began to catch and release wealthy women, the term kleptomaniac could not be applied to them by physicians or legal professionals and began to virtually disappear. For Segrave, it also "became less and less necessary to save women of the upper classes from the system by the use of the label… this kind of labeling became less politically and socially acceptable" because the term was used to degrade women as an emotional and inferior species (Segrave, 2001, p.26).

Today, the diagnosis of kleptomania is used sparingly, and is reserved for persons who repeatedly and impulsively shoplift items that are not needed or wanted (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). The APA, the world's leading psychiatric organization that works collaboratively to promote and ensure the highest quality of care for all persons with mental illness, reported that there are three females diagnosed with kleptomania for every one male diagnosed. To diagnose kleptomania, mental health professionals often consult the APA Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) for a list of kleptomania

symptoms. Symptoms include recurrent impulsivities to steal, feelings of tension before the theft, and feelings of gratification or relief after the theft.

Kleptomania is a condition that remains understudied (Talih, 2011), likely because it is reported in less than 1% of the population (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Goldman, 1991; Grant et al., 2009). It also carries significant legal consequences (Blum et al., 2018), especially since 64%-87% of persons clinically diagnosed with kleptomania have been arrested and apprehended on multiple occasions (Grant & Potenza, 2008; Grant et al., 2009; Sarasalo et al., 1996). Nonetheless, kleptomania was a historical term used to conceal the privileged woman's theft, a term that gained and lost momentum throughout the centuries. Retailers rarely pressed charges on these privileged women, likely because "today's kleptomaniac is tomorrow's big spender" (Shteir, 2011, p.42). It is possible that the term kleptomania, and the perception that women have a higher propensity for shoplifting, is why shoplifting is often considered a "pink collar crime" (Caputo & King, 2011, p.159). However, this ideology is quickly disappearing as researchers further explore demographic predictors of shoplifting.

The Social Significance of Shoplifting

While it is generally perceived to be of little social significance (Klemke, 1992), shoplifting, specifically shrinkage caused by theft, remains a costly problem for retailers, consumers, and society. The term "shrinkage" has been used to describe proprietary losses for over 100 years (Abelson, 1989; Bamfield, 2012; Chapman & Templar, 2006; Curtis, 1960; Curtis, 1983; Hayes, 1991; Van Maanenberg, 1995), and while it is a complex problem, there is often little consensus on how shrinkage or "loss" should be measured in retailing (Beck, 2018). Some retailers use shrinkage to describe only employee theft or customer shoplifting, while others include administrator or vendor errors (Beck, 2018). Historical estimates of the loss of

revenue attributed to shoplifting and shrinkage-related events are either truly unknown or media exaggerations. For example, media sources throughout the 1970s reported shoplifting shrinkage losses ranging from $0.5 billion to $30 billion annually (Segrave, 2001). Essentially, the lack of definitional clarity (Beck, 2018) make shrinkage difficult to measure within the boundaries of the retail supply chain today (Chapman et al., 2003), especially since there is no standardized measurement for shrinkage across retailers. Shrinkage data primarily come from store stock audits (Chapman & Templar, 2006) and most surveys and reports categorize shrinkage in four broad areas: employee theft, customer theft (i.e., shoplifting), administrative or paperwork error, and vender or supplier fraud or error (Bamfield, 2011; Hollinger & Adams, 2014). The National Retail Security Survey, a survey conducted in the United States, and The Global Retail Theft Barometer, a survey conducted worldwide, are two common sources of shrinkage-related statistics.

The National Retail Security Survey, in partnership with the National Retail Federation and Dr. Richard Hollinger of the University of Florida, provides annual data about retail loss prevention (i.e., shrinkage). The 2019 survey, administered between February 27, 2019 and March 29, 2019, assessed respondents' 2018 fiscal year loss prevention performance and action. A total of 63 retailers, including apparel companies, department stores, supermarkets, pharmacies, and toy stores, participated in the 2019 survey. Results showed that the average shrinkage rate (1.38%) has remained steady in the United States since 2014. Larger retailers (500 or more stores) reported an average shrinkage rate of 1.81%, while retailers with 500 or fewer stores had an average shrinkage rate of 0.9%. Bob Moraca, Vice President of Loss Prevention at the National Retail Federation noted that, "It is apparent that larger retailers having greater variation of merchandise in their marketplace offer boosters a greater variety of products to steal

than smaller specialty stores" (National Retail Security Survey, 2019, p.5). While the low shrinkage rate may sound positive, it is estimated to impact the retail industry by a staggering $50.6 billion annually.

Employee-related shrink, such as employee theft, remains one area of concern within the realm of proprietary loss. However, the definition of employee theft is ambiguous (Oliphant & Oliphant, 2001), and may include behavior involving unauthorized taking or transfer of goods (Hollinger & Clark, 1983), employee misconduct (Leatherwood & Spector, 1991), and unethical or deviant employee behavior (Sieh, 1987; Slora, 1989; Trevino & Victor, 1992). Employees are often considered "part of the family" and therefore employee theft is difficult for managers to comprehend and describe (Oliphant & Oliphant, 2001, p.442).

Shoplifting is another significant contributor to retailer shrinkage. When an individual is caught shoplifting, the retailer has several options, including apprehension without police referral, police referral resulting in arrest, or civil demand requesting a sum of money incurred through the shoplifting incident. The National Retail Security Survey (2019) reported that from 2015 to 2018, the average number of both shoplifting apprehensions (i.e., stops without referrals) and prosecutions (i.e., law enforcement referrals) had dropped significantly. In 2018, larger retailers (500 or more stores) reported significantly more apprehensions than did smaller retail establishments (603.8 vs. 418.6, respectively); however, they were less likely to prosecute or request civil restitution than were their smaller retail counterparts.

Another shrinkage reporting tool is The Global Retail Theft Barometer. This report is funded by CheckPoint Systems and was the first comparative report examining retail shrinkage and retail-related crimes worldwide (The Global Retail Theft Barometer, 2007). In 2007, data from 827 retail companies were retrieved over a 12-month period. These 827 retail companies

that responded to the survey had a total of 138,603 operating stores reported sales totaling $948 billion. The responding retailers reported that shrinkage-related events cost retailers over $98 million (1.36%) in annual retail sales. India, Thailand, and the United States reported the highest shrinkage rates, while Austria, Switzerland, and Iceland reported the lowest. Shoplifting-related crimes accounted for the largest source of shrinkage ($41,504 million in losses, or 42% of shrinkage), followed by disloyal employees ($34,671 million or 35.2%), and supplier or vendor theft or fraud ($6,207 million or 6.3%). Interestingly, employee theft was higher than customer theft (i.e., shoplifting) in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Shrinkage-related events, plus the costs of loss prevention (e.g., security cameras, loss prevention staff, electronic article surveillance systems) cost consumers an average of $283.61 per household globally in 2007. In the United States, the cost is slightly higher at $394.04 per household.

In 2014, The Global Retail Theft Barometer collected data in 24 countries from 222 retailers. The global average shrinkage rate was 1.29%. In the United States, the shrinkage rate was 1.48% ($42 billion), which was slightly higher than the global average, but slightly lower than Mexico (1.70%) and China (1.53%). Dishonest employees (i.e., employee theft) remained a significant concern for retailers and their shrinkage problems. In the United States, dishonest employees caused a majority of shrink losses (42.9% or $18 billion), followed by shoplifting (37.4% or $15.7 billion), administrator loss (10%), and vendor fraud (8.9%). Unfortunately, this report does not include the total cost of shrinkage-related events on households.

The Global Retail Theft Barometer recently released their 2019 report of data retrieved from 11 European countries from 2016, 2017, and 2018. While the results do not include U.S. information, shrinkage continues to remain a significant concern worldwide. The 2015-2017

average shrinkage rate was 1.4%, with food retail reporting the highest shrinkage rate (2.0%). More than 15% of its survey respondents reported an increasing trend in shrinkage.

In sum, shoplifting may be perceived as socially insignificant; however, retailers in the United States and around the world are forced to increase merchandise prices due to thinning revenue margins caused by shrinkage. While the cost of shrinkage on households is understudied and inconsistently reported, it is clear that consumers pay and carry the burden for the shrinkage-related events caused by theft. Essentially, shoplifting costs retailers billions of dollars every year and shrinkage-related events like shoplifting are costly for consumers.

Identifying and Classifying Shoplifting

Mississippi Code § 97-23-93 identifies a shoplifter as, "any person who shall willfully and unlawfully take possession of any merchandise owned or held by and offered or displayed for sale by any merchant, store or other mercantile establishment with the intention and purpose of converting such merchandise to his own use without paying the merchant's stated price therefor shall be guilty of the crime of shoplifting" (Miss. Code § 97-23-93, 2014). Therefore, those who attempt to conceal or remove unpaid merchandise, alter prices, transfer goods from one container to another, and/or cause the cash register to reflect a value other than what the merchant stated are guilty of shoplifting. Illegal acts that are punishable by law are generally classified into three distinct categories: infraction (also commonly referred as a petty offense or a violation), misdemeanor, and felony. According to Mississippi State Records (2017), the punishment for an infraction, the least serious of the crime classifications, is generally limited to a small fine. Punishments for misdemeanors, which are more serious than infractions but less serious than felonies, include fines not exceeding $10,000 and/or jail time usually not exceeding a year. While the state of Mississippi does not categorize misdemeanor crimes by their

seriousness, most states categorize misdemeanors based on the severity of the crime committed (e.g., as Class A, Class B, or Class C). However, guidelines are state specific and class designation varies by state. In Mississippi, misdemeanor crimes include: simple assault, drug possession, underage drinking, resisting arrest, solicitation, simple battery, first time DUI, noise complaints/disturbing the peace, public nudity, and shoplifting. Lastly, Mississippi state law refers to a felony offense as, "a serious crime that is punishable by fines exceeding $10,000, more than one year in prison or the death penalty." Similar to misdemeanor crimes, the state of Mississippi does not categorize felonies, and penalties are determined by the state's criminal statutes and are often specific to the jurisdiction in which the crime was committed.

Data Sources to Measure Shoplifting

Several data sources are available to examine the impact of shoplifting on the criminal justice system, retailers, and consumers: arrest data, adjudication data, store loss prevention apprehension reports, offender self-report data, and systematic observational studies**.** Most data used to study criminal activity come from apprehended offender reports (i.e., Uniform Crime Reports [UCR]) despite the fact that such data sources are riddled with inherent biases (Buckle & Farrington, 1994; Dabney et al., 2004). The information gathered from apprehended offender reports are commonly used to study criminal activity because they capture a wide variety of criminal information that is accessible to the public for no additional cost. Because such reports are generated from law enforcement arrest information, those who commit unreported or unobserved crimes are not represented in its reports. In return, inaccurate accounts of crime are reported, causing subsequent statistical misrepresentation. Shoplifting thus becomes "a dark figure of crime" (Dabney et al., 2004, p.694) because it is often an undetected or underreported crime that is not represented in secondary apprehension data sets. Despite these important facts,

shoplifting continues to be studied using secondary apprehension data sets even though apprehension data are ill-suited for studying shoplifting (Dabney et al., 2004).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's UCR Program is a widely used secondary apprehension data set that analyzes and monitors reported criminal activity in the United States (Uniform Crime Report, 2017). According to the UCR, shoplifting is a sub-type of larceny-theft, which refers to "the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another… examples [include], thefts of bicycles, thefts of motor vehicle parts and accessories, pocket-picking, shoplifting, and the stealing of any property or articles that is not taken by force and violence, or by fraud" (Uniform Crime Report, 2017). However, the UCR also does not accurately portray the true impact of shoplifting because the UCR is focused primarily on felony offenses. Because shoplifting is generally classified as a misdemeanor offense, shoplifting may be underreported in the UCR database since many police departments do not report misdemeanor offenses to the UCR. While the UCR is commonly used to examine shoplifting, it fails to account for those who go undetected or unreported by retailers and law enforcement.

As a response to concerns centered around police-generated reports, criminologists have turned to alternative methodologies such as self-reported victimization surveys (i.e., The National Crime Victimization Survey [NCVS]) to gain deeper and more accurate insight of the criminal world (Hood & Sparks, 1970). The NCVS is the United States' leading source of data collection for victimization (NCVS, 2018); however, it is not without faults, especially when exploring the practice of shoplifting. Larceny-theft – the "completed or attempted theft of property or cash" – is included in the NCVS, but it is restricted to thefts against persons (Dabney et al., 2004). Studying shoplifting using NCVS data is therefore impossible because the survey

excludes larceny-thefts against organizations such as retailers (Dabney et al., 2004). While the NCVS may be helpful to study other areas of crime and victimization, it overlooks shoplifting completely.

Self-reports have also been employed to examine the nature of shoplifting, despite the fact that self-reports are inherently dependent on the person's willingness to participate, honesty in reporting, and memory recall (Buckle & Farrington, 1994). In Klemke's 1992 exploratory study of juvenile shoplifting, he noted that law enforcement data are often limited because only a small proportion of shoplifters are ever reported to the police by retailers, subsequently leading to fewer apprehension reports. Additionally, he argued that store records (i.e., loss prevention reports) for shoplifting commonly reveal only the control policies and biases of store personnel. Because store-generated information resulting from unsystematic apprehension practices often limits important descriptive data, Klemke (1992) utilized a self-report methodology to examine shoplifting patterns by sex, age, social class, value of items shoplifted, and frequency of shoplifting. Klemke (1992) concluded that shoplifting is a prevalent criminal activity among youth. Other self-reported surveys employed to study shoplifting among youth (Elliott et al., 1989; Huizinga et al., 1991; Loeber et al., 1998; Thornberry et al., 1994) have similarly concluded that shoplifting is the most prevalent criminal activity among youth. Self-report surveys of adults (Ray, 1987; Ray & Briar, 1988) and arrested shoplifters (Schlueter et al., 1989) have also been conducted. While self-reports are commonly employed in research, their scope and usage still come with concerns, especially regarding shoplifting.

Systematic observational studies have also been employed to examine shoplifting. Buckle and Farrington (1984) became the first social scientists to publish in a scholarly journal using systematic observation methodology to study shoplifting (Buckle & Farrington, 1994). In their

benchmark study in the United Kingdom, Buckle and Farrington (1984) observed shoplifting behavior at a small department store in Peterborough from July-August. Randomly selected customers were systematically watched by two psychologists from the time they entered the store to the time they exited the store. A total of 503 persons were followed, but only 486 customers were included in the study because some people were not potential customers (i.e., they walked in and out of the store without looking at merchandise). A total of nine people (1.9%) shoplifted. Males were twice as likely as females to shoplift (2.9% v. 1.4%, respectively). Shoplifting was most prevalent among persons 55 years and over. None of the shoplifters were apprehended in this study.

In 1994, Buckle and Farrington replicated their first systematic observational study. This study took place in Bedford, another city in the United Kingdom, in July and August and randomly selected customers were systematically watched by the same two psychologists from the time they entered the store to the time they exited the store. A total of 514 customers were followed; only 502 customers were included in the study because some people were not potential customers (i.e., they walked in and out of the store without looking at merchandise). A total of six people (1.2%) shoplifted. Males were three times more likely than were females to shoplift (2.2% v. 0.6%, respectively). Shoplifting was most prevalent among persons 17-25 years, which contradicted their findings from the previous study. However, the authors acknowledge that the small number of shoplifters, and the fact that none of the shoplifters were apprehended, were both limitations of this study.

Taken together, the results from both studies indicate that shoplifting was most prevalent among persons 55 years and over (3.2%) and those 25 years and younger (2.2%). Buckle and Farrington (1994) concluded that shoplifting may be more prevalent in these age groups because

they are less likely to be prosecuted for shoplifting. Interestingly, the researchers asserted that a majority of the shoplifters (12 out of 15) also purchased goods, possibly to deter suspicion of shoplifting. In fact, the value of the purchased item was greater than the value of some of the shoplifted items (9 out of 12 cases). Both systematic observational studies provided textually descriptive data that many studies are unable to provide (e.g., time spent in the store, how many people were in the shopping party, where display stands were located, how long customers held an item). While Buckle and Farrington (1994) noted that systematic observation may be able to provide the most accurate, unbiased, and direct accounts of shoplifting, observational studies are time consuming, expensive, and occur at limited locations and therefore generalizability may be limited.

Farrington (1999) analyzed police records, retail records, self-report surveys, and systematic observational studies to explain conflicting and varying shoplifting data. When analyzing British police records, he first examined offending rates by gender for shoplifting in 1996. Overall, the prevalence rate for shoplifting was approximately 3.2 recorded shoplifters per 1,000 males and 1.8 recorded shoplifters per 1,000 females. However, Farrington noted that this was not a true prevalence rate because each person could be recorded multiple times in the data set, and it may be closer to 2.9 recorded shoplifters per 1,000 males and 1.6 recorded shoplifters per 1,000 females. When analyzing surveys of retailers for the year 1996-97, he found that retailers apprehended 24.1 males per 1,000 population and reported 16.9 per 1,000 to law enforcement, while law enforcement only recorded 3.2 per 1,000 males as offenders. Likewise, 22.7 females per 1,000 population were apprehended by retailers, with only 15.8 per 1,000 reported to law enforcement. However, law enforcement only recorded 1.8 per 1,000 females as offenders. When British self-report surveys were analyzed, they suggested that about one in 150

shoplifting offenses leads to conviction (Belson et al., 1975; Graham & Bowling, 1995; Riley & Shaw, 1985; West et al., 1977; Willcock et al., 1968). In systematic observational reports, approximately 500 items per week are stolen (Buckle & Farrington, 1984; Farrington et al., 1993). In another study that repeatedly counted goods to examine shoplifting, about 10% of all items that were counted were stolen instead of sold (Beck & WIllis, 1988). Ultimately, Farrington (1999) solidified the argument that shoplifting data sources have the potential to report conflicting results because of their divergent data collection methodologies; arrest data, retail records, self-report surveys, and systematic observational studies each count and report shoplifting differently.

One can conclude that arrest data, adjudication data, store loss prevention apprehension reports, offender self-report data, and systematic observational studies each come with limitations. Researchers therefore have a limited scope when examining the practice of shoplifting. In return, it becomes difficult to detect and prevent this crime in retail establishments. Thus, shoplifting remains one of the most underreported and misreported crimes (Farrington, 1999; Hollinger & Davis, 2003).

Shoplifting Mechanisms

According to Segrave (2001), shoplifters have always hidden pilfered items in their pockets, handbags, or hosiery, but new shoplifting methodologies emerged as early as the 1900s. For example, retailers began to notice that people would try to shoplift by trying on new clothing and then walking out wearing it. Thieves would also look at various items, place them in a large pile, and conceal a stolen item or two on their person. Shoplifters became even more resourceful with shoplifting mechanisms between 1919 and 1946. For example, an artificial hand, known as the “third hand,” was placed where one’s real hand belonged (Segrave, 2001, p.32). With

complete use of their real hand, the shoplifter could comfortably retrieve stolen goods through the front of their coat. Techniques such as adding a false bottom to a bag or a large pocket inside shirts were also used.

Segrave (2001) also noted that by 1927, another version of shoplifting emerged: return fraud. In one of the earliest examples of return fraud, Robert F. Murphy was arrested and charged for returning stolen items for a cash refund to Jersey City merchants. More recently, Claude Allen, the senior domestic advisor in the White House, became the first government official convicted of return fraud in 2006 (Shteir, 2011). While reports indicate that Allen began the practice of return fraud on October 29, 2005 in Gaithersburg, Maryland, it would be early 2006 before he would be caught and charged with a felony theft. This charge was dropped to one count of misdemeanor theft by the judge. Following the charges, Allen resigned from the White House in February, and four years later was suspended from practicing law in the District of Columbia for a full year. As described by Shteir (2011), Allen's "shameful shoplifting arose out of the greater shame about the administration's inept handling of Hurricane Katrina and George W. Bush's apparent indifference towards the suffering of New Orleanians" (Shteir, 2011, p.92). Allen testified that, "I would go to Target just to kind of escape…seeing vividly a gentleman sitting out in front of the Superdome in a chair for days with an [sic] sign on him saying, 'I've passed away. Please bury me'" (Shteir, 2011, p.92). As described by Allen's psychiatrist Thomas Goldman, Allen ultimately acted out as a result of outrage against the Administration because "there was so much needing to be done that was not being done that it put a strain… on his loyalty" (Shteir, 2011, p.92). According to the National Retail Security Survey (2019), return fraud remains a significant problem for retailers today. In fact, 12.7% of survey respondents reported that return fraud risks are more of a priority today than they have been in the past.

Another significant turn in shoplifting mechanisms has been the use of self-checkout processes such as smartphone checkout, store-provided mobile device checkout, and employee-assisted mobile checkout. Traditional fixed location checkout settings have existed for about 100 years (Aloysius et al., 2019), but retailers integrated these novel mobile technological transaction processes to enhance operational efficiency, increase customer experiences, and decrease labor-related costs (Aloysius et al., 2016; Chandra et al., 2010). Though the use of self-checkout and mobile applications have brought mixed emotions among consumers, mobile checkout technologies have also led to a new form of cybercrime known as cyber-shoplifting, which refers to the practice of shoplifting using technology (Knapton, 2016; Phillips et al., 2005; Taylor, 2016).

Aloysius, Arora, and Venkatesh (2019) examined this new technological shoplifting phenomena through a mixed-methods approach using focus group interviews conducted by the National Association for Shoplifting Prevention and online surveys from a U.S. crowdsource platform. The data were categorized into shoplifters (i.e., those who had shoplifted in the past) and non-shoplifters; additional responses also identified *prospective* shoplifters. The sample included 146 experienced shoplifters, 126 prospective shoplifters, and 200 "honest customers" who offered opinions about retail stores (Aloysius et al., 2019, p.1238). They found that both experienced and prospective shoplifters had increased shoplifting intentions when stores allowed customers to use personal smartphone for mobile checkout, but customers were reluctant to shoplift when using store-provided mobile devices. Ultimately, they concluded that shoplifting intentions were higher in mobile checkout settings than in fixed settings, and that the use of a smartphone for checkout fostered shoplifting behavior among experienced and prospective

shoplifters. Retailers are thus cautioned and encouraged to increase security measures when using smartphone checkout services.

Scholars continue to note that literature on shoplifting is limited, and literature around cyber-shoplifting is almost nonexistent. Every day household items, such as jackets, umbrellas, and strollers continue to be mechanisms commonly used for shoplifting. Furthermore, those who "graze," or sample food without payment (Bai et al., 2019), are using their hands and mouth as a mechanism for shoplifting. Today, booster bags (bags lined with aluminum foil), act as an electromagnetic shields against the security detectors that detect radiofrequency from security tags (Segrave 2001; Shteir, 2011). The act of shoplifting, and the mechanisms employed to pilfer, are just as intricate and complex as those who steal.

Deterrence Mechanisms

As noted by Segrave (2001), retailers once asked patrons to check their bags at the door, but customers quickly grew angry at this practice. By the 1960s, shrinkage due to shoplifting was a well-known problem among retailers. Therefore, retailers became interested in new technological devices to deter shoplifting. By the fall of 1961, a new deterrence device invented by E.M. Trikilis, the Sentronic Wand, was expected to be available for North American retailers (Segrave, 2001). However, the system never became popular among retailers, likely because of the cost and effort associated with the wand. Store items were to be coated with a chemical tracer, and if a person tried to leave the store with the treated item, an alarm would sound from an arch-like sensing device. The device sent penetrating "radio-like waves" through clothing and any type of bag or container and purchased items could be easily deactivated by store clerks (Segrave, 2001, p.60). Each checkout stand required its own Sentronic-Storegard system, and rental costs were approximately $75 per unit, excluding installation and tracer fees.

Oversized cardboard containers, blister packaging, loudspeakers, convex mirrors, and concealed closed-circuit television cameras were also used to deter shoplifting. However, shoplifters had little difficulties removing items from the blister packs and cardboard packages (Segrave, 2001). Furthermore, loudspeakers projecting the message "Put it Back" did little to combat theft (Segrave, 2001, p.61). Moreover, customer loyalty was challenged because patrons were not comfortable being filmed and even felt violated because mirrors were being used.

By 1962, another technological device was in the process of being made (Shteir, 2011). John Minasy, an inventor, and the Vice President of Belock Instrument Corporation, spent time with the New York City Police Department and realized that shoplifters were rarely arrested by police officers. In 1966, Minasy filed for a patent on a device called an electronic article surveillance (EAS) tag. Minasy developed a sensitized tag with analog waves that would alert two sensors, sounding an alarm if someone attempted to leave the store with an item of clothing. Clothing would be damaged if the culprit attempted to remove the tags. Thus, Minasy gave the system the moniker, "Chinese handcuffs" because the tag would essentially "trap" you if you attempted to pilfer (Shteir, 2011, p.47). Because Minasy was a pioneer for future EAS tagging devices, which are now ubiquitous across the world, his device would eventually be placed in the Smithsonian Institution in 1991.

Shteir (2011) also examined a similar tag, the Sensormatic, developed by Ronald Assaf. Assaf managed several Ohio-based supermarkets for the Kroger Company. In 1966, Assaf began working on an antishoplifting device with the help of engineers at the University of Michigan and his cousin, Jack Welsch, a self-proclaimed inventor. The team created a small sensitized label involving a diode attached to an antenna. By 1969, stores began to use the "alligator tag" device and the company changed its name from JKR to Sensormatic (Segrave, 2001, p.114).

According to Segrave (2001), the device operated similar to Minasy's tagging system in which customers were required to pass through pedestals that would set off an alarm if unpaid items left the store. The Sensormatic operated on microwaves and proved to work better at large retail establishments because it could be sensed at greater distances. Sensormatic quickly became popular in retail stores. Because of store management's interest in deterrence, a larger tag, easily seen by customers, was developed in response to this demand. Various Sensormatic tags are still used to deter shoplifting today, and EAS and Sensormatic tags ultimately revolutionized the capture of shoplifters.

While studies support that EAS-type devices are helpful in deterring theft in retail establishments (Bamfield, 1994; Cardone & Hayes, 2012; DiLonardo, 1996; Farrington et al., 1993; Howell & Proudlove, 2007), not all stores use these devices. In the 2007, the Global Retail Barometer report indicated that only 45.2% of the North American respondents used EAS tagging devices to deter theft (The Global Retail Barometer, 2007). In 2013-2014, the Global Retail Barometer reported EAS tagging devices were perceived as the most effective solution to deter retail theft among 49% of retailers, followed by locked boxes (23%), locked display cabinets (13%), dummy cartons or ticket systems (6%), line/loop alarms (4%), and metal detectors (3%) (The Global Retail Barometer, 2014). In their 2019 report, EAS tagging devices, closed-circuit television, alarms, and unarmed guards were the most popular theft deterrence mechanism among 70% of European respondents (The Global Retail Barometer, 2019).

Lists naming shoplifters have also been used as a shoplifting deterrence mechanism (Segrave, 2001). In 1970, Spartan Industries, Inc. shared a one-of-a-kind list of 250,000 "confessed shoplifters and 'dishonest' retail employees" with other retail companies (Segrave, 2001, p.79). Names on the list were compiled from supermarkets and department stores across

America. Spartan reported that 75% of the names were shoplifters who signed an admission of their theft, where the remaining names on the list were employees who admitted to at least one "dishonest incident during their employment" (Segrave, 2001, p.79). By 1971, newspapers across America were publishing newspaper ads stating that shoplifters were criminals, and that the practice of shoplifting was costly to retailers and customers and weakened the family unit because shoplifting compromised trust and respect.

Uniformed guards are also used to help catch shoplifters in retail establishments. Segrave (2001) reviewed an argument posed by an Ohio-based security expert who noted that while guards, cameras, mirrors, and signs were used as deterrents, they did very little to stop shoplifting. The security expert argued that shoplifting was most effectively minimized through store employees. For example, customers would find it more challenging to steal from a store if they were greeted and offered help because the customer felt "recognized" (Segrave, 2001, p.61). He also urged retailers to block off cashier aisles that were not in use, so customers were forced to walk by a cashier, making it less likely for the customer to steal. The expert explained that cashiers should actively engage with customers by making eye contact and asking, "Is there anything else?" at checkout because the customer may feel recognized (Segrave, 2001, p.62).

Potdar, Guthrie, and Gnoth (2016) proposed that quality relationships between supermarket employees and their customers prevented shoplifting. Based on a systematic review of literature on relationship quality using peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2007 and 2016, Potdar and colleagues identified three factors that encouraged quality retailer-customer relationships: retailers' commitment to corporate social responsibility and cause-related marketing, a supermarket's service quality, and "place bonding" (i.e., a customer's attachment to a place) (Potdar et al., 2015, p.254). The researchers argued that factors such as customer

satisfaction, trust, and commitment may increase a consumer's bond with a retailer, which, in return, prevents shoplifting.

Shoplifting warning signage reading, "WARNING: SHOPLIFTERS WILL BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW" are also used to deter pilfering (Segrave, 2001, p.62). In 1976, McNees et al. researched the effectiveness of shoplifting-prevention through the use of signs. Targeting women's clothing in a department store in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, McNees and colleagues reported that signs designed to increase consumer awareness and/or the threat of detection partially decreased shoplifting rates. In this study, signs were placed around the department store indicating that "shoplifting is stealing," and "the item you see marked with a red star are items that shoplifters frequently take" (McNees et al., 1976, p.380-382). Results were associated with a shoplifting rate that was reduced nearly to zero for items marked with a red star.

Thurber and Snow (1980) conducted a similar study targeting cigarettes in a retail supermarket in a Pacific Northwest community. This study was conducted across four consecutive weeks, with week one and week four as baseline periods. During week two, a sign was hung above the cigarette display indicating that "CIGARETTES are the items most often SHOPLIFTED in this store" (Thurber and Snow, 1980, p.309-310). In week three, the sign advertised that, "EVERYONE pays for SHOPLIFTING" (Thurber and Snow, 1980, p.309-310). However, the prevention signs indicated an increase in shoplifting rates when compared to the baseline periods. Specifically, rates of shoplifting remained consistent during the baseline periods of week one and week four. However, shoplifting increased five percent in week two and four percent in week three when signs were displayed. Thurber and Snow noted that while their results contradicted McNees et al, their signs appeared to act as a stimuli, prompting shoplifting.

As noted by Segrave (2001), in 1978, Hal C. Becker, a behavioral scientist and affiliate of Tulane University School of Engineering, developed a system that projected subliminal audio messages. While thought to only be heard by the subconscious mind, messages such as, "Be honest, do not steal… if I do steal I will be caught and sent to jail" were played in six chain stores in New York. While the device did not gain momentum with retailers, Becker reported shoplifting and employee theft decreased by 30 percent (Segrave, 2001, p.80).

Segrave (2001) also noted other methods of deterring shoplifting. 3M Company created Tattle-Tap, which were thin metal strips retailers placed in books. Rent a Thief Canada, Ltd. "rented" actors who pretended to shoplift, and uniformed guards would apprehend them through a publicly embarrassing situation. Stores also used small, relatively undiscoverable cameras inside the eye of a mannequin, known as the Anne Droid, to catch thieves. Stores used ColorTag, tags filled with dye that explode when they were tampered with or removed incorrectly. Retailers are also known to place security officers in observation towers, known as "Trojan Horses," to watch shoppers through two-way mirrors.

Researchers have also been interested in the perceptions and attitudes of guards while looking for and apprehending shoplifters. For example, Feuerverger and Shearing (1982) examined decisions to prosecute shoplifters across four different retail department stores. Security officers were presented with 192 hypothetical shoplifting cases. Seven factors were included in the case file: (1) value of item shoplifted (low value under $5 vs. high value $20-$50); (2) admission of shoplifting behavior (yes vs. no); (3) sex (male vs. female); (4) age; (5) race; (6) attitude of shoplifter (respectful and aggregable vs. disrespectful and disagreeable); and (7) appearance (clean and well-dressed vs. dirty and poorly dressed). Results indicated that security officers were more likely to prosecute offenders when the value of the item was higher

and the offender admitted shoplifting. Age was also a significant predictor of prosecution, such that those who were elderly (66-80 years) were less likely to be prosecuted. Race was not a significant predictor of prosecution. Well-dressed individuals were more likely to be prosecuted than were those who were poorly dressed or dirty. The researchers concluded that some offender characteristics influenced the security guards decision-making strategies for prosecution.

The risks associated with shoplifting have also been explored. Kraut (1976) sent 1,500 questionnaires to University of Pennsylvania students, of which 606 were completed and returned. Students were asked the number of times they had shoplifted the year before and in their life. Additionally, they were asked when they shoplifted most recently. Results indicated that they shoplifted frequently and recently. Approximately two-thirds of the sample reported shoplifting and one-third had shoplifted within two years prior to the survey. Results also indicated that males shoplifted slightly more than females, younger students shoplifted more than the older students, and lower socioeconomic status students shoplifted more than higher socioeconomic status students. An important take away from the study was the fact that students who shoplifted saw minimal risk associated with shoplifting. Those who shoplifted more described themselves as invulnerable and did not anticipate serious consequences for their actions. However, results indicated that apprehended shoplifters believed that they would be sentenced more harshly if they were caught shoplifting again. Thus, apprehension increased one's perception of the severity and certainty of risk.

Kallis and Vanier (1985) examined the managerial implications for store deterrence activities and the aberrant behavior of shoplifting between shoplifters and non-shoplifters. In 1980, approximately 782,393 shoplifting crimes were recorded by the U.S. Department of Justice. However, Kallis and Vanier (1985) suggested that only one out of ten of these crimes

were actually reported; in this case, the incidence total was closer to eight million cases a year. In their study, data were collected using a questionnaire that was mailed to southern California residents. While 1,000 questionnaires were mailed, only 27% responded. Most of those who completed the questionnaire were White (80%) and male (56%). While almost 82% of the sample had never been arrested, 41.9% reported shoplifting at some time and 18% admitted to shoplifting in the past 12 months. Kallis and Vanier (1985) found that non-shoplifters were less permissive toward thrill seeking behavior than their shoplifting counterparts. When justifying their actions, shoplifters reported that they shoplifted because they felt that the business was an impersonal organization and their crime would not impact the retailer directly or they justified their shoplifting because businesses charged too much for their products. Both groups were asked about their perceptions of the legality of removing towels from hotels, taking ashtrays from restaurants, speeding, stealing office/school supplies for personal use, bank robbery, and stealing food. Overall, both groups saw these acts as illegal. Results also indicated that shoplifters were more aware than non-shoplifters of the impropriety and illegality of these same scenarios.

Respondents were asked about the perceived effectiveness of 14 predetermined shoplifting deterrents, including armed guards at all doors, TV cameras in all areas of the store, jail sentences, and fines. Kallis and Vanier (1985) found that those who shoplifted for the thrill perceived the mandatory checking of coats and packages as an effective deterrent. However, such practices were perceived less effective for non-shoplifters. Additionally, deterrent mechanisms were less effective in deterring individuals who felt they should have the right to make their own choices in life situations, including whether or not to shoplift. The researchers concluded that promotional campaigns labeling shoplifting as “socially undesirable” are more

likely to affect non-shoplifters than shoplifters. However, messages such as, "Make a choice on your own – don't shoplift," may influence shoplifters who are more individualistic (Kallis & Vanier, 1985, p.463). Fear of punishment and use of passive deterrents (e.g., electronic alarms and TV cameras) are unlikely to effectively deter shoplifting, whereas confrontational deterrents (e.g., mandatory coat and bag checking) are perceived to be more effective deterrents.

While retailers spend millions of dollars on sophisticated shoplifting devices and threaten arrest, little has deterred the practice of shoplifting. Sherman and Gartin (1986) examined recidivism rates of 1,595 apprehended shoplifters during a six-month period of time. They reported that almost 5.7% of the arrested shoplifters were rearrested for shoplifting, while 5.9% of the released shoplifters were rearrested. Sherman and Gartin (1986) concluded that being arrested for shoplifting does not significantly deter subsequent shoplifting, likely because the punishment was perceived as unfair and stimulated defiant pride, instigating future criminal behavior.

In 1987, the Police Foundation, funded by the National Institute of Justice, researched the influence of arrest on deterring shoplifting. William, Forst, and Hamilton (1987) collected and analyzed 1,593 shoplifting cases from nine stores in U.S. department store chains. Two groups of shoplifters, those released from the store without arrest and those arrested by police, were followed over a six-month period to examine subsequent shoplifting behavior. Williams and colleagues acknowledged that shoplifters who were arrested were no more likely to shoplift in the six-month period than were those who were not arrested. However, arrest had a significant effect on juveniles. Four percent of the 253 juveniles arrested for shoplifting were rearrested for non-shoplifting crimes in the six-month follow-up. Ten percent of the 315 non-arrested shoplifters were arrested for crimes other than shoplifting in the six-month period. Importantly,

both groups were caught shoplifting again at a rate of 6%. Williams and colleagues concluded, "that for the vast majority of shoplifters in this study, arrest had no apparent deterrent effect on subsequent offenses, either for shoplifting or other offenses" (William et al., 1987, p.52-58).

Michele Tonglet (2002), another researcher from the United Kingdom, conducted two surveys in Northampton between 1997 and 1998 to gain a greater understanding of shoplifting behavior and the impact of shoplifting prevention and deterrence mechanisms. The first survey was administered to shoppers over a two-week period. The second survey was administered to students, aged 13 to 18, in two Northampton schools. Questions assessed respondents' beliefs about the costs and benefits of shoplifting, their approval or disapproval of shoplifting, and the ease of shoplifting. In the first survey, 417 out of 1,200 consumer questionnaires were returned, while 450 out of 451 questionnaires were returned from the school sample. For both the consumer and student groups, respondents who felt shoplifting was dishonest, foolish, bad, and/or wrong were significantly more likely to shoplift than their counterparts who disagreed with those statements. The consumer group also reported that social pressure influenced shoplifting behavior, while students reported that their previous shoplifting experiences played a significant role in whether they would shoplift again. When determining factors that influenced shoplifting intentions, Tonglet reported that, while economic hardships may influence one's propensity to shoplift in general, it was not significant in this study. Recent shoplifters indicated that beliefs about economic benefits, risk of apprehension, social pressure, previous shoplifting experience, and ease of shoplifting were strongly associated with one's future shoplifting behavior. Interestingly, over 52% of recent shoplifters thought they would likely shoplift in the future. Recent shoplifters were also significantly less likely to perceive shoplifting morally wrong or dishonest.

Tonglet (2002) also determined that the risks and consequences of being caught for shoplifting varied among non-shoplifters, past shoplifters, and recent shoplifters. For example, the majority of non-shoplifters and past shoplifters believed that shoplifting would result in some form of apprehension or arrest. Nearly 40% of the non-shoplifters and half of the past shoplifters perceived that low apprehension risks, ineffective security measures, and lenient penalties would inspire them to shoplift. Fifteen percent of recent shoplifters thought they would be caught shoplifting and 33% thought they would be apprehended or arrested for the act. Most of the recent shoplifters perceived security measures as ineffective, viewed shoplifting as a low-risk crime, and thought that ineffective security measures facilitated shoplifting. Essentially, recent shoplifters concluded that arrest and punishment were unlikely to deter them from shoplifting.

A variety of deterrence mechanism have been used nationwide, but not by all retailers. Additionally, perceptions of the risk of apprehension for shoplifting and the effectiveness of deterrence mechanisms continue to yield inconsistent results. As one study showed, offender characteristics, such as appearance, affect the decision-making strategies of security guards. While deterrence mechanisms have been employed around the world, security devices and one's probability of arrest do not always deter shoplifting.

Juvenile Shoplifting

Earlier accounts of shoplifting historically chastised adult women for the crime but by the 1970s, scholars began to take an interest in youth shoplifting behavior. Various studies have reported motivations for youth shoplifting behavior, including economic, social, and personal factors (Prayag & Juwaheer, 2009). Some studies indicated that adolescents under the age of 20 are more likely to be apprehended for shoplifting (Klemke, 1992; Kraut, 1976), while others

suggest that youth shoplift more often during middle adolescence (i.e., 13-18 years) (Cox et al., 1990; Krasnovsky & Lane, 1998). Though shoplifting is deemed "common behavior" among youth (Cox et al., 1990, p.149), it remains understudied (Krasnovsky & Lane, 1998). When it is studied, interpretations and results vary between scholars.

Klemke (1978) reported more involvement in shoplifting among younger children than among older youth. In his study, 1,189 youth were administered a self-report survey; 751 youth (63%) indicated that they had shoplifted at some point in their lives. Of these 751 youth, 50% had shoplifted by the age of 10 years, 39% began shoplifting between 10 years old and their last school year, and 26% began shoplifting during the last active school year. Shoplifting decreased as children aged. Of the freshman youth, 39% reported recent shoplifting, whereas only 18% of seniors reported recent shoplifting behavior. Males (68%) were slightly more likely to shoplift than were females (57%) and lower-class youth (66%) were more likely to shoplift than were middle-class youth (57%). Most youth reported shoplifting infrequently. Most items stolen were under $2. Four percent of youth (51 individuals) reported shoplifting more than 10 times during the last school year.

Hiew (1981) conducted a questionnaire survey in New Brunswick, Canada in order to examine community approaches to shoplifting. Of the 1,800 high school students who were sampled, 53.9% reported having shoplifted at least once. Of the shoplifters, 53.3% were male and 46.7% were female. A majority of the high school students (67.9%) stated that they were unaware of shoplifting penalties. Additionally, 35.3% of the students argued that they would shoplift if they would not get caught. When students were asked why their classmates shoplift, the most common response was that their peers stole for thrill-seeking behavior (32%).

As mentioned earlier, Buckle and Farrington (1984) conducted the first known systematic observational study of shoplifting in a department store. While they were not specifically targeting youth shoplifters, they noted that out of the 503 randomly selected shoppers, 24 were juveniles. Shoppers 55 years and over shoplifted most frequently, while none of the 24 youth shoplifted. In their 1994 replication study, Buckle and Farrington (1994) concluded that shoplifting was most prevalent among persons 17-25 years. While their results are somewhat conflicting in the replication study, they noted that the items sold during this observation may have been more appealing to youth and therefore they shoplifted.

Moschis, Cox, and Kellaris (1987) sampled 150 adolescents in middle and high school using anonymous self-administered questionnaires to examine motivations for shoplifting and shoplifting behaviors. Sporting motivations (i.e., "shoplifting is like a game") were positively associated with age and peer communication about shoplifting (Moschis et al., 1987, p.526-527). Specifically, as youth age, they become more susceptible to peer influence and shoplifting becomes "game-like" when shared with others. Additionally, the frequency of peer communication about shoplifting was positively associated with favorable attitudes toward shoplifting. Peers who have favorable attitudes toward shoplifting and who discuss shoplifting frequently influence other youth to engage in shoplifting behavior. Social class was positively associated with economic motivations towards shoplifting behavior. This study demonstrated that peers and social circumstances influence adolescent shoplifting behavior. Unfortunately, prevalence rates and demographic profiles for shoplifting were not included in this study.

Cox, Cox, and Moschis (1990) used a self-report questionnaire to study the pervasiveness of shoplifting among Georgia youth. Their sample included 1,692 youth; 51.5% were male and 48.5% were female. Of these students, 58% were in 7th or 8th grade and 42% were in grades 9-12.

Most students were White (58.9%), followed by African American (36.7%) and other (4.4%). Shoplifting behavior was measured by asking youth how often they shoplifted, what products were lifted, the reasons for their behavior, and various demographic and background information. Of the 1,692 youth, 632 (37%) had shoplifted at least once in the past year. Economic motivations and wanting contraband materials were two primary reasons for youth shoplifting behavior; peer pressure was significantly less likely to contribute to their pilfering. Shoplifting youth were more likely to be male, despite the popular view that shoplifting is a feminized crime. No statistical relationships were observed between youth shoplifting and family occupational status. The most commonly shoplifted items were clothing, records, cigarettes, toys, sporting goods, alcoholic beverages, and health products.

In order to gain a better understanding of youth shoplifting behavior, Tonglet (2002) collected data from two separate surveys in Northampton 1997 to 1998. In one shopper survey (n=417), 68% of shoppers indicated they never shoplifted, 25% of shoppers indicated they had shoplifted over 12 months ago, and 7% of shoppers indicated that had shoplifted within the last 12 months. In the school survey, 49% of youth reported no shoplifting activity, 32% reported they shoplifted over 12 months ago, and 19% indicated they had shoplifted within the last 12 months. Similar to Cox et al. (1990) and Ray (1987), she concluded that economics, personal morality, previous shoplifting experiences, and the risk of apprehension all influence youth shoplifting behavior.

Prayag and Juwaheer (2009) used a questionnaire and a 45-minute interview to collect data on teenage shoplifting. They reported that, out of 238 teenagers, 46.2% reported shoplifting activity within the last year. Males (67.6%) claimed to have shoplifted more often than did females (42.9%). Of the teens who shoplifted, candies or sweets were shoplifted most frequently

(21.4%), followed by school supplies (13%), and books or magazines (11.3%). Male youth were more likely to pilfer music-related items, followed by books or magazine, toys, and cigarettes.

Hirtenlehner, Blackwell, Leitgeob, and Backer (2014) explored gender differences in shoplifting frequency and perceived risk of detection among juveniles in 2011. Hirtenlehner and colleagues administered an online survey to 7th and 8th grade children at 50 Lower and Upper Austrian schools; 2,911 students responded and most were 13 and 14 years old. Of these youth, 5.1% reported shoplifting at least once in the last year. Male youth (7.3%) reported having committed more acts of shoplifting in the last year than did female youth (2.8%). Common risk behavior among shoplifting youth included responses like, "I like to take chances," "it's fun," or "it's fun to do dangerous things" (Hirtenlehner et al., 2014, p.48-49).

The literature on juvenile shoplifting suggests that scholars have relied heavily on self-report data. Various scholars have noted that youth shoplift frequently, but prevalence rates differ. Klemke (1978) reported that 63% of his sample shoplifted in one study, whereas only 22% of his sample shoplifted in a similar study. Hiew (1981) reported that almost 54% of youth respondents admitted to shoplifting at least once, while Cox, Cox, and Moschis (1990) reported that 37% of their sample shoplifted. Tonglet (2002) reported that 51% of sampled youth shoplifted at some point. Prayag and Juwaheer (2009) reported that 46.2% of sampled youth shoplifted in the last year, whereas Hirtenlehner et al. (2014) reported that only 5.1% of sampled youth reported shoplifting in the past year. While rates of shoplifting vary among youth, shoplifting is undoubtedly prevalent, and current research is needed to bridge information gaps concerning this crime.

Typologies of Shoplifters

Cameron (1964) conducted the first extensive research study about shoplifting. Using a combination of city police records and store records from 10 large Chicago department stores, an eight-year sample of 4,500 shoplifting arrests was compared to a three-year sample of 817 court cases. This benchmark study revealed two typologies of shoplifters: "boosters" and "snitches." "Boosters", or "commercial shoplifters," comprised almost 10% of her sample of shoplifters. "Boosters" were motivated to steal for financial gain (i.e., to sell items) and were considered to have well-established contacts within the criminal community. While Cameron (1964) did not consider this type of shoplifter to be a professional thief, other researchers diverge from her theory and argue that this descriptive narrative fits the professional shoplifter/criminal profile (Krasnovsky & Lane, 1998). "Snitches", or "amateur shoplifters", were considered to be "respectable" community members who did not share the same values of the criminal subculture. These persons were also not poor people stealing for personal needs; they did not resell items and they were not observed to have compulsive tendencies. Interestingly, of the 817 court cases, approximately 6% of the women shoplifters were referred for psychiatric evaluations, with less than one-third being considered committable to a mental institution. Cameron (1964) concluded that kleptomania was not a prominent motivator for these shoplifters.

Klemke (1982) critiqued Cameron's study, and while he noted that her study served "as a stimulus and point of comparison for subsequent researchers," he described her findings as "provocative generalizations and unwarranted claims" (Klemke, 1982, p.88-90). For example, Klemke (1982) argued that the effect of being apprehended for shoplifting led to inaccurate conclusions. Cameron (1964) noted that in one store, 709 women were arrested for shoplifting; only 20 (2.82%) women had prior shoplifting arrest records, whereas 18 out of 147 (12.24%)

males had prior shoplifting arrests. Cameron (1964) concluded that "once [a person was] arrested, interrogated, and in their own perspective, perhaps humiliated, pilferers apparently stop pilfering. The rate of recidivism is amazingly low." However, Klemke (1982) noted that official records (i.e., court or police records) are inherently biased because they under-report offenses and unless police officers apprehended shoplifters every time they shoplifted, one cannot make accurate conclusions about repeated apprehensions. Additionally, Cameron (1964) collected data from Chicago city police records and only 10 Chicago department stores. Cameron's findings are not generalizable, especially since she concluded that once a person is caught shoplifting, they rarely shoplift again. Klemke (1982) continued his critique by examining self-report data from apprehended youth. Of 720 youth, 27% were apprehended for shoplifting one or more times by store personnel. Of 127 youth who reported being caught shoplifting by their parents, 54% reported that they continued to shoplift even after being apprehended. Today, one could surmise that Cameron's findings are questionable since being apprehended does not automatically deter subsequent shoplifting activity.

Moore (1984) extended Cameron's typologies by examining frequency of shoplifting activity, factors that influence shoplifting behavior, the uses of shoplifted items, and apprehension and prosecution reactions among a sample of 300 convicted shoplifters. Additional psychological evaluations, personality tests, and intellectual tests were administered to each person. From this information, Moore (1984) created 5 typologies of shoplifters: (1) "impulsive shoplifter"; (2) "occasional shoplifter"; (3) "episodic shoplifter"; (4) "amateur shoplifter"; and (5) "semi-professional shoplifter".

Of the 300 convicted shoplifters, 15.4% were described as "impulsive shoplifters" (Moore, 1984, p.55) These individuals had minimal shoplifting activity; they usually shoplifted

one to two times and the activity was not planned. The "impulsive shoplifter" usually took one inexpensive item during the event. When apprehended by security officers, this shoplifter felt immense guilt, embarrassment, and shame. Often, these persons were shocked to be stopped in the first place. Because shoplifting was perceived to be a traumatic event, these persons stated they were unlikely to shoplift again.

The "occasional shoplifter" comprised 15% of the sample (Moore, 1984, p. 56). These persons reported having shoplifted 3 to 10 items within the last year. They reported economic or social motivations for their behavior. Despite minimizing the seriousness of the offense, the "occasional shoplifter" reported feeling mild embarrassment, usually admitted to stealing, and acknowledged that shoplifting was wrong. Shoplifters in this category were not likely to shoplift again.

"Episodic shoplifters," representing 1.7% of the sample, were described as people who shoplifted irregularly (Moore,1984, p. 57). Individuals also reported that they shoplifted as "self-punishment"; severe psychological problems in these persons were reported by professionals. Episodic shoplifters reported depression, guilt, and anger when they shoplifted. These individuals also reported that shoplifting was morally and legally wrong.

"Amateur shoplifters" comprised a majority of the sample (56.4%) (Moore, 1984, p.58). These shoplifters reported shoplifting regularly, sometimes weekly. While they were aware that shoplifting was legally wrong, they found it profitable. These persons tended to shoplift small, concealable items. When they were apprehended by security officers, they claimed to have only rarely shoplifted.

Lastly, "semi-professional shoplifters" comprised 11.7% of the sample (Moore, 1984, p.58). Shoplifting was described as a "life-style" and occurred weekly. These individuals tended

to resell pilfered items and saw themselves being treated unfairly or wronged by society. They did not view shoplifting as wrong. Semi-professional shoplifters did not admit guilt and often had a story prepared when approached by security officers. These individuals often shoplifted after being prosecuted and fined.

Similar to Klemke's critique of Cameron's typologies, Krasnovsky and Lane (1998) questioned the generalizability of Moore's work, especially since he had a small sample size (n=300). Additionally, Moore's classification was based on self-reported information from convicted, frequent shoplifters (69.8%), some with emotional and psychological problems. While Krasnovsky and Lane (1998) agreed that Moore's work laid the groundwork for subsequent shoplifting research, researchers should approach these classifications with caution.

Shoplifting Today – Gender, Race, Social Class, and Age

When the term shoplifting was first coined in the 17th century, men were perceived to commit most shoplifting offenses. By the 18th century, all persons of lower class were perceived to shoplift. By the 19th century, shoplifting activity occurred more often among privileged, upper- and middle-class women. From the 1970s to the 1990s, researchers estimated that as many as 60% of people shoplifted in their lives (Klemke, 1982; Klemke 1992; Kraut, 1976). One researcher estimated that 1 in every 12 shoppers shoplift (Ray, 1987), while another estimated that 1 in 11 people has shoplifted at some point (The National Association of Shoplifting Prevention, 2019). While a variety of data sources report information on shoplifting, they lack consensus. These limitations and inconsistencies continue to impact our understanding of shoplifting (Blanco et al., 2008), but it is undisputable that shoplifting is prevalent, even well into the 21st century.

Shoplifting offender characteristics, such as gender, race, social class, and age, have received limited attention from scholars. Shoplifting has been characterized as a feminized crime (Abelson, 1989) and therefore became a popular stereotype among women (Abelson, 1989; Klemke, 1992; Ray & Briar, 1988). A major fault of historical sources is that they failed to consider that women shopped at higher proportions than did men (Klemke, 1992). After shoplifting grabbed the attention of scholars in the 1970s, many studies contradicted the previous stereotype by reporting that males were equally as involved (Marshall & He, 2010; Sarasalo et al, 1996) or more involved (Bamfield, 2012; Blanco et al., 2008; Buckle & Farrington, 1994; Cook & May, 2019; Cox et al., 1990; Dabney et al., 2004; Farrington, 1999; Hirtenlehner et al., 2014; Klemke, 1978; Klemke, 1982; Klemke, 1992; Krasnovsky & Lane, 1998; Prayag & Juwaheer, 2009; Tonglet, 2002) in shoplifting. However, in one current study, Farmer and Dawson (2017) reported higher numbers of female than male shoplifters. Farmer and Dawson acknowledge the anomalous nature of their findings but do not provide an explanation for them.

Race and ethnicity have also remained relatively underexplored in the shoplifting literature. In fact, some shoplifting studies did not examine race (Hirtenlehner et al., 2014; Praya & Juwaheer, 2009; Thomas & Farrell, 1982; Tonglet, 2002), collected racial composition but did not report the data (Buckle & Farrington, 1994; Moschis et al., 1987), or did not find any significant associations between race and shoplifting (Klemke, 1978). Krasnovsky and Lane (1998) argued that no conclusive evidence has emerged to suggest that shoplifting is a product of race or cultural differences. In one early study, Cameron (1964) noted that fewer African Americans were represented in her study of shoplifting. However, when she looked at apprehension data, three in five apprehended African Americans (58%) were charged with shoplifting while only 1 in 10 apprehended Whites (10.9%) were formally charged with

shoplifting, suggesting differential treatment rather than differential involvement. Cameron (1964) concluded that African Americans were likely subjected to racial bias, especially since African Americans shoplifted less expensive items in her study. Robin (1963) also found that African American shoplifters were prosecuted more than their White counterparts, but Cohen and Stark (1974) and Hindelang (1974) found no racial biases in their investigations.

In other studies, people of color accounted for higher numbers of shoplifters. For example, Dabney, Hollinger, and Dugan (2004) observed that a shoplifters in their sample were significantly more likely to be African American or Hispanic than white or other races. On the other hand, a few studies have concluded that Whites were more involved in shoplifting than were African Americans (Kallis & Vanier, 1985). Blanco et al. (2008) reported that shoplifting behavior was more common among Native Americans and non-Hispanic Whites. Most currently, Cook and May (2019) found that from 2009-2013, African Americans in their sample were more involved in shoplifting incidents; however, from 2014-2018, White persons in their sample were more involved in shoplifting incidents. While it is possible that this finding is unique to the jurisdiction under study or a product of legislative changes to shoplifting sentencing, Cook and May (2019) conclude that future research should explore demographic predictors of shoplifting. Race and ethnicity continue to be underreported among shoplifting studies, and when reported, shoplifting appears to occur across all racial and ethnic groups.

Few studies examine social class or socioeconomic status and shoplifting (Krasnovsky & Lane, 1998), likely because they rely on self-reported information or census-level tract data. Cameron (1964) noted that male shoplifters had higher unemployment rates (41%) in her study. Won and Yamamoto (1968) observed the most shoplifting cases in middle-income households (52.1%), followed by upper-income households (43.2%), low-income households (4.7%), and

the lowest-income households (0%). Gold (1970) reported that White lower-class youth reported 10% to 20% more shoplifting than did White upper-class youth in Flint, Michigan. Klemke (1982) noted that lower-class youth reported higher shoplifting activity, especially when controlling for gender. Using census-level tract data and police records (which indicated store and offender residence locations), Thomas and Farrell (1982) found that those who were apprehended for shoplifting often had adequate money on them that day to pay for the stolen good. The highest levels of arrest were among those who had low-median family income and among census tracts with low housing values. Moore (1984) revealed that 72% of "occasional" and "semi-professional" shoplifters reported low incomes as a factor in their shoplifting behavior. Yates (1986) gathered extensive background and demographic information from Toronto, Canada shoplifters. Using interview assessments, probationary notes, and records, economic disadvantage (e.g., shoplifters stole food or clothes for family) was noted in 63% (64 of 101 shoplifters) of the sample. Dabney et al. (2004) concluded that lower- and working-class persons shoplifted more than their middle- and upper-class counterparts. Blanco et al. (2008) reported that although shoplifters may be from any social class, shoplifting was more common among those with higher education and income. Taken together, these results suggest that little consensus has emerged around the relationship between social class and shoplifting. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that shoplifting occurs among all social classes.

Cases of shoplifting have been reported in virtually every age group and shoplifting remains one of the most frequently committed crimes among youth and adults (The National Association for Shoplifting Prevention, 2019). Reports from the 1970s through today have indicated that 5% to 63% of adolescents have admitted to shoplifting at least once (Cox et. al, 1990; Hiew, 1981; Hirtenleahuer et al., 2014; Klemke, 1978; Klemke, 1982; Osgood et al., 1989;

Prayag & Juwaheer, 2009; Tonglet; 2002). Earlier researchers commonly agreed that persons 20 years and younger are most likely to be caught shoplifting and that 40% of apprehended shoplifters are adolescents (Baumer & Rosenbaum, 1984; Klemke, 1978; Klemke, 1982; Klemke, 1992; Kraut, 1976; Osgood et al., 1989). Numerous studies have been conducted on adult shoplifting and some researchers report increased shoplifting activity in persons 55 years and older (Buckle & Farrington, 1984). One study reported late-onset kleptomania in a 77-year-old woman (McNeilly & Burke, 1998), which brings up concerns of shoplifting even in the aging community. Blanco et al. (2008) indicated that the lifetime prevalence of shoplifting is about 10% in the U.S. population aged 18 years and over. Age as a predictor of shoplifting continues to be examined in shoplifting literature, and while research is needed to expand and confirm previous findings, shoplifting is a common behavior among most age groups. Although gender, race, social class, and age are important predictors of criminal offending, there is no typical profile of a shoplifter (National Association of Shoplifting Prevention, 2019).

Shoplifting Today – Arrests for Shoplifting from the UCR

The UCR, a widely used secondary data source, includes information on larceny-theft (which includes shoplifting) in its annual reports. Table 0 displays arrest data for larceny-theft and shoplifting from 1991-2018. Of the 177 million individuals arrested for larceny-theft between 1991 and 2018, 28.8 million (16.26%) were arrested for shoplifting.

Figure 1 displays shoplifting arrest trends by year. From 1991 to 2004, shoplifting arrests steadily declined. A period of sharp decline is noted between 2005 and 2006. In 2005, shoplifting arrests dropped 1.45 times less than reported in 2004 (1,010,756 v. 698,233, respectively). Arrests levels returned by 2009, then slightly increased until 2015. Overall, shoplifting arrests in 2018 are 1.42 times lower than they were in 1991.

Motivational Explanations for Shoplifting

Although millions of items are shoplifted each year, not all retail items are shoplifted at the same rate. Some of the most targeted products for shoplifting in the United States are fashion accessories and clothing, mobile handsets and accessories, power tools, wine, and cosmetic products (Global Retail Theft Barometer, 2014). Motivations for shoplifting, however, remain understudied among shoplifting scholars. While retailers use a variety of sophisticated security systems to deter shoplifting, motivations to shoplift are usually attributed to myriad factors, not just one (Tonglet, 2002). For example, Klemke (1982) reported economic, personal, and social motivations for juvenile shoplifting. He reported that 45.1% of youth expressed economic motivations to shoplift: 24.1% "need[ed] something and couldn't afford it," 20.7% "wanted[ed] the item and didn't want to pay for it," 0.3% "[got] items to sell." Social motivations also were reported, such that 42.4% of youth were motivated to shoplift because they perceived they could "get away with it," it was fun, or it gave them a thrill. Only a few youth reported social motivations for shoplifting, including peer pressure (5.9%) and to sell illicit items such as beer and cigarettes (3.2%).

Moore (1984) reported economic motivations for shoplifting in a clinical study of 300 shoplifters, most (76%) of whom reported weekly shoplifting. Economic disadvantage motivated shoplifting behavior in 72% of the adult shoplifters. While character defects (i.e., personality disorders) were present in some of the respondents, he found little evidence that persons who shoplifted were motivated by mental illness. Nearly twice as many women who shoplifted were affected with psycho-stressors (i.e., anxiety, depression, divorce) than their male counterparts.

Kallis and Vanier (1985) reported economic, personal, and social motivations for shoplifting behavior among youth. Attitudes concerning shoplifting motivations were examined

and the following eight factors were determined: (1) orientation toward permissiveness (harmful nature of shoplifting); (2) thrill-seeking orientation (shoplifting as an exciting activity); (3) orientation toward punishment (punishment for shoplifting); (4) product-redress/socioeconomic-grievance orientation ("getting back" at a retailer); (5) pathology orientation ("sickness explanation" or justification); (6) orientation towards shoplifters (how shoplifters are viewed); (7) economic orientation (monetary gain); and (8) personal/peer group moral orientation (image of one's self shoplifting or the image of a peer). Non-shoplifting youth were more likely than shoplifting youth to view shoplifting as pathologically motivated and injurious and therefore they were not motivated to shoplift. Additionally, non-shoplifting youth were not motivated to shoplift to fulfill thrill-seeking behavior, whereas youth who shoplifted were motivated to shoplift for the excitement or thrill of the activity.

Turner and Cashdan (1988) offered a variety of motives for shoplifting behavior in college-aged students (17-25 years old), including economic needs, self-indulgence, thrill-seeking, company diffusion, company revenge, dare, and social diffusion. Economic needs included factors such as lack of funds or low socioeconomic status as motivators of shoplifting. Students primarily contended that they were motivated to shoplift because they wanted to obtain goods at low costs. Self-indulgent motivations were fueled by "wanting" something rather than by "needing" it. Thrill seeing motivations were characterized by excitement, pleasure, and seeing shoplifting as a game. Company diffusion indicated that students saw little harm in shoplifting. Company revenge meant that students expressed negative attitudes towards certain establishments and therefore felt justified in shoplifting there. Students who reported dare as a motivator for shoplifting suggested that peer pressure and social acceptance influenced their act.

Lastly, respondents indicated that "everyone does it" and therefore they were deviantly socialized to shoplift.

Cox, Cox, and Moschis (1990) examined shoplifting behavior using a self-report survey and reported experiential, economic, contraband, and social motivations for youth shoplifting. Cox and colleagues noted that experiential motivations, such as thrill-seeking behavior, contributed to youth shoplifting. Youth perceived some shops as "allowing shoplifting" because they did not deter the behavior. Youth also reported economic motivations and reported that they were good customers in the past, so there was no harm in shoplifting. Additionally, youth noted that retailers would not miss the shoplifted item. Youth also expressed contraband motivations because they could not legally obtain certain products or were embarrassed by the item (i.e., cigarettes, pornography, beer). Social motivations for shoplifting were also discussed, such that youth were socially motivated to shoplift because their peers shoplifted.

Prayag and Juwaheer (2009) explored juvenile shoplifting motivations using a self-report survey and identified social, negative perceptions, experiential, and environmental motives for shoplifting. Social factors such as peer pressure explained 11.3% of youth motivations. Youth also reported having negative perceptions about retailers, which accounted for 9.8% of motivations. Experiential reasons accounted for 8.8% of motivations, meaning youth wanted to try shoplifting. Lastly, environmental motivations contributed to 8.8% of explained shoplifting behavior, such that youth felt insufficient security devices were related to their shoplifting behavior.

Nadeau, Rochlen, and Tyminki (2019) identified personality traits (i.e., depression, anger, cognitive impairment, addiction, compulsiveness, impulsivity, and antisociality) linked to shoplifting motivation. Individuals who cope with depression accounted for 18.3% (37

individuals) of respondents in their study. Hobbyist-type motivations accounted for 17.8% (36 individuals); these individuals described themselves as "above the law" and therefore motivated to shoplift. Addictive-compulsive motivations accounted for 8.9% (18 individuals) of respondents and economic motivations, those marked by low annual income and socioeconomic status, accounted for 6.9% (14 individuals) of the sample.

Identifying factors that contribute to a person's motivation to shoplift are often rooted in behaviors that require multidisciplinary approaches, drawing on research from criminologists, sociologists, psychologists, and consumer behaviorists (Gudjonsson, 1990; Krasnovsky & Lane, 1998; Prayag & Juwaheer, 2009). Economic motivations largely point to financial gain as a reason for shoplifting behavior. Social motivations such as peer pressure contribute to shoplifting among youth. Personality traits, such as depressive states, compulsive disorders, anger issues, and addiction have also been linked with motives for shoplifting. Experiential motivations, such as thrill-seeking behavior, have been expressed by adults and youth among various studies. Though shoplifting may be viewed as a crime of convenience to society, additional research is needed to identify motivations so that shoplifting behavior may be better understood.

Theoretical Explanations for Shoplifting

Scholars have employed a variety of theoretical explanations for theft-related crimes, including shoplifting. For example, the theory of planned behavior (originating from psychology literature), and routine activity theory (a criminological theory) have been integrated and applied to understand shoplifting behavioral intentions. Routine activity theory postulates that one's intention to shoplift may be influenced by offender motivations, absence of capable guardians, and the suitability of shoplifting targets while the theory of planned behavior suggests that individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls influences one's

intention to shoplift (Korgaonkar et al., 2020). When the theories are integrated, they help to explain shoplifting decision-making strategies. Nudge theory, a relatively new theory, has also been applied to shoplifting, asserting that shoplifting behavior may be deterred by designing environments with contextual clues to unconsciously manipulate behavior (Sharma & Scott, 2015). When applied to shoplifting, techniques of neutralization provides a helpful framework explaining how individuals justify or excuse their shoplifting behavior (Harris & Daunt, 2011). An application of situational action theory to shoplifting postulates that personal morality and moral context are factors of shoplifting involvement (Hirtenlehner & Hardie, 2016).

One theoretical perspective that has often been used to explain property crime has been social disorganization theory. Social disorganization theory has been applied to theft-related incidents such as street robbery (Smith et al., 2000), breaking and entering (Andresen, 2006), robbery (Cancino et al., 2009), residential burglary (Kikuchi & Desmond, 2010), burglary and robbery at a college campus (LaRue & Andresen, 2015), farm equipment theft (Osborne, 2015), and motor vehicle theft (Andresen, 2006; Kikuchi & Desmond, 2010; LaRue & Andresen, 2015; Lee et al., 2016). However, no known studies have applied social disorganization theory to the crime of shoplifting.

Social disorganization theory provides a theoretical orientation linking community characteristics with levels of crime and delinquency. Shaw and McKay's (1942) study of juvenile delinquency in urban areas sought to explore why certain geographic areas in Chicago had higher rates of crime than others. Their study conceptualized social disorganization through socioeconomic status, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility. Shaw and McKay (1942) borrowed from Park and Burgess's (1925) discussion of urban expansion and concentric zone theory to examine residential locations of court referred juveniles using spatial mappings. Shaw

and McKay (1942) noted that crime was not evenly distributed in Chicago communities. They found neighborhoods with high rates of crime to be located near inner-city industrial businesses. In contrast, lower rates of crime were observed in suburban communities located on the outskirts of the industrial zone.

To better understand the spatial distribution of crime, they tested for associations between economic status and crime. Shaw and McKay (1942) analyzed the number of families receiving public assistance, median rental price, and number of owned homes. They noted that the crime rate increased in areas marked by higher proportions of people on public assistance and in areas with higher unemployment rates. Additionally, they noted that crime rates decreased as the median rental price increased. Shaw and McKay (1942) suggested that suburban areas had lower crime rates because they were economically and socially positioned to succeed. That is, affluent suburban communities shared similar attitudes and conventional beliefs and had access to security, education, and training, which helped to reduce an environment conducive to crime. Inner-city neighborhoods were found to have higher numbers of immigrants, higher numbers of African American headed households, and were marked with higher rates of crime than were suburban communities. Additionally, they found crime rates to be associated with neighborhoods that had higher rates of residential mobility (i.e., residents moving in and out). Shaw and McKay (1942) asserted that areas with high residential mobility and high racial heterogeneity had varying social beliefs and standards, all conditions found to be linked with inner-city Chicago neighborhoods. They concluded that neighborhoods with economic disadvantage, high residential mobility, and high racial heterogeneity lacked important social relationships that informally regulated behavior. Furthermore, they argued that delinquency was a function of structural neighborhood characteristics rather than individual characteristics.

Shaw and McKay's study did not come without limitations and criticisms have focused on its macro-level application and its measurement of social disorganization (Vesey & Messner, 1999). While it lost momentum within the criminological community from the 1950s to the 1980s, it regained prestige after several expansions refined the theory (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Kirk & Papcahristos, 201; Kornhauser, 1978; Sampson & Groves 1989; Sampson et al., 1997). For example, Kornhauser (1978) argued that Shaw and McKay ignored causal mechanisms of social disorganization. Therefore, Kornhauser (1978) expanded Shaw and McKay's social disorganization to include two subgroups of social disorganization: "strain variants" and "control variants." The strain variant of social disorganization theory postulated that persons who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods have "frustrated wants" (or strains) that lead to criminal activity. The control variant of social disorganization posits that neighborhoods characterized by disadvantage have low social control caused by high residential mobility and high racial heterogeneity; neighborhoods have crime, then, because they are unable to establish social solidarity, a sense of community, or common goals.

Sampson and Groves (1989) were the first to empirically test Shaw and McKay's model of social disorganization. In their study, they looked at poverty, racial heterogeneity, and racial mobility as indicators of community attachment. Additionally, they looked at the mediating effects of community relationships, friendship networks, and unsupervised teens on crime. Sampson and Groves (1984) found that communities with higher indicators of disorganization were those with fewer social bonds.

In another critique, Bursik and Grasmick (1993) created a model looking at the mediating effects of relationships on disorganization and crime. Bursik and Grasmick (1993) postulated that community ties and socialization influenced rates of crime. Therefore, communities with

strong social ties, high community involvement, and effective socialization of children would have lower crime rates than would those lacking these factors. Similar to Shaw and McKay (1942), they proposed that high levels of poverty, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility led to social disorganization, resulting in higher rates of crime.

Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) also expanded Shaw and McKay's work by building off the previous work of Sampson and Groves (1989). Their expansion of social disorganization theory examined the mediating effects of social networks on crime. Sampson and colleagues concluded that collective efficacy is reduced in neighborhoods characterized by poverty, residential mobility, and racial heterogeneity because mutual trust cannot be established between community members. Social ties and informal monitoring of youth is diminished in these areas, leading to an increase in criminogenic behavior.

Another critique and expansion of Shaw and McKay's work was from Kirk and Papachristos (2011). Building on Sampson et al.'s theory of collective efficacy, Kirk and Papachristos (2011) argued that both structural and cultural characteristics influenced criminogenic behavior. In their theory of legal cynicism, they argued that concentrated disadvantage and residential mobility, components of social disorganization, breed a collective distrust in social interactions with law enforcement. In some cases, cynicism constrained residents' choices because they were unable to rely on law enforcement and therefore, they created their own form of social control. Their results showed that legal cynicism led to higher community violence and social disorder.

Throughout these studies, social disorganization is operationalized through three key factors: racial heterogeneity; socioeconomic stats; and residential mobility. Pratt and Cullen's meta-analysis assessing macro-level predictors and theories of crime examined a variety of

measures of social disorganization and their impact on crime. These measures include: (1) measures of racial heterogeneity (i.e., percent Black or nonwhite); (2) socioeconomic status (i.e., percent below the poverty line and unemployment rate); (3) residential mobility; (4) family disruptions (i.e., percent divorced or separated, single-headed households and female-headed households); (5) collective efficacy; and (6) unsupervised peers (i.e., household activity ratio and public sources of support). Pratt and Cullen (2005) found that high levels of racial heterogeneity, economic deprivation, and high family disruption were the strongest and most stable predictors of crime. Thus, social disorganization theory had strong empirical support when compared to various other theories.

While no known studies have applied social disorganization theory to shoplifting, several studies have applied social disorganization theory to other property crimes. For example, Cancino, Martinez, and Stowell (2009) used social disorganization theory to examine the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and robbery in San Antonio, Texas. Using robbery data and tract-level data from the 2000 U.S. Census, they constructed a measure of disadvantage using the percent in poverty, the percent of female-headed households with children, the percent unemployed, and the percent with no college education. Next, they measured residential instability using the percent of the population that moved within the past five year and the percent of vacant housing units. Racial heterogeneity measurements included the proportion of neighborhoods that were non-Latino Black, non-Latino White, Latino, and non-Latino Asian. An immigration index was operationalized by the percent of neighborhood population that is foreign-born and arrived in the 1990s. Interestingly, they included a crime-prone population that was composed using the population of males between the age of 18 and 34. They conclude by arguing that there was mixed support for social disorganization theory in their

study. For example, residential instability was positively associated with intra- and inter-group robbery, which is consistent with social disorganization theory because crime increased among racially heterogenic groups. However, when measuring the effects of disadvantage among each racial group, support for social disorganization theory was stronger for Blacks than Latinos. Thus, they found mixed support for social disorganization theory because the measurements did not translate the same for all racial groups.

Kikuchi and Desmond (2010) suggested that social disorganization theory provides a framework to describe neighborhood crime rates over time. Using U.S. Census block group level data from Indianapolis, a residential stability index was created using the percentage of persons age five and over who have changed residences within the past five years and the percentage of renter occupied housing units. Two variables were created: (1) residential mobility and (2) economic disadvantage. Economic disadvantage was measured using several indicators: (1) the percent of household below the federally defined poverty line; (2) the percent of households receiving public assistance; (3) the percent of female-headed households with children; (4) the percent unemployed; (5) the percent of persons age 25 and over who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent; (6) and the percentage of the population that is African American. They found neighborhood characteristics over time were statistically related to neighborhood crime. However, residential stability did not have a statistical effect on neighborhood crime. Thus, social disorganization theory received partial support in their study.

Osborne (2015) examined macro-level correlates of farm equipment theft using routine activity theory and social disorganization theory. Social disorganization measures using 2010 U.S. Census data included measurements for poverty, residential mobility, household instability, and ethnic heterogeneity. For poverty, he included the percentage of households below the

federally defined poverty line. Residential mobility was measured as the percentage of residents who moved to their current residence within the last five years. House instability was measured by proportions of household that are headed by single female parent with children under the age of 18. Ethnic heterogeneity included the proportions of household falling within each ethnic group. In summary, measures of social disorganization predicted that poverty was a statistical-significant predictor of farm equipment theft. Counties with high levels of residential mobility has higher farm equipment theft; however ethnic heterogeneity did not indicate a statistically significant relationship with farm equipment theft. Thus, Osborne (2015) concluded that social disorganization theory may be applicable to such theft.

While Osborne (2015) included measures for motivated offender, suitable target, and absence of capable guardian for routine activity theory, this level of data is not included in this proposed research. For example, he included average farm size, worker density, total value of equipment, and proportion of farmland as measures for routine activity theory. Average store size, worker density, and the total value of merchandise in retail establishments are not accessible among our data. Therefore, routine activity theory may not be applied to shoplifting in this thesis.

Lee et al. (2016) examined neighborhood characteristics and auto theft with an application of social disorganization theory. Using U.S. Census data, three factors were measured for social disorganization including measurements of concentrated disadvantage, immigration concentration, and residential stability. The poverty measurement for concentrated disadvantage included proportion of the population to the total population below the poverty level, receiving public assistance, younger than 18 years, African American, unemployed, and female-headed household. The racial heterogeneity measurement for immigration concentration

included proportions of Latino and foreign-born individuals. The residential mobility measurement for residential stability included percentage of those living at the same residence for over five years. Though immigration concentration was not associated with auto theft rate, their results supported the social disorganization theory model in which auto theft rates showed higher concentrated disadvantage, lower residential stability, and higher racial heterogeneity were statistically associated with auto theft rates.

An Application of Social Disorganization Theory to Shoplifting

Social disorganization theorists postulate that neighborhoods with high racial heterogeneity, low socioeconomic status, and high residential mobility have higher rates of crime. For the purpose of this proposal, I propose that shoplifting may be examined through the variables of social disorganization theory. In this study, secondary apprehension data from the Meridian Police Department and U.S. census level data will be used to explore shoplifting through the theoretical framework of social disorganization theory.

According to the American Community Survey (2018) Meridian, Mississippi has a population of 38,602 persons. Descriptive statistics indicate that 52% of people in Meridian are female with 48% being male, and the median age is 36.3 years. Fifty-eight percent of the Meridian population is single, with 42% being married. The vast majority (84.8%) of residents have a high school diploma or higher. Meridian has a racially heterogeneous population in which a majority of the residents are African American (63%), followed by White (34%), Hispanic (2%) and Asian (1%). Meridian is also marked by economic disadvantage. For example, median household income in Meridian is $32,807 a year. Additionally, almost 30% of all persons in Meridian live under the federally defined poverty line (approximately $25,100 for a family of four), which is almost 1.5 times the rate in Mississippi (20.8%). Meridian is also characterized

by high residential mobility. For example, almost 20% of homes in Meridian are vacant. Of the homes that are occupied, 49% are renter occupied, which is 1.5 times the rate of Mississippi (32%). Almost 20% of Meridian residents reported moving since the previous year.

Shoplifting in Mississippi

Only one known study has examined shoplifting-related statistics in the state of Mississippi. In their benchmark study, Cook and May (2019) provided necessary demographic profiles of shoplifting. However, further shoplifting research is needed in the state of Mississippi, because the focus of the study was primarily centered on the effects of House Bill 585 on shoplifting convictions.

Criminal law in the state of Mississippi has changed significantly, especially regarding shoplifting as a misdemeanor crime. According to the National Research Council (2014), incarceration rates have quadrupled in the United States over the last four decades (National Research Council, 2014). Currently, the U.S. incarceration population is by far the largest in the world, incarcerating approximately 2.2 million adults. Criminalization involving stricter sentencing policies continues to have considerable social consequences on prisoners, significant fiscal repercussions on U.S. taxpayers, and having minimal impact on crime prevention. In a response to concerns like these, many states have attempted to reduce prison populations by raising the threshold for felony theft (Pew, 2017). By raising the value of stolen money or goods by which prosecutors may charge as a felony, lawmakers may then prioritize prison space for more serious offenses instead of misdemeanor crimes, such as shoplifting.

On April 4, 2013, the state of Mississippi passed House Bill 1231, which established a task force comprised of 21 inter-branch criminal justice stakeholders, who were asked to conduct a comprehensive review of corrections and sentencing data. With assistance from Pew Charitable

Trusts and its partners, The Corrections and Criminal Justice Task Force (2013) found that Mississippi not only had the second-highest imprisonment rate in the U.S., its prison population had grown 17% in the last decade. This prison growth was costly for Mississippi taxpayers, and while policies were created to reduce these correction costs, the population growth quickly returned. The Corrections and Criminal Justice Task Force (2013) projected that in the absence of policy reformation, the Mississippi prison population was to grow by 1,990 inmates over the next decade, costing its taxpayers an additional $266 million dollars.

The Task Force examined key drivers of the prison population and conducted thorough research to gain a better understanding of correction practices. Policy practices in states such as, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, as well as a variety of other states outside of the South, were reviewed to determine which successfully implemented policies to control correctional costs and improve public safety. Upon reviewing successfully implemented policies, Mississippi lawmakers received a 24-page comprehensive final report composed by the Task Force, which included policy recommendations aimed to halt projected prison growth and "avert at least $266 million dollars of corrections spending through 2024" (Corrections and Criminal Justice Task Force, 2013, p.20).

After Mississippi lawmakers reviewed the Task Force's recommendations, House Bill 585 was developed, passed in both houses, and enacted on July 1, 2014. As described by Cook and May (2019) the bill, "led changes in time served requirements, technical violations of community supervision, eligibility for parole and various alternative sentencing, and sentencing structures for various property and drug offenses" (Cook & May, 2019, p.89). This criminal justice reform bill redefined many areas of criminal law, including shoplifting.

Prior to the enactment of House Bill 585, Mississippi House Bill 1121 (2003) outlined that shoplifters could be charged with a misdemeanor crime for pilfering items worth $500 or less. In fact, this misdemeanor charge potentially carried up to six months in jail and/or a fine up to $1,000; however, this was case and jurisdiction specific and only pertained to first and second offenses. Those who shoplifted items worth more than $500 were automatically charged with a felony offense, which was punishable with up to 10 years in state prison. Petty shoplifters who had three or more shoplifting offenses would receive a felony charge, which carried up to a 5-year sentence in state prison, and/or a $5,000 fine.

House Bill 585 (2014) brought several significant changes to shoplifting sentencing guidelines. First, guidelines raised the merchandise total amount required for a person to be charged with felony shoplifting from $500 to $1,000 (first and second offenses). Second, those with three or more shoplifting offenses would receive a misdemeanor charge for shoplifting items up to $500, which is punishable by a fine up to $1,000 and/or up to six months in county jail. Judges may suspend any jail sentence and sentence offenders to probation not exceeding one year unless they find ample reasoning as to why the offender may not safely and effectively be monitored in the community. In those cases, the court has the discretion to punish the shoplifters with jail time. Lastly, individuals engaging in three or more shoplifting offenses of $500-1,000 are classified as felons and may receive punishment up to three years in prison and/or $1,000 fine. House Bill 585 ultimately deemed all shoplifting offenses as misdemeanors as long as the third or subsequent offenses does not exceed $500. It is important to note that a majority of the mandatory minimums outlined by this bill are not retroactive and apply only to those convicted on or before July 1, 2014.

While the state of Mississippi has observed a 10% reduction in its imprisonment rate and a 5% reduction in the state's overall crime rate since the enactment of House Bill 585 (Pew, 2018), little is known about its impact on local jurisdictions and its impact on shoplifting (Cook & May, 2019). In 2019, Cook and May became the first to examine the impact of House Bill 585 on shoplifting trends in one of the 10 largest cities in the state of Mississippi. To analyze shoplifting trends, Cook and May examined adult shoplifting cases from 2009 to 2018. Information such as race, class, gender, age, statute descriptions, violation locations, offense dates, court outcomes, and limited sentencing information were collected from the city police department and municipal court. The data set contained 3,062 misdemeanor and felony shoplifting cases. From 2009 to 2018, 81% of arrests made were misdemeanor offenses, with shoplifting cases accounting for approximately 22% of the arrests. First offense shoplifting charges comprised 80.5% of the shoplifting arrests, 12.9% were 2nd offenses, while 6.6% of the cases were third or subsequent charges. In order to analyze the impact of House Bill 585, they examined five years of the shoplifting data (2009-2013) prior to the enactment of the bill, and after the passage of the bill (2014-2018). Cook and May observed an increase in shoplifting arrests after the passage of House Bill 585 when compared to the five years prior to its enactment (1266 cases to 1796 cases, respectively), in which they conclude that there is either an increase in offending or enforcement behavior.

When examining plea dispositions over the ten-year period, 38% were "failure to appear," 33.8% were "guilty," and 16.2% were "not guilty." Eighty-two cases were dismissed and 6% of the remaining cases were other plea dispositions such as "no contest" and "non-adjudication." Over the ten-year period, final dispositions for the shoplifting cases were 76.3% "guilty," 11.6% "not guilty," and 4.2% "dismissed."

Descriptive statistics for race, gender, age, location of the shoplifting violation, and prior shoplifting arrest information were examined over the ten-year period. African Americans accounted for 57.3% of persons charged with shoplifting. While this number accounts for the majority of the shoplifting cases, the number is slightly lower than the proportion of African Americans (61.1%) in this city under study. White persons accounted for 41.6% of the persons charged with shoplifting, a number slightly higher than the proportion of the White (37.8%) population in this city under study. The population of Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian defendants charged with shoplifting only made up 1% of the cases of the ten-year period; therefore, they were excluded from subsequent analysis. Females comprised the majority of shoplifting cases (59.3%). The average age of a shoplifter was 33, with ages ranging from 18 to 85. Almost half (48.9%) of shoplifting offenses occurred at Walmart. Fifty-nine percent of persons charged with shoplifting in the ten-year period had only one arrest for shoplifting, and about three in five cases occurred after the passing of House Bill 585.

The study also presented several interesting associations from their Binomial correlations. Race was found to have a statistically significant association with age where African American persons charged with shoplifting were younger than White persons. Shoplifting incidents involving African Americans were also less likely to occur at Walmart. Additionally, African American individuals were significantly more likely to shoplift prior to the enactment of House Bill 585. Regarding gender and age, males were significantly older and significantly more likely to have prior shoplifting offenses than females. Of those incidents involving males, males were less likely to shoplift at Walmart and more likely to shoplift after the passing of House Bill 585. Interestingly, shoplifting incidents significantly increased at Walmart after the enactment of House Bill 585. However, they were less likely to involve an

individual with a prior shoplifting arrest. Finally, shoplifting incidents that occurred after the passing of House Bill 585 were more likely to involve individuals who had prior shoplifting arrests than those that occurred prior the enactment of House Bill 585.

When analyzing additional trends over the ten-year period, Cook and May (2019) found that felony charges for shoplifting almost disappeared the year House Bill 585 was passed (2014). However, first, second, third, and subsequent shoplifting charges trended upward. In 2015, the year following the enactment of House Bill 585, the highest number of shoplifting cases were observed. Cook and May (2019) suggest that when comparing the average number of shoplifting cases five years after House Bill 585 and five years before its passage, cases increased by a staggering 44% after the bill was passed. They also suggest that while African Americans were involved in a majority of the shoplifting incidents prior to House Bill 585, the racial gap had "essentially closed," as White individuals were shoplifting at higher numbers than African Americans after the passing of House Bill 585. When examining gender, females were involved in the majority of shoplifting cases prior to House Bill 585, where cases involving males were quickly trending upward following the enactment of the bill. In 2018, males outnumbered females in shoplifting cases, and Cook and May concluded that "the gender gap in shoplifting cases has begun to close." Interestingly, when examining the intersection of race and gender for shoplifting trends, they found that White females had the largest increase in shoplifting cases after the passing of House Bill 585. Trend analysis also suggested that shoplifting incidents began to increase at Walmart the year prior to the enactment of House Bill 585 and continued to grow dramatically after its passage.

While their data set did not include socioeconomic predictors, Cook and May (2019) were able to obtain poverty rates for the county under study and found that poverty rates and

shoplifting arrests did not trend. When examining trends in plea and final dispositions, they found "failure to appear" dispositions significantly increased over the ten-year period. Additionally, individuals were much less likely to plead "not guilty" when charged with shoplifting from 2016-2018 than between 2009 to 2015.

Cook and May (2019) conducted a series of logistic regression analyses. They concluded that after the passing of House Bill 585 (2014-2018), individuals charged with shoplifting were significantly more likely to not appear in court and be found guilty than they were prior to the passage of House Bill 585 (2009-2013). Additionally, Whites were more likely than African Americans to fail to appear in court at all time periods (2009-2018). Whites were also more likely to be found guilty of shoplifting after the passing of House Bill 585 (2014-2018) than were African Americans. However, African Americans were more likely than Whites to plead "not guilty" after the enactment of House Bill 585 (2013-2018). They also determined that males were more likely to fail to appear in court than their female counterparts. Females were more likely than males to plead "not guilty" to their shoplifting arrest. Older individuals were more likely than younger individuals to appear in court. However, age did not affect the type of plea or the verdict one received. Interestingly, those who were more likely to fail to appear in court, enter a "not guilty" plea, and receive a "not guilty" verdict were those with prior shoplifting arrests, while those without prior shoplifting arrests were more likely to enter a "guilty" plea and receive a "guilty" verdict. Lastly, those arrested for shoplifting behavior at Walmart were more likely to fail to appear in court, less likely to plead "not guilty," and more likely to receive a "guilty" verdict at trial.

In their discussion, Cook and May (2019) acknowledged that racial and gender gaps in shoplifting activity have practically closed in this area under study. Interestingly, they found that

the number of shoplifting cases began to increase the year before the passing of House Bill 585, as well as the number of shoplifting arrests occurring at Walmart. At this same time, the number of cases for males and White females began an upward trend, which may have subsequently influenced the narrowing of the racial and gender gaps observed in the jurisdiction under study. Significant relationships between White individuals shoplifting at Walmart were observed. Additionally, significant relationships for females shoplifting at Walmart were observed. Cook and May (2019) explained that it is possible that Walmart has increased their shoplifting enforcement, which may explain why shoplifting cases are trending together, causing the racial and gender gap to close. When examining demographic predictors, they note that Whites were more likely to fail to appear in court over the ten-year period than their African American counterparts, and that African Americans were more likely to plead "not guilty" while Whites were more likely to receive a "guilty" verdict, especially after the passage of House Bill 585 (2014-2018). However, they concluded that these novel findings need further exploration whether this is unique to shoplifting, or the jurisdiction under study.

While males were more likely to fail to appear in court than females, little is known about predictors and plea dispositions such as "failure to appear" and therefore further research is warranted. Though Cook and May (2019) found that individuals with prior shoplifting arrests were more likely to fail to appear in court, plead "not guilty," and receive a "not guilty" verdict, they also found that those who had no prior shoplifting arrests were more likely to plead "guilty," and receive a "guilty" verdict. They concluded that further research is needed; however, it is possible that those with prior shoplifting arrests had "skipped court" and received no consequences for their actions. Therefore, they were more likely to not appear in court for future

shoplifting arrests. It is also possible that those with prior shoplifting arrests were likely to enter a "not guilty" plea because they felt a "guilty" plea would result in harsher sentences.

A majority of the shoplifting incidents occurred at Walmart. Cook and May (2019) suggest that it is possible that Walmart may use the criminal justice system to deter shoplifting. In fact, they suggest that individuals charged with shoplifting at Walmart are often aware of Walmart's stance on shoplifting. Individuals in this study were less likely to not appear in court than those who shoplifted at other businesses during the ten-year period under study (2008-2018). Those who appeared in court were more likely to receive a "guilty" verdict. While additional research is needed, Cook and May (2019) noted that a Walmart representative is present during trials in this particular jurisdiction, which may subsequently impact charges.

Lastly, after the passage of House Bill 585, individuals were more likely to fail to appear in court and receive a "guilty" verdict. Interestingly, cases occurring before to the passage of House Bill 585 were more likely to plead "not guilty" and receive a "not guilty" verdict. While they conclude they cannot say this is due to the passage of statewide criminal justice reform, "failure to appear" and "guilty" verdicts have significantly increased. It is quite possible that individuals being charged with misdemeanor crimes feel less threat and are less likely to be deterred from crimes, such as shoplifting. They also note that store personnel, police, prosecutors, and judges were more proactive in pursuing misdemeanor offenses than they were for felony offenses since they carried the possibility of a prison sentence. Ultimately, Cook and May (2019) encouraged the research community to further examine shoplifting trends, as well as the impacts of criminal justice reform as it may highlight successful strategies or uncover unintended consequences.

The Current Study

Almost no research has examined neighborhood predictors of shoplifting, and no research of which I am aware has examined the relationship between residing in a socially disorganized neighborhood and the shoplifting experiences or court processing of shoplifters. The purpose of this study is thus twofold. First, I want to expand the current body of literature on shoplifting by examining whether shoplifting offenders from socially disorganized neighborhoods differ from shoplifting offenders from less socially disorganized neighborhoods. Second, I seek to expand the current body of literature on shoplifting by examining demographic predictors of shoplifting. This work may help scholars gather additional insight into the social significance of shoplifting through the lens of social disorganization theory.

Hypotheses

In this study, I will examine the following hypotheses:

H1: *Shoplifting arrestees from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely than their counterparts to have prior offenses.* I believe these will be positively correlated. Socially disorganized neighborhoods are often plagued with crime; individuals who live in these communities are therefore more likely to participate in criminal activity and to have a prior arrest record. However, it is possible that those with prior offenses are also more likely to live in socially disorganized neighborhoods, which would also be responsible for a positive correlation between the two variables.

H2: A large body of research suggests that criminals, particularly property criminals, commit their crime in areas in close proximity to where they live. Because dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores are more likely to be located in these neighborhoods, I expect the following: *Those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely to shoplift at*

dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores than will individuals from less socially disorganized neighborhoods.

H3: Because the crime of shoplifting is a misdemeanor offense, *those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely to receive a guilty outcome from the court process, whether by plea or by conviction, than their counterparts.*

H4: *Those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely than their counterparts to shoplift lower total dollar amounts.* Individuals from socially disorganized neighborhoods may shoplift less items per trip, or less costly items because of the types of stores found in their neighborhoods, leading to a lower total dollar amount because dollar stores, convenience stores, and liquors stores may not allow them to shop with large bags, backpacks, or other items that may conceal stolen goods.

H5: *Those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely than their counterparts to shoplift non-necessity items.* Individuals from socially disorganized neighborhoods may have "frustrated wants" and therefore may shoplift items they truly do not need.

H6: *Those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely to fail to appear in court than their counterparts*. Individuals from socially disorganized neighborhoods are often considered a transient population and may be difficult for court officials to locate when attempting to summon them to court.

Table 1 UCR Arrest Data for Larceny-Theft and Shoplifting from 1991-2018

Year	Total Number Apprehended for Larceny-Theft (Excluding Motor Vehicle Theft)	Total Number Apprehended for Shoplifting	Year	Total Number Apprehended for Larceny-Theft (Excluding Motor Vehicle Theft)	Total Number Apprehended for Shoplifting	Year	Total Number Apprehended for Larceny-Theft (Excluding Motor Vehicle Theft)	Total Number Apprehended for Shoplifting
1991	8,142,200	1,337,681	2001	7,092,267	978,802	2011	5,369,855	940,903
1992	7,915,200	1,253,766	2002	7,057,379	986,296	2012	5,362,935	997,739
1993	7,820,900	1,200,910	2003	7,026,802	1,013,265	2013	5,392,153	1,074,188
1994	7,879,800	1,178,223	2004	6,947,685	1,010,756	2014	5,111,544	1,097,444
1995	7,997,700	1,204,156	2005	5,036,548	698,233	2015	5,014,269	1,118,390
1996	7,904,685	1,214,434	2006	5,265,007	695,387	2016	4,971,925	1,038,574
1997	7,743,760	1,181,805	2007	5,268,582	785,228	2017	4,917,272	1,021,226
1998	7,376,311	1,094,412	2008	5,602,099	908,127	2018	4,390,400	937,012
1999	6,955,520	1,002,576	2009	5,462,598	990,636	Total	177,388,566	28,847,355
2000	6,971,590	962,079	2010	5,391,580	925,107			

Figure 1 UCR Shoplifting Arrest Trends from 1991 to 2018.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Data

The data for this analysis were secured from two primary sources: a spreadsheet of 2018 shoplifting arrest data that was obtained by Dr. Amanda Cook from the Meridian Police Department and the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) from the United States Census Bureau. Data from the Meridian Police Department were collected during the 2018 calendar year and contain variables about both the shoplifting incident and the alleged shoplifting offender. Incident data included information about the number and types of items that were shoplifted, the location where the shoplifting occurred, and plea and final disposition information for each offense. Offender data included the offender's home address(es) (including whether or not they listed themselves as homeless), gender, race, and marital status. Data consisted of information from 434 arrested adult shoplifters whose violation(s) occurred in Meridian, Mississippi. However, after removing one duplicate entry (i.e., one case was recorded twice) and non-unique shoplifting offenders (n=73), a total of 361 unique cases were included for descriptive data analysis. These data included arrestees who were homeless, non-Lauderdale County residents, and Lauderdale County residents. For the 73 arrestees with more than one shoplifting arrest in 2018, I retained only the most recent shoplifting arrest for each individual because a) that arrest was most likely to have their current address and b) using other arrest information would not have accounted for all of their prior offenses.

Information from the Meridian Police Department dataset was used to create the dependent and control variables for this analysis.

The American Community Survey data were collected from a random sample of addresses in the United States, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The 2018 ACS sample comprises approximately 3.54 million housing unit addresses. Interviews were conducted in-person, online, or by mail between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018. Addresses that were nonexistent, commercial businesses, or survey refusals were excluded from the interviewing process. Data for this analysis were five-years estimates based on aggregate data from 2014 to 2018, in which relevant figures were updated annually in terms of inflation by the United States Census Bureau. Census-tract level data were retrieved from https://data.census.gov/cedsci/advanced?g=0500000US28075.140000&tid=ACSDT5Y2018.B01003&y=2018&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables&vintage=2018.

Information from the 2018 ACS contained variables regarding living arrangements, residential mobility, public assistance, demographics, education, and employment for each of the 19 census tracts in Lauderdale County, Mississippi (where the city of Meridian is located). However, census tract 9800 was excluded from data analysis because: (1) none of the arrestees resided in census tract 9800, and (2) census tract 9800 is a rural residential area with a population of 71 individuals (32 households). Data represented in the 2018 ACS were used to create independent variables serving as proxies for social disorganization theory. Because this analysis explores how social disorganization may influence shoplifting, the ACS was chosen because it captures a wider variety of detailed information not provided in the decennial United States Census. Those shoplifters (n=105) who listed a home address outside of Lauderdale County, Mississippi (i.e., non-residents), or were homeless, are excluded from all models that include

social disorganization measures because they did not have an address in one of the 18 census tracts explored in these data. Thus, a total of 256 Lauderdale County residents within 18 Lauderdale County census tracts were included in all analyses where social disorganization variables were relevant.

Dependent Variables

Six dependent variables from the Meridian Police Department data were used as measures of shoplifting for this analysis. These variables are described in detail below.

Prior Shoplifting Offenses. The first dependent variable captured the total number of prior shoplifting offenses for each alleged offender at the time of their arrest for the 2018 shoplifting violation. This variable was called *Prior Shoplifting Offenses*. The number of prior arrests ranged from 0 to 16 offenses. Data were recoded so that 0=no prior offenses and 1=prior offenses. Prior shoplifting offenses only reflected prior shoplifting offenses within the past 10 years and not any other type of crime that may have occurred.

Business Type. The second dependent variable captured the location of the retail establishment in which the shoplifting violation occurred. This variable was called *Business Type*. Names of retail establishments and addresses were reported. Data were coded so that 0=Ace Hardware, 1=Belk, 2=Best Buy, 3=Bonita Lakes Mall, 4=Books-A-Million, 5=Cefco, 6=Clover Leaf Package Store, 7=Dillards, 8=Dirt Cheap, 9=Dollar General 24th Avenue, 10=Dollar General Frontage Road, 11=Dollar General North Hills, 12=Dollar General Bonita, 13=Family Dollar 8th Street, 14=Fred's Dollar Store on 8th Street, 15=Fred's Pharmacy, 16=Freddie's Fine Spirits, 17=Lowes, 18=Pilot, 19=SAV-A-LOT, 20=Seafood Express, 21=Sears, 22=Shell, 23=Spaceway Truck Stop, 24=TJ Maxx, 25=Tractor Supply, 26=Walmart Highway 19, 27=Walmart Highway 39, and 28=Walmart Bonita. Locations were then recoded so

that Dollar/Liquor/Convenience stores (5,6, 8-16,22, and 23) were coded 1 and all other stores were coded 0. Because this variable was comprised of stores, not individuals, this variable is not an individual-level variable.

Failure to Appear. The third dependent variable captured whether the arrested shoplifter failed to appear in court after they were arrested. This variable was called *Failure to Appear*. An entry in the data set captured whether or not the defendant's case was dismissed, whether or not they failed to appear for their court date, and any plea they may have offered. These responses were coded so that arrestees who failed to appear were coded (1), and all other arrestees were coded (0).

Disposition. The fourth dependent variable captured the court's final verdict or ruling. This variable was called *Disposition*. Arrestees that were found guilty by the court, or those who were coded as appeal in the original data (indicating that the defendant wanted to reverse the official court decision) were coded as (1). Arrestees whose case was dismissed or were not found guilty were coded as (0).

Amount Stolen. The fifth dependent variable captured the total dollar amount of the stolen item(s). This variable was called *Amount Stolen*. Data were reported in dollar amounts and ranged from $1.59 to $955.82.

Item Stolen. The sixth dependent variable described the type of item that was shoplifted. This variable was called *Item Stolen*. In the original arrest report, the items that the individual was charged with stealing, were listed. I analyzed those items and categorized them into 19 categories. Categories included clothing (clothing for adults or children including underwear, shoes, hats, scarves, etc.), childcare items (items for babies or kids), food (meat, canned goods, drinks, etc.), steak/ribs (steak and other cuts of meat), alcohol/tobacco, junk food (candy,

cookies, etc.), tools (drills, hammers, saws, etc.), household items (candles, lighters, etc.), electronics (TVs, radios, DVD players, DVDs, etc.), car accessories (car parts or accessories), phone accessories (phones and phone accessories), jewelry (necklaces, earrings, watches, etc.), beauty items (makeup, fragrance, body spray, hair dye, nails, etc.), hygiene items (deodorant, soap, shampoo, etc.), medicine (medicine and vitamins), sporting goods (camping and outdoor supplies), office/school supplies (pens, paper, printer ink, school uniforms, etc.), miscellaneous (shoplifted various types of items), and other. Categories were then recoded as follows: 1=necessities (clothing, childcare items, food, steak/ribs, hygiene items, medicine) or 0=non-necessity items (all other items).

Independent Variables

Because the primary purpose of this research was to examine whether shoplifting offenders from socially disorganized neighborhoods differ from shoplifting offenders from less socially disorganized neighborhoods, eight variables were used to represent the social disorganization of 18 Lauderdale County census tracts across three attributes of social disorganization theory: population heterogeneity, residential instability/mobility, and socioeconomic status. These 18 census tracts ranged in population from 1,347 to 7,788 individuals, with a mean population of 4,291.78. Three variables, one of which was an index, were created to represent the three social disorganization attributes. The strategy used to construct the variables is described below.

Percent Black. To create the variable representing the population heterogeneity of the census tract, I used ACS data to divide the total number of Black individuals that were in a census tract by the total number of individuals of all races in the respective census tract. This produced the percentage of the tract that was Black. This variable was called *Percent Black*. As

social disorganization literature suggests, tracts with higher percentages of Black residents were considered to be more socially disorganized than tracts with lower percentages of Black residents.

Resident Turnover. To create the *Resident Turnover* variable, which is used to indicate the residential instability of the census tract, I used ACS data to divide the total number of individuals who resided in the same house for the last year by the total number of households in each tract. This produced the percentage of the tract that did not move from the same house within the last year. Next, the variable was recoded inversely by subtracting the percentage of individuals who remained in the same house for the last year from 100. This produced the percentage of the tract that moved within the last year. Tracts with higher percentages of residents who moved within the last year were considered to be more socially disorganized than tracts with lower percentages.

The original plan was to include renter occupied housing as a second variable to represent residential instability in the census tract and combine that variable with the R*esident Turnover* variable to have a summative scale based on data from both variables to represent residential instability. When analyzing the reliability of the residential instability index created using these two proposed index items (i.e., resident turnover and renter occupied housing), an α=0.478 was estimated, indicating poor interrelatedness between the index items, forcing me to choose one of these two items representing residential instability. Though renter occupied housing is regularly used as a proxy for residential mobility and instability, I chose to use the *Resident Turnover* variable because the social disorganization literature suggests that it is a better indicator of residential instability than renter occupied housing (Pratt and Cullen, 2005).

SES Index. The third index created to represent social disorganization was the *SES Index.* This index consisted of ACS data derived from six variables. For each variable, after the variable scores were calculated, tracts were ranked from 1 to 18, with 18 indicating the score that is most disadvantaged for each variable. Thus, scores could range from 6 (where the tract scored lowest on disadvantage for each of the six measures) to 108 (if a tract achieves the most disadvantaged score on each of the six indicators). Tracts with highest scores were considered to be the most socially disorganized tracts.

The first variable used to create the *SES Index* was the variable representing the poverty status of the census tract. This variable was derived from the estimated number of households whose income was below the federally defined poverty line by the total number of households in each tract. The second variable used to comprise the index was the variable representing the percentage of female headed households in each tract receiving aid. This variable was derived by dividing the estimated number of female headed households, who have children under the age of 18, no husband present, and received food stamps or SNAP benefits within the past 12 months by the estimated number of household types in each tract. The third variable used to comprise the *SES Index* was the percent of households in the census tract receiving aid. This variable was derived by dividing the number of households who have received food stamps or SNAP benefits within the past 12 months by the total number of households in the tract. The fourth variable used to comprise the index was the variable representing the educational attainment of the tract. This variable was derived from the estimated percentage of individuals 25 and older who have not received a high school diploma or GED divided by the estimated population in each tract. The fifth variable used to comprise the *SES Index* was the median income of the tract. Scores were ranked so that that tracts with the lowest median income received the highest scores on the

SES Index. The final variable used to comprise the index was the variable representing employment status. This variable was derived from the estimated number of individuals in the labor force divided by the total population in each tract. Scores were ranked so that that tracts with the lowest percentage of employment received the highest scores on the *SES Index*.

Control Variables

There were five control variables used in this study: 1) *Race*; 2) *Gender*; 3) *Homelessness*; 4) *Age*; and 5) *Residency Status*. These data were reported by the Meridian Police Department. For each arrestee, the data file included the *Race* (0=White; 1=Black), *Gender* (male=0; female=1), and *Homelessness* (0=not homeless; 1=homeless) of the arrestee, and each of the three variables were coded dichotomously. Next, *Age* was a continuous variable ranging from 17 to 70. *Residency Status* was coded so that Lauderdale County arrestees were coded as 1 and all other arrestees were coded as 0.

Analysis Strategy

In this thesis, I conducted descriptive analyses using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 27.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA, 2020) to help readers understand univariate shoplifting data and its distribution. I also conducted both logistic and ordinary least square (OLS) regression analyses to better understand the relationships between and among the independent and dependent variables using SPSS. Lastly, with Stata 16 software (Statacorp, 2019), a series of logistic and OLS regression models using the cluster procedure (Rogers, 1993) were estimated. The cluster procedure was selected to control for the nesting of the individual-level data of the 261 offenders inside the 18 census tracts. As described by Helms and Jacobs (2002), this type of correction minimizes the need for hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) by

correcting standard error biases within the data since the observations within the census tracts are non-independent. An interaction term between race and percent Black was also calculated to better understand any unique relationships between the variables in the regression models using the cluster procedure. However, the interaction term was not significant in any of the models and, consequently, none of the models using the interaction term are included herein.

Below, the analyses are presented in a series of tables. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the arrestees, Table 3 and Table 4 describe the Meridian Police Department Shoplifting data, and Table 5 includes the 2018 American Community Survey by census tract. Bivariate correlations between the variables under study are presented in Table 6 and Table 7, while Tables 8 through 13 contain the logistic and OLS regression models. For clarity, I also include a table that ranks the census tracts in terms of their social disorganization (Table 14) and close with a table that summarizes the results of the hypothesis tests (Table 15).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for the 361 arrestees in the sample. Of the 361 adult shoplifters arrested in Meridian, Mississippi in 2018, approximately half were White (49.9%) and half were Black (48.8%). A total of 184 arrestees were female (51.0%) and 176 were male (48.8%). Most arrestees were residents of Lauderdale County (72.0%) and 3.6% were homeless. The age of the arrestees ranged from 17-70 years, with a mean age of 33.41 years. Of the 361 arrested shoplifters, 235 (65.1%) had no prior offenses.

Table 3 and Table 4 describes the Meridian Police Department shoplifting data (n=361). Interestingly, slightly over half of the sample failed to appear in court during their plea disposition (51.8%), while 36.3% pled guilty, and 9% were dismissed or found not guilty. In the court's final disposition, 319 of 361 (88.4%) arrestees received a guilty ruling from the court. Walmart was by far the most common location for a shoplifting violation to occur (78.1%), followed by dollar/discount stores (6.6%) and liquor/convenience stores (1.7%). The value of the stolen items ranged from \$1.59-\$955.82 (M = \$79.27). The most common necessity item stolen was clothing (31.6%), followed by food (20.8%), hygiene items (8.9%), medication (6.9%), childcare items (6.4%), and steak/ribs (2.8%). The most common non-necessity items shoplifted were miscellaneous/other items (18.8%), followed by household items (16.9%), makeup and accessories (15.5%), electronics (11.9%), junk food (11.6%), phone accessories (8.3%), tools

(7.8%), jewelry (7.5%), car accessories (5.5%), alcohol/tobacco (3.6%), outdoor items (2.5%), and office/school supplies (2.2%). Non-necessity items (55.1%) were stolen more frequently than were necessity items (34.9%). The number of items stolen ranged from 1-63; arrestees shoplifted an average of 6.74 items.

Table 5 includes eight columns of information pertaining to the description of the 2018-5yr ACS variables for Lauderdale County census tracts (n=18). These columns include the percentage of Black individuals in each census tract, the percentage of individuals who moved within the past year, median income, the percentage of individuals who do not have a high school diploma or GED, the percentage of those employed, the percentage of individuals who live below the federally defined poverty line, the percentage of all households that received cash public assistance or Food Stamps/SNAP in the last 12 months, and the percentage of female headed households with no husband, have children under the age of 18, and received cash public assistance or Food Stamps/SNAP in the last 12 months.

The percentage of Black individuals in each census tract ranged from 7.9%-92.5%, with census tract 6 reporting the highest percentage, followed closely by census tract 2 (91.9%). A majority of individuals in each census tract remained in the same home for one year, with percentages ranging from 72.6%-96.5%. Census tract 11.01 reported the highest median income; median income for each tract ranged from $10,469-$38,669. A majority of Lauderdale County residents obtained at least a high school diploma or GED. Census tract 104 had the lowest percent of residents employed (27.7%), followed by census tract 107 (35.3%), census tract 6 (41.1%), and census tract 2 (42.5%). Census tract 6 reported the highest percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line (51.4%), followed by census tract 4 (50.9%), census tract 107 (49.9%), census tract 7 (45.5%), and census tract 2 (42.1%). The percentage of all

households receiving public assistance ranged from 7.3%-51.5% and the percentage of female headed households receiving public assistance ranged from 0.6%-21.2%.

Binomial Correlation Analysis

The bivariate correlation results are presented in Table 6 and Table 7. In Table 6, the correlations between the social disorganization independent variables and the control variables are presented. In Table 7, the correlations between the dependent variables are presented. The results presented in Table 6 indicate that (1) Black arrestees were significantly more likely to live in census tracts with a higher percentage of Black residents, live in census tracts with higher resident turnover, and live in census tracts with higher levels of poverty than their White counterparts, (2) arrestees living in census tracts with high levels of resident turnover were significantly more likely to live in census tracts with higher levels of poverty, be Black, and be older than their counterparts, (3) arrestees living in census tracks with higher levels of poverty were significantly more likely to be Black than their counterparts, (4) arrestees who were Black were significantly younger than White arrestees and significantly more likely to be a Lauderdale County resident than White arrestees, (5) arrestees who were female were significantly less likely to be homeless than male arrestees, and (6) arrestees who were homeless were significantly less likely to be a Lauderdale County resident.

The results presented in Table 7 indicate that arrestees (1) who had prior shoplifting offenses were significantly more likely to fail to appear in court than arrestees with no prior shoplifting offenses, (2) who shoplifted at dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store, were significantly less likely to have a stolen a higher total dollar amount than arrestees who shoplifted from Walmart and all other stores, (3) who shoplifted at dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store, were significantly less likely to fail to appear in court, (4) who shoplifted at

dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store, were significantly less likely to receive a guilty disposition than arrestees who shoplifted from Walmart and all other stores. (5) who shoplifted necessity items were significantly less likely to have stolen a higher total dollar amount than arrestees who shoplifted non-necessity items, and (6) who failed to appear in court were significantly more likely to receive a guilty disposition than arrestees who appeared in court.

Binomial Logistic Regression and Multivariate OLS Regression Analyses

Table 8 and Table 9 display the Binomial Logistic and Multivariate OLS regression results of examining the relationships between the five dependent variables and the five control variables without the social disorganization variables included in the models. The results of the first model presented in Table 8 (Prior Shoplifting Offenses) indicate that older arrestees and homeless arrestees were significantly more likely than their counterparts who were younger and provided a home address to the officer at the time of their arrest to have had prior shoplifting offenses. Additionally, arrestees from neighborhoods with high resident turnover were significantly more likely than arrestees from other neighborhoods to have had prior shoplifting offenses. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee had prior shoplifting offenses.

The results of the second model presented in Table 8 (Type of Business Victimized) suggest that Black arrestees were significantly more likely to shoplift at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store than their White counterparts. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee shoplifted at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store.

The Binomial Logistic regression results presented in the final model in Table 8 (Necessity v. Non-necessity Items) indicate that Black arrestees were significantly more likely to

shoplift necessity items than White arrestees. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee shoplifted necessity items.

In the first model in Table 9, the Binomial Logistic regression results of regressing whether or not the arrestee failed to appear in court on the control variables are presented. The results presented in Model 4 suggest that arrestees who were White and male were significantly more likely to fail to appear in court than arrestees who were Black and female. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee failed to appear in court.

In the final model in Table 9, whether or not the arrestee received a guilty disposition is regressed on the control variables. The results suggest that Black arrestees were significantly more likely receive a not guilty adjudication than their White counterparts. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee received a guilt disposition.

Because the cumulative cost of the items stolen (Amount Stolen) is an interval-level variable, I used Multivariate OLS regression to examine its predictors. The results presented in Table 10 indicate that older arrestees were significantly more likely than their younger counterparts to steal items of more cumulative value. None of the other variables included in the models had a statistically significant impact of the value of the items stolen. The variables include in the model explained less than 2 percent (1.9%) of the variation in the cumulative amount of items stolen.

Binomial Logistic and Multivariate OLS Regression Analysis Adjusted for Clustering

The results of the Binomial Logistic and Multivariate OLS regression models regressing the dependent variables on the control variables and the social disorganization variables are presented in Table 11 and Table 12. To control for the fact that the arrestee variables were nested in the census tracts that created the three measures of social disorganization, I used STATA 16 with the cluster command to conduct these analyses. The results of the first model presented in Table 11 (Prior Shoplifting Offenses) indicate that older arrestees were significantly more likely than their younger counterparts to have had prior shoplifting offenses. Additionally, arrestees from neighborhoods with high resident turnover were significantly more likely than arrestees from other neighborhoods to have had prior shoplifting offenses. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee had prior shoplifting offenses.

The results of the second model presented in Table 11 (Type of Business Victimized) indicate that Black arrestees were significantly more likely than White arrestees to shoplift at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store. Additionally, arrestees living in census tracts with a higher percentage of Black residents were significantly less likely to shoplift at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store than arrestees from other neighborhoods. Arrestees living in census tracts with higher levels of poverty were also significantly more likely to shoplift at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store than arrests from other neighborhoods. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee shoplifted at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store.

The Binomial Logistic regression results presented in the final model in Table 11 (Necessity v. Non-necessity Items) indicate no statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee shoplifted necessity items.

In the first model in Table 12, the Binomial Logistic regression results of regressing whether or not the arrestee failed to appear in court on the control and social disorganization variables are presented. The results presented in Model 1 suggest that arrestees who were White and male were significantly more likely to fail to appear in court than arrestees who were Black and female. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee failed to appear in court.

In the final model in Table 12, whether or not the arrestee received a guilty disposition is regressed on the control and social disorganization variables. The results suggest that Black arrestees were significantly more likely receive a not guilty adjudication than their White counterparts. None of the other variables included in the model had a statistically significant association with whether or not the arrestee received a guilt disposition.

Because the cumulative cost of the items stolen (Amount Stolen) is an interval-level variable, I used Multivariate OLS regression to examine its predictors and the results are presented in Table 13. None of the control or social disorganization variables included in the models had a statistically significant impact of the value of the items stolen. The variables include in the model explained less than 3 percent (2.7%) of the variation in the cumulative amount of items stolen.

In sum, the results of the regression models suggest very limited support for social disorganization theory. While there were limited instances of a significant association between one social disorganization variable and a dependent variable, there were no instances in which

the *Percent Black* variable, the *Resident Turnover* variable (i.e., percent that moved within the last 12 months), and the *SES Index* were simultaneously significant in the regression models presented in Tables 11, 12, and 13. I return to this finding in more detail in the discussion section.

Social Disorganization Rank Order

Table 14 presents the social disorganization rank order for each Lauderdale County census tract. The results indicate that (1) census tract 105 was the least socially disorganized, followed by: (2) census tract 11.02, (3) census tract 103.02, (4) both census tract 102.02 and census tract 106, (5) census tract 11.01, (6) census tract 103.01, (7) census tract 9, (8) census tract 10, (9) census tract 102.01, (10) census tract 104, (11) census tract 3, (12) census tract 2, (13) census tract 8, (14) census tract 7, (15) census tract 107, (16) census tract 4, and (17) census trac 6 as the most socially disorganized. When summing the total for all eight social disorganization variables, census tracts 102.02 and 106 both received the same score (score=42) and therefore received the rank order of 4.

Table 2 Description of Arrestees in Sample (N=361)

Variable	N	Percent
Race		
White	180	49.9
Black	176	48.8
Missing	5	1.4
Total	361	100.0
Gender		
Female	184	51.0
Male	176	48.8
Missing	1	0.3
Total	361	100.0
Homelessness Status		
Not Homeless	348	96.4
Homeless	13	3.6
Missing	0	0
Total	361	100.0
Lauderdale County Residency Status		
Resident of Lauderdale County	260	72.0
Not a Resident of Lauderdale County	101	28.0
Missing	0	0
Total	361	100.0
Age		
Mean	33.41	
Standard Deviation	11.75	
Minimum	17	
Maximum	70	
Prior Shoplifting Offenses		
0	235	65.1
1	62	17.2
2	26	7.2
3	13	3.6
4	5	1.4
5	3	0.8
6	3	0.8
7	6	1.7
8	0	0
9	1	0.3
10 or more	4	1.2
Missing	3	0.8
Total	361	100.0

Table 3 Description of Meridian Police Department Shoplifting Data (N=361)

Variable	N	Percent
Plea		
Failure to Appear	187	51.8
Guilty or No Contest	131	36.3
Dismissed	24	6.8
Not Guilty	8	2.2
Missing	11	3.0
Disposition		
Guilty	319	88.4
Dismissed	29	8.0
Missing	13	3.6
Business Type		
Walmart	282	78.1
Dollar/Discount Store	24	6.6
Liquor/Convenience Store	6	1.7
Other	39	10.8
Missing	10	2.8
Amount Stolen		
Mean	79.27	
Standard Deviation	117.52	
Minimum	1.59	
Maximum	955.82	
Item Stolen		
Necessity Items		
Clothing	114	31.6
Food	75	20.8
Hygiene	32	8.9
Medication	25	6.9
Childcare	23	6.4
Steak/Ribs	10	2.8
Non-Necessity Items		
Miscellaneous/Other	68	18.8
Household	61	16.9
Makeup and Accessories	56	15.5
Electronics	43	11.9
Junk Food	42	11.6
Phone Accessories	30	8.3
Tools	28	7.8
Jewelry	27	7.5
Car Accessories	20	5.5
Alcohol/Tobacco	13	3.6
Outdoor	9	2.5
Office/School Supplies	8	2.2

Table 4 Description of Meridian Police Department Shoplifting Data Continued (N=361)

Variable	N	Percent
Non-Necessity or Necessity Item		
Non-Necessity	199	55.1
Necessity	126	34.9
Missing	36	10.0
Number of Items Stolen		
Mean	6.74	
Standard Deviation	9.15	
Minimum	1	
Maximum	63	

Table 5 Description of 2018-5yr American Community Survey Variables for Lauderdale County Census Tracts

Census Tract N=18*	% Black	% Moved in the Past Year	$ Median Income	% No HS Diploma or GED	% Employed	% Below Poverty Level	% All Households Receiving Aid	% Female Headed Households with Children and Receiving Aid
2	91.90	15.71	14135	24.67	42.52	42.07	31.66	4.12
3	82.06	19.33	19003	16.60	61.45	34.69	23.24	4.84
4	86.94	24.86	14639	23.67	50.50	50.90	40.11	19.32
6	92.53	21.89	10469	26.76	41.12	51.41	51.49	21.19
7	82.10	12.12	13434	28.85	45.50	45.54	32.81	18.39
8	80.47	19.47	11518	22.95	44.27	38.00	29.73	6.31
9	72.97	15.43	23722	11.36	71.17	18.31	13.06	5.97
10	43.97	16.33	25946	10.04	61.64	17.00	16.56	7.28
11.01	35.52	18.15	38669	2.35	59.58	19.47	10.57	3.75
11.02	32.33	14.63	29232	9.42	60.64	10.43	7.78	1.98
102.01	42.71	3.5	19900	15.40	52.59	24.71	18.73	3.84
102.02	27.14	15.95	31382	8.84	66.86	15.75	9.16	4.28
103.01	18.94	12.6	24668	11.01	57.68	16.70	13.51	6.56
103.02	17.22	6.37	23099	7.24	53.15	13.70	8.41	1.18
104	38.16	18.07	19189	28.70	27.68	10.99	10.41	0.88
105	7.90	14.96	34644	11.32	60.86	4.62	8.21	1.21
106	21.21	19.45	24977	17.10	63.30	8.54	7.29	0.60
107	67.63	27.39	13645	19.12	35.34	49.86	42.53	13.35

*Removed census tract 9800 because it was a rural residential area.

Table 6 Description of 2018-5yr American Community Survey

	Percent Black	Resident Turnover	SES Index	Race	Gender	Age	Homelessness Status
Resident Turnover	0.321*	-					
SES Index	0.859*[1]	0.277*	-				
Race (1=Black)	0.600*	0.192*	0.497*	-			
Gender (1=female)	-0.099	-0.068	-0.073	-0.056	-		
Age	-0.075	0.131*	-0.084	-0.224*	-0.003	-	
Homelessness Status (1=homeless)	--[2]	--[2]	--[2]	-0.043	-0.138*	0.034	-
Residency Status (1=Lauderdale County resident)	--[2]	--[2]	--[2]	0.120*	0.101	0.019	-0.178*

[1] Multicollinearity is present. Nevertheless, theoretical patterns suggest that population heterogeneity and poverty will be highly correlated but represent different aspects of social disorganization; therefore, these variables remained in the analysis

[2] Bivariate correlations between the social disorganization variables and homelessness status and residency status could not be estimated because the arrestee did not provide a home address in Lauderdale County, Mississippi.

Table 7 Correlates of Dependent Variables

	Prior Shoplifting Offenses	Business Type	Necessity vs. Non-Necessity	Amount Stolen	Failure to Appear
Business Type (1=dollar store, liquor store, convenience store)	0.042	-			
Necessity vs. Non-Necessity (1=necessity)	0.001	-0.010	-		
Amount Stolen	-0.113	-0.153*	-0.145*	-	
Failure to Appear	0.166*	-0.129*	-0.041	0.089	-
Disposition (1=guilty)	-0.064	-0.263*	0.045	0.048	0.296*

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

Table 8 Binomial Logistic Regression of Dependent and Control Variables

Variable	B	Std. Error	Wald	p-value	Exp(B)	Nagelkerke R^2
Prior Shoplifting Offenses						0.121
Race	0.153	0.243	0.396	0.529	1.165	
Gender	0.062	0.240	0.068	0.795	1.064	
Age	0.029	0.010	8.532	0.003*	1.030	
Homelessness Status	2.190	0.677	10.459	0.001*	8.938	
Residency Status	1.190	0.323	13.578	0.000*	3.286	
Constant	-2.761	0.508	29.539	0.000	0.063	
Business Type (1=dollar store, liquor store, convenience store)						0.075
Race	1.181	0.433	7.441	0.006*	3.259	
Gender	0.591	0.410	2.079	0.149	1.806	
Age	0.028	0.015	3.338	0.068	1.029	
Homelessness Status	1.000	0.847	1.393	0.238	2.717	
Residency Status	0.066	0.471	0.020	0.888	1.069	
Constant	-4.442	0.829	28.703	0.000	0.012	
Necessity vs. Non-Necessity (1=necessity)						0.063
Race	0.706	0.248	8.120	0.004*	2.026	
Gender	0.384	0.242	2.522	0.112	1.468	
Age	0.011	0.010	1.155	0.282	1.011	
Homelessness Status	0.839	0.631	1.771	0.183	2.315	
Residency Status	0.424	0.285	2.218	0.136	1.528	
Constant	-1.732	0.470	13.607	0.000	0.177	

N=361; * Correlation is significant at or below the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 9 Binomial Logistic Regression of Dependent and Control Variables Continued

Variable	B	Std. Error	Wald	p-value	Exp(B)	R^2
Failure to Appear						0.064
Race	-0.555	0.228	5.922	0.015*	0.574	
Gender	-0.684	0.223	9.431	0.002*	0.505	
Age	-0.016	0.010	2.709	0.100	0.984	
Homelessness Status	0.490	0.633	0.600	0.439	1.633	
Residency Status	0.049	0.255	0.036	0.849	1.050	
Constant	1.210	0.432	7.848	0.005	3.352	
Disposition (1=guilty)						0.061
Race	-1.190	0.451	6.973	0.008*	0.304	
Gender	-0.006	0.412	0.000	0.989	0.994	
Age	-0.019	0.016	1.430	0.232	0.981	
Homelessness Status	-0.703	0.839	0.703	0.402	0.495	
Residency Status	0.428	0.448	0.911	0.340	1.534	
Constant	3.514	0.777	20.453	0.000	33.578	

N=361; * Correlation is significant at or below the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 Multivariate OLS Regression of Dependent and Control Variables

Variable	B	Std. Error	Std. Coef. Beta	t	p-value	Nagelkerke R^2
Amount Stolen						0.019
Race	-3.411	13.811	-0.014	-0.247	0.805	
Gender	15.585	13.492	0.066	1.155	0.249	
Age	1.153	0.581	0.115	1.983	0.048*	
Homelessness Status	-3.841	35.639	-0.006	-0.108	0.914	
Residency Status	-9.787	15.515	-0.037	-0.631	0.529	
Constant	41.514	25.339		1.638	0.102	

N=361; * Correlation is significant at or below the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 11 Social Disorganization Binomial Logistic Regression Models[1]

Variable	Odds Ratio	Robust Std. Error*	Z	p-value	Nagelkerke R^2
Prior Shoplifting Offenses					0.029
Race	1.180	0.389	0.50	0.616	
Gender	1.049	0.256	0.20	0.842	
Age	1.028	0.010	2.72	0.007**	
Percent Black	1.004	0.009	0.53	0.598	
Resident Turnover	0.960	0.019	-2.03	0.042**	
SES Index	1.003	0.008	0.47	0.641	
Constant	0.248	0.103	-3.33	0.001	
Business Type (1=dollar store, liquor store, convenience store)					0.098
Race	6.321	3.954	2.95	0.003**	
Gender	1.384	0.677	0.66	0.506	
Age	1.020	0.021	1.01	0.315	
Percent Black	0.958	0.014	-2.82	0.005**	
Resident Turnover	1.035	0.021	1.69	0.092	
SES Index	1.037	0.013	2.72	0.006**	
Constant	0.007	0.007	-4.70	0.000	
Necessity vs Non-Necessity (1=necessity)					0.049
Race	1.626	0.725	1.09	0.276	
Gender	1.350	0.370	1.10	0.273	
Age	1.013	0.012	1.15	0.251	
Percent Black	1.006	0.010	0.65	0.517	
Resident Turnover	0.971	0.016	-1.68	0.093	
SES Index	1.008	0.010	0.80	0.425	
Constant	0.188	0.109	-2.88	0.004	

*Std. Error adjusted for 18 clusters in census tracts; N=256, ** Correlation is significant at or below the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

1 An interaction term was calculated between race and percent Black. In results not presented here, all models were estimated with the interaction term; the interaction term was not significant in any of the models, so the models presented do not use an interaction term.

Table 12 Social Disorganization Binomial Logistic Regression Models Continued[1]

Variable	Odds Ratio	Robust Std. Error*	z	p-value	Nagelkerke R^2
Failure to Appear					0.036
Race	0.574	0.158	-2.01	0.044**	
Gender	0.455	0.067	-5.30	0.000**	
Age	0.986	0.012	-1.03	0.301	
Percent Black	1.00	0.005	0.93	0.354	
Resident Turnover	1.01	0.016	0.80	0.421	
SES Index	0.994	0.005	-1.09	0.278	
Constant	3.00	1.149	2.88	0.004	
Disposition (1=guilty)					0.098
Race	0.133	0.067	-4.01	0.000**	
Gender	1.495	0.786	0.77	0.443	
Age	0.998	0.019	-0.06	0.951	
Percent Black	1.033	0.022	1.55	0.122	
Resident Turnover	1.038	0.044	0.90	0.369	
SES Index	0.968	0.020	-1.53	0.126	
Constant	27.848	27.966	3.31	0.001	

*Std. Error adjusted for 18 clusters in census tracts; N=256, ** Correlation is significant at or below the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

1 An interaction term was calculated between race and percent Black. In results not presented here, all models were estimated with the interaction term; the interaction term was not significant in any of the models, so the models presented do not use an interaction term.

Table 13 Social Disorganization Multivariate OLS Regression Models[1]

Variable	Coef.	Robust Std. Error*	t	p-value	R^2
Amount Stolen					0.027
Race	-14.311	15.862	-0.90	0.380	
Gender	5.717	19.539	0.29	0.773	
Age	0.094	0.564	0.17	0.869	
Percent Black	-0.157	0.408	-0.39	0.704	
Resident Turnover	2.207	1.570	1.41	0.178	
SES Index	-0.337	0.477	-0.71	0.489	
Constant	71.292	28.062	2.54	0.021	

*Std. Error adjusted for 18 clusters in census tracts; N=256, ** Correlation is significant at or below the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

[1] An interaction term was calculated between race and percent Black. In results not presented here, all models were estimated with the interaction term; the interaction term was not significant in any of the models, so the models presented do not use an interaction term.

Table 14 Social Disorganization Rank Order for Lauderdale County Census Tracts

Social Disorganization Rank Order	Census Tract (N=18)	% Black	% Moved in the Past Year	$ Median Income	% No HS Diploma or GED	% Employed	% Below Poverty Level	% All Households Receiving Aid	% Female Headed Households with Children and Receiving Aid	Total Score
(Low) 1	105	1	6	2	7	6	1	3	4	30
2	11.02	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	5	32
3	103.02	2	2	9	2	10	5	4	3	37
4*	102.02	5	9	3	3	2	6	5	9	42
4*	106	4	14	6	11	3	2	1	1	42
5	11.01	17	12	1	1	8	10	7	6	52
6	103.01	3	4	6	6	9	7	9	13	57
7	9	12	7	8	8	1	9	8	11	64
8	10	10	10	5	5	4	8	10	14	66
9	102.01	9	1	10	9	11	11	11	7	69
10	104	8	11	11	17	18	4	6	2	77
11	3	14	13	12	10	5	12	12	10	88
12	2	17	8	14	15	15	14	14	8	105
13	8	13	15	17	13	14	13	13	12	110
14	7	15	3	16	18	13	15	15	16	111
15	107	11	18	15	12	17	16	17	15	121
16	4	16	17	13	14	12	17	16	17	122
(High)17	6	18	16	18	16	16	18	18	18	138

*Received same rank order because these census tracts shared the same total score.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The crime of shoplifting is often overlooked by scholars, likely because it is perceived to be socially insignificant (Klemke, 1992). While there is little research exploring shoplifting, a large body of the existing shoplifting research from the 1970s and 1980s explored demographic predictors of the crime, as well as motivational explanations, and data sources measuring shoplifting. Shoplifter typologies were also established in early literature; however, they gained very little momentum among scholars because they were based on broad generalizations. From the 1990s to today, the practice of shoplifting continues to receive some attention from psychologists, sociologists, and criminologist, but literature gaps still exist. Because there are no known studies assessing demographic and neighborhood predictors of shoplifting, the purpose of this study was twofold. First, I wanted to determine whether shoplifting offenders from socially disorganized neighborhoods differ from shoplifting offenders from less socially disorganized neighborhoods. Second, I wanted to expand the current body of literature on shoplifting by examining demographic predictors of the crime. This analysis used data from Meridian Police Department information from 434 arrested adult shoplifters and census-tract level data from the 2018 5yr-ACS to determine demographic and neighborhood predictors of shoplifting.

Social Disorganization Results

In Table 15, I have included each of the original hypotheses and their respective results. Most null hypotheses were accepted by the analysis; however, I believe important information may still be garnered from this research, especially since this is the first known attempt to analyze relationships between demographic and neighborhood predictors of shoplifting. Social disorganization theory posits that neighborhoods with high population heterogeneity, high residential mobility, and low socioeconomic status lack important social relationships that informally regulate behavior; therefore, crime is more prevalent in these neighborhoods. The theory also suggests that neighborhoods with high rates of crime are located near inner-cities, where lower rates of crime are generally observed in suburban communities located on the outskirts of major cities. In this study, all three of the proxy variables for social disorganization theory (i.e., *Percent Black*, *Resident Turnover*, and *SES Index*) were never simultaneously significant at any time during the analysis. However, an unexpected finding was discovered when analyzing prior shoplifting offenses and social disorganization. Social disorganization theory suggests that arrestees from socially disorganized neighborhoods are more likely to have prior shoplifting offenses. However, in this analysis, arrestees from census tracts with a higher percentage of Black residents and higher disadvantage were not significantly more likely than their counterparts from less socially disorganized neighborhoods to have prior shoplifting arrests. Interestingly, the impact of *Resident Turnover* had the opposite effect of what I originally hypothesized. In this analysis, shoplifting arrestees from neighborhoods with high resident turnover were *less likely* than their counterparts to have prior offenses. Age also had a significant relationship with prior shoplifting offenses. Arrestees who were older were more likely to have prior shoplifting offenses than younger arrestees in this analysis. Resident turnover is observed

more frequently among lower-income households, those who rent, and younger individuals (Coulton et al., 2012). Therefore, it is possible that younger, first time arrestees lived in census tracks with higher resident turnover, explaining the effect seen in the analysis. However, if this were the case, one would expect the *SES Index* to be significantly associated with prior offenses, but this was not the case. More research is needed to untangle this relationship.

When analyzing the relationship between social disorganization and type of business, arrestees from social disorganized neighborhoods were no more or no less likely to shoplift from a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store than individuals from less socially disorganized neighborhoods. However, arrestees who lived in census tracts marked with higher socioeconomic disadvantage were more likely to shoplift at dollar stores, liquor stores, or convenience stores. Because economic segregation often minimizes the distribution of retail establishments in one's community or neighborhood (Altwitt & Donley, 1997), disadvantaged neighborhoods generally have more access to dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores. It is possible that arrestees living in poorer census tracts were more likely to shoplift at dollar stores, liquor stores, or convenience stores because they lacked transportation (Meridian has no real public transportation system) and thus were limited to where they could shoplift. Additionally, literature suggests that residents from poorer neighborhoods are more likely than the rest of the population to either travel greater distances or use public transportation to purchase goods (Altwitt & Donley, 1997). Smaller stores such as dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores subsequently charge higher "convenience prices" for their products because residents who shop at their establishments are often geographically isolated (Altwitt & Donley, 1997). It is possible that the arrestees in this sample may have shoplifted because convenience price inflation restricted their purchasing power. In other words, arrestees who lived in

disadvantaged neighborhoods may have shoplifted at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store because they were unable to pay for the highly priced item and therefore stole the item. However, the data set was limited to arrestee information only, which did not include explanations as to why the offender shoplifted. Therefore, the explanations above are broad generalizations.

Additionally, Black arrestees were significantly more likely to shoplift from a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store than were their White counterparts. A large body of research suggests that disadvantaged neighborhoods are often comprised of African American residents. Considering this fact, and that dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores are often located in disadvantaged neighborhoods, it may help to explain why Black arrestees were significantly more likely to shoplift at these type of stores. However, it is also possible that Black arrestees were not differentially involved in the crime of shoplifting at these type of stores, rather they received differential treatment from store owners or clerks. In other words, it is possible that Black arrestees were subjected to racial bias by the store owner or clerk, a similar finding expressed by Cameron (1964).

An interesting and unexpected anomalous relationship was observed when analyzing the *Percent Black* variable and the type of business where shoplifting violations occurred. Arrestees from census tracts with a higher percentage of Black residents were significantly *less likely* to shoplift from dollar stores, liquor stores, or convenience stores, despite the finding reported earlier that Black arrestees were significantly *more likely* to shoplift from the same stores. It is possible that in this study, Black arrestees lived in neighborhoods comprised mostly of White residents but in those neighborhoods, Black arrestees may also have lived in clusters around dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores, explaining why they were significantly more

likely to shoplift from these stores. Most Americans generally live in neighborhoods composed of people of the same race (Crowder et al., 2012); however, Lauderdale County is almost equally comprised of Black and White residents. It is possible that in Lauderdale County, neighborhoods are formed based on social class, rather than racial preference, explaining why Black arrestees were significantly less likely to shoplift from dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores in neighborhoods with higher percentages of Black residents. However, further investigation should explore relationships between shoplifting, residential segregation, and where shoplifting offenses are occurring.

The social disorganization variables had no significant relationships with the remaining dependent variables (necessity vs non-necessity, amount stolen, and failure to appear), and these null hypotheses were accepted. However, another interesting observation was made. As described in Table 14, most of the census tracts that received the highest social disorganization scores were observed to be located in the most central part of Lauderdale County (and thus the central city of Meridian), where most of the census tracts that received the lowest social disorganization score were located on the outskirts of Lauderdale Country. However, census tract 11.02, which received the second lowest social disorganization score, was located in the central part of Meridian. Additionally, census tracts 102.01 and 104 both had high social disorganization rank orders (9 and 10, respectively) despite being located on the outskirts of the county. Additional research should explore this anomalous observations in this county.

Dependent and Control Variables Results

The results of the binomial logistic and multivariate OLS regression analysis of the dependent variables and control variables also describe important information regarding the crime of shoplifting. For prior shoplifting offenses, arrestees who were older, homeless, or from

Lauderdale County were more likely to have a prior shoplifting offense. Very few scholars have examined prior shoplifting offenses in their studies of shoplifting. In one study, Cameron (1964) reported that 20 out of 709 women (2.82%) had prior shoplifting arrest records, where 18 out of 147 males (12.24%) had prior shoplifting arrests. Another study examined the recidivism rate of 1,595 apprehended shoplifters and reported that 5.7% of the arrested shoplifters were rearrested for shoplifting in a six-month period (Sherman and Gartin, 1986). More currently, Cook and May (2019) reported the most robust information regarding prior shoplifting offenses. Using data from 2009-2018, they report a range of 0 to 16 prior shoplifting offenses among arrestees, with approximately 18.2% of their sample committing a prior shoplifting offense. In the current study, data reflect that, in 2018, a range of 0 to 16 prior shoplifting offenses was recorded using arrestee data. However, this study reports that 34.2% of the arrestee sample had prior shoplifting offenses, which is approximately 1.9 times greater than the percentage Cook and May (2019) report. In 2014, House Bill 585 increased the felony threshold for shoplifting from $500 to $1,000 and removed the enhanced felony charge for 3rd and subsequent shoplifting offenses as long as those offenses do not exceed $500 (House Bill 585, 2014). It is possible that this study observed a higher percentage of prior shoplifting offenses because this data was collected after the passage of the House Bill 585, where Cook and May's study included data from offenders before and after the passage of the bill and the threat of receiving a felony charge was greater for some of their sample.

Cook and May (2019) also noted that males arrested for shoplifting were significantly more likely to be older and have prior shoplifting arrests than females. While this study did not make the same conclusions regarding gender, age, and prior shoplifting offenses, age was significantly associated with prior shoplifting offenses. In this study, older individuals were more

likely to have prior shoplifting offenses. It is possible that age had a significant relationship with prior shoplifting offenses, simply because older individuals had more years to commit multiple shoplifting offenses, or as stated above, older arrestees shoplifted and were arrested multiple times because the risk of receiving a felony charge was minimal. It is also possible that the relationship between prior shoplifting offenses and age would be very different if older arrestees received a felony charge for their shoplifting offense. In one study assessing the effects of aging on recidivism, federal offenders were significantly less likely to recidivate (United States Sentencing Commission, 2017). However, these data do not report whether arrestees with prior offenses received a misdemeanor or felony charge for their crimes and future exploration between the relationship of prior offenses, age, and the outcome of the charge is warranted.

Lastly, numerous studies have also been conducted on adult shoplifting and some researchers report increased shoplifting activity in persons 55 years and older (Buckle & Farrington, 1984), which may help to explain the relationship between age and prior shoplifting offenses. However, Buckle and Farrington (1994) concluded that shoplifting was more prevalent in persons 25 years and younger and 55 years and older because they are less likely to be prosecuted. Therefore, it is possible that older arrestees in our sample were more likely to have prior shoplifting offenses because they perceived the threat of being prosecuted as minimal.

As stated above, the binomial logistic regression analysis regressing prior offenses on the control variables also suggested a relationship between prior shoplifting offenses and homelessness status and residency status. Arrestees who were homeless or from Lauderdale County were more likely to have a prior shoplifting offense. No known studies examine the relationship between prior shoplifting offenses and homelessness. However, some scholars have focused on the relationship between homelessness and recidivism and suggest that stable

accommodations may have a role in reducing reoffending (O'Leary, 2013). Homeless populations may engage in "survival offending," such as shoplifting, if they are without stable food sources or housing (Payne et al., 2015). It is possible that "survival offending," over time, may lead to multiple shoplifting arrests, possibly explaining the relationship observed in this analysis.

Lastly, a relationship between prior offenses and residency status was also observed, in which 260 of the 361 (72%) arrestees in this sample were Lauderdale County residents. Property crimes, such as larceny-theft (e.g., shoplifting), often occur in close proximity to one's home (National Crime and Victimization Survey, 2008), and it is possible that this relationship was observed because arrestees committed repeated shoplifting offenses near their home.

The binomial logistic regression analysis regressing business type on the control variables indicated that arrestees who were Black were significantly more likely to shoplift at dollar stores, liquor stores, or convenience stores. As stated earlier, a large body of research suggests that disadvantaged neighborhoods are often comprised of African American residents and dollar store, liquor stores, and convenience stores. Black arrestees may have been more likely to shoplift at the these types of stores because (1) their purchasing power was limited because of convenience price inflation, (2) the type of stores they could shoplift from was limited, and (3) they were subjected to racial bias because they received differential treatment from store owners or clerks.

Shoplifting behavior has been reported across all population strata, from the most disadvantaged populations to the most affluent. Thomas and Farrell (1982) found that those who were apprehended for shoplifting often had adequate money on them that day to pay for the stolen good. Considering these facts, there continues to be a relatively contentious debate

whether persons who shoplift, shoplift out of necessity. While non-necessity items (55.1%) were pilfered more frequently than necessity items (34.9%), race was significant when examining the relationship between necessity vs. non-necessity items in the binomial logistic regression models. Black arrestees were significantly more likely to shoplift necessity items (i.e., clothing, childcare items, food, hygiene products, and medicine) than White arrestees. Minority groups, such as African Americans, are more likely to experience "multidimensional poverty (i.e., low household income, low or limited educational attainment, low or limited health insurance, reside in high-poverty areas, and high unemployment) (Reeves et al., 2016, p.5), which may result in less access to important resources such as food, clothing, and medicine. Additionally, lower-income neighborhoods often have access to fewer community resources (Wilson, 1996). Because African Americans are more likely to reside in these neighborhoods, they generally have fewer opportunities to form strong social networks, limiting their access to important social spaces (i.e., jobs, schools, and other important organizations) (Wilson, 1996). Considering these facts and the average median income of the 18 census tracts in Lauderdale County ($21,792.83), it is possible that Black arrestees in this sample were more likely to shoplift necessity items because they experienced significant resource and network barriers, influencing their decision to shoplift. However, it is important to note that the necessity vs. non-necessity measurement is incredibly subjective, especially considering that the data does not include explanations for why specific items were pilfered. For this study, necessity items included food, steak/ribs, clothing, medicine, and hygiene products, where non-necessity items included junk food, alcohol/tobacco products, tools, household items, electronics, phone and car accessories, jewelry, beauty items, sporting goods, office and school supplies, and other/miscellaneous items. Clothing (31.6%) and food (20.8%) were the most frequently shoplifted items in this study. Meridian Police Department

data included descriptions of the type of items shoplifted. Designer clothing, shirts, pants, and undergarments were among the most reported clothing items stolen. Meats (including specialty meats such as ribs and steaks), dairy products, deli items, and specialty beverages (i.e., Red Bull, flavor infusers for water) were commonly pilfered food items. Arguably, not all these items are truly essential (i.e., designer clothing, Red Bull, flavor infuser for water), but because they are type of food or clothing, or were shoplifted with other clothing or food-type items, they were categorized as such. Therefore, it is possible that items that were considered necessity items were truly not necessity items.

The same argument may be made for non-necessity items. For example, one arrestee shoplifted a tent. For the purpose of this study, tents were categorized as a sporting item, and was therefore considered a non-necessity item. However, upon further investigation, it was discovered that this arrestee was homeless and given the context of this situation, it is possible someone else would classify the tent as a necessity item. Ultimately, this is a major limitation of this database and a complete picture of shoplifting may not be gathered because the database is lacking contextual details offering explanations for the arrestee's shoplifting behavior.

The binomial logistic regression model regressing whether or not the arrestee failed to appear in court on the control variables indicated that race, gender, and failure to appear were significantly associated, and race also was associated with the disposition an arrestee received. In 2018, 51.8% of shoplifting arrestees whose offense occurred in Lauderdale County failed to appear in court. This is an astonishing finding especially considering that persons who fail to appear in court automatically receive a guilty disposition (Cook & May, 2019). In this study, Black arrestees and female arrestees were significantly more likely to appear in court for their alleged shoplifting charge than White arrestees and male arrestees. Additionally, White arrestees

were more likely to receive a guilty disposition than were Black arrestees. Cook and May (2019) are the only other known study to report demographic predictors of plea and disposition outcomes. Interestingly, they observed similar relationships in their study.

From 2009-2018, Cook and May (2019) reported that 38.4% of their sample failed to appear in court for shoplifting charges, a lower percentage than the current study. An important finding of their study was that White offenders, and male offenders were significantly more likely than Black offenders, and female offenders to not appear in court for their shoplifting charge(s) from 2009-2018. In this 2018 study, White, and male offenders were significantly more likely to fail to appear in court than their counterparts as well. Cook and May (2019) suggest that while failure to appear cases were trending upward prior to the passage of House Bill 585 (2009-2013), they actually increased after the enactment of the bill (2014-2018), which may help to explain why this study observed such a high percentage of failure to appear cases. Since the passage of House Bill 585, shoplifting has largely been classified as a misdemeanor crime in Mississippi. It is possible that arrestees may be less likely to appear in court because their offense does not carry the threat of a felony offense. As suggested by Cook and May (2019), it is also possible that persons who "skip court" may have done so in the past and did not receive any consequences for their actions. Therefore, they failed to appear in court for the shoplifting offense under question. Additionally, it is possible that individuals who failed to appear in court did not have a private attorney or did not request/accept an appointed attorney. Perhaps these alleged offenders understood that they were guilty and knew that going to court would make minimal difference in their disposition outcome. However, it is possible that if they did not have a private attorney, or request/accept an appointed attorney, they were unaware of

their legal options. This is only the second known study to assess failure to appear in court outcomes and shoplifting and future research is needed to better under these relationships.

Most of the arrestees in this study were found guilty of their shoplifting offense (88.4%). However, White arrestees were more likely to receive a guilty disposition than Black arrestees. It is possible that White arrestees were significantly more likely to receive a guilty disposition because White arrestees were significantly more likely to shoplift from Walmart stores where Black arrestees were significantly more likely to shoplift from dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores. Representatives from Walmart stores are often present in Lauderdale County court, which may help to explain the relationship observed since these Walmart representatives may then present evidence against the alleged offender. Conversely, because Black arrestees were more likely to shoplift from dollar stores, liquor stores, or convenience stores, representatives from these types of stores may be less likely to come to court, and thus Black arrestees may then receive a non-guilty adjudication because the complainant did not appear, making black defendants less likely to be found guilty. This study also found that White arrestees were significantly more likely to fail to appear in court, which may also help to explain why White arrestees were significantly more likely to receive a guilt dispositions, since failure to appear in court cases are usually adjudicated as guilty or "guilty in absentia."

In one study, Cook and May (2019) similarly report that White arrestees were significantly more likely to receive a guilty disposition. While Cook and May concluded that this may be a unique outcome specific to the jurisdiction they studied, they reflect on past literature that suggests "that being Black is a strike against an individual in the criminal justice system…it appears that in this jurisdiction, being White is associated with greater likelihood of a guilty verdict" (Cook and May, 2019, p. 104). Whether this is truly a unique outcome, a new social

phenomena, or a result of Lauderdale County attempting to correct past sentencing discrepancies, I recommend further exploration into the nature of these relationships.

The Multivariate OLS regression model regressing the amount stolen on the control variables indicated that older arrestees were significantly more likely to shoplift higher total dollar amounts. In this study, the mean age of the arrestees was 33.41 years (range 17-70 years) and the mean amount stolen was $79.27 (range $1.59-$955.82). Very few shoplifting studies report the amount stolen by shoplifters, likely because they typically use arrest data or store loss prevention apprehension reports. In one study of youth shoplifters, Klemke (1978) reported that most items youth shoplifted were under $2; however, the total amount stolen by youth in his study was not discussed. In another study, Prayag and Juwaheer (2009) reported that teens shoplifted candies or sweets most frequently, followed by school supplies, and then books or magazines. While these studies use self-reported data from youth, it is possible to draw a few conclusions. For instance, it is possible that younger individuals shoplift lower valued items, such as junk food or makeup; therefore, the total dollar amount stolen is lower. If this is the case, it is possible that older arrestees shoplift more expensive items, such as electronics, jewelry, and clothing, explaining the relationship between age and amount stolen observed in this analysis.

Descriptives

While there is no typical profile of a shoplifter (National Association of Shoplifting Prevention, 2019), demographic information helps scholars gain a better understanding of the type of people committing certain types of crime. These data suggest that most of the shoplifting arrestees were residents of Lauderdale County (72%) and were not homeless (96.4%). Arrestee ages ranged from 17-70 years, with an average age of 33 years reported. Interestingly, the demographic composition of the arrestee data in this study depict an almost equal distribution of

racial and gender characteristics among the arrestees. White arrestees comprised slightly more of the sample (49.9%), followed closely by African Americans (48.8%). Likewise, female arrestees accounted for slightly more of the sample (51%) than males (48.8%).

Race is relatively underexplored in the shoplifting literature. Most currently, Cook and May (2019) found that from 2009-2013, African Americans in their sample were more involved in shoplifting incidents; however, from 2014-2018, White persons in their sample were more involved in shoplifting incidents. For gender, Marshall and He (2010) suggest that males are equally involved in shoplifting as females, a conclusion shared by this study. However, other studies suggest that males are more involved in shoplifting (Bamfield, 2012; Blanco et al., 2008; Buckle & Farrington, 1994; Cox et al., 1990; Dabney et al., 2004; Farrington, 1999; Hirtenlehner et al., 2014; Klemke, 1978; Klemke, 1982; Klemke, 1992; Krasnovsky & Lane, 1998; Prayag & Juwaheer, 2009; Tonglet, 2002) while others observed more females (Cook and May, 2019; Farmer and Dawson, 2017). As suggested by Cook and May (2019), the gender and racial gap in shoplifting appear to be closing.

In this study, the average amount stolen was $79.27 and, on average, about seven items were stolen. The most frequently shoplifted items included clothing, food, household items, makeup and accessories, electronics, and junk food. Very few studies explore the total amount stolen, the number of items stolen, and the type of items. Klemke (1978) reported that youth in his study shoplifted items such as candies and books, and items were usually under $2. In the United States, the most targeted products for shoplifting are fashion accessories and clothing, mobile handsets and accessories, power tools, wine, and cosmetic products (Global Retail Theft Barometer, 2014). Information regarding these relationships is extremely limited and therefore additional research is needed.

In this study, most of the shoplifting violations occurred at Walmart (78.1%). Cook and May (2019) noted that almost half of the violations in their study occurred at Walmart. Walmart stores are located in almost every major city and town in the United States. In fact, there are approximately 5,353 Walmart stores (i.e., Walmart Supercenters, Walmart Discount Stores, Neighborhood Markets, and Sam's Club) located in the United States alone (Walmart Inc., 2020). Furthermore, there are multiple Walmart stores in Lauderdale county. Large retailers carry a greater variation of merchandise, which often offers shoplifters a wider variety of items to steal (National Retail Security Survey, 2019). These facts may help to explain why such a large percentage of the arrestees shoplifted at Walmart in this study. It is possible that persons arrested in Lauderdale County had more access to Walmart stores, explaining how the location to shoplift was chosen.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations were encountered in this study. First, the study relied on a small sample of arrest data, which does not provide a complete picture of shoplifting since it only includes information from those who were apprehended for shoplifting. Second, this study used ACS data in combination with individual level arrest data. It is often difficult to make finite conclusions when analyzing macro-level data in combination with micro-level data. It is very likely that many of the conclusions made in this study are broad generalizations which border on ecological fallacies. Third, this analysis lacked self-report information which may have provided a richer, more textually detailed analysis. Because of this, this analysis was unable to explain why specific arrestees shoplifted certain items, or why they shoplifted at specific locations. This study was also unable to gather information regarding the mechanisms used to pilfer, or what

deterrence mechanism were used by retailers. Fourth, arrest data was only collected from Lauderdale County, thus limiting the generalizability of these findings even further.

Millions of arrests are made every for shoplifting; however, shoplifting continues to be overlooked by the academic community, and it is my hope that scholars expand this analysis. I recommend that future scholars explore and compare the total amount stolen by shoplifters, the types of items shoplifted, and when items are being stolen (i.e., seasonal shoplifting), especially since this information is lacking in literature. Juvenile shoplifting behavior should also be studied especially because this study did not explore this behavior. Additionally, though this study used 2018 data, analyses were conducted during the COVID-19 era, and scholars should explore and compare the types of items shoplifted before and after this time.

Future research should also explore the application of social disorganization theory, as well as other criminological and sociological theories, to shoplifting in other jurisdictions. Interestingly, this is the first known study to truly explore homelessness and shoplifting. It is possible that certain resource barriers exist for this population and additional analyses are warranted. Reporting true prevalence rates on shoplifting is impossible, especially since (1) retailers lack a standardized way to measure shoplifting, (2) many shoplifters go unobserved, and (3) arrest data on shoplifting is not standardized. Data sources measuring shoplifting must be improved. Such information may help law enforcement, retailers, and scholars understand the true impact of shoplifting and shrinkage.

This study observed that arrestees frequently shoplifted at Walmart and often failed to appear in court. This is the second known study to observe this trend. It is possible that Walmart is using the criminal justice system to deter shoplifting (Cook and May, 2019). However, it is not known if this deterrence method is working. It is possible that additional deterrence strategies

may need to be explored with this organization. Lastly, it is concerning that a large number of the arrestees in this study failed to appear in court, especially since a failure to appear in court, more often than not, results in an automatic guilty verdict. Efforts should be made to examine if this is a product of transportation issues, conflicting employment schedules, childcare issues, or the fact that arrestees know there are minimal consequences for shoplifting. Addressing these issues may help scholars gather additional insight into the social significance of shoplifting.

Conclusion

This analysis attempted to better understand the crime of shoplifting through the theoretical framework of social disorganization theory. Additionally, this analysis attempted to report current demographic predictors of shoplifting. This analysis found only partial support for social disorganization theory when analyzing where the shoplifting offense occurred. In this analysis, shoplifting arrestees from neighborhoods with high levels of poverty were more likely than their counterparts to shoplift at dollar stores, liquor store, or convenience stores. The demographic composition of the arrestee data in this study depict an almost equal distribution of racial and gender characteristics among the arrestees. It was also found that persons arrested for shoplifting in Lauderdale County often failed to appear in court, frequently received a guilty disposition, frequently shoplifted at Walmart, and frequently stole non-necessity items. Arrestees who were older, homeless, or from Lauderdale County were significantly more likely to have prior shoplifting offenses. Additionally, arrestees who were Black were significantly more likely to shoplift necessity items, or shoplift at a dollar store, liquor store, or convenience store. Older arrestees were significantly more likely to have stolen a higher dollar amount. Lastly, arrestees who were White or male were significantly more likely to fail to appear in court, and arrestees who were White were significantly more likely to receive a guilty disposition.

This study was an attempt to expand the knowledge in the area of social disorganization. While my efforts found very limited support for an association between social disorganization theory and shoplifting, this research has expanded the breadth of knowledge in the area of shoplifting. Perhaps the most important expansion is in the areas of race and gender. Despite the commonly held myth that females shoplift more than males, this research suggests that recent data indicate there is a limited relationship between gender and shoplifting. The results of this study also suggest that there are only slight racial differences in shoplifting as well. While racial and gender gaps in shoplifting activity have practically closed, additional investigations of shoplifting behavior are warranted, especially considering the fact that scholars continue to neglect this field of study.

Funding

Shoplifting data were gathered for this project through funding provided to Dr. Amanda Cook and Dr. David May by Arnold Ventures (formerly the Laura and John Arnold Foundation). All analyses and conclusions included herein represent those of the author and not necessarily those of the funding organization.

Table 15 Results of Hypotheses

H1: Analysis accepted the null hypothesis that shoplifting arrestees from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely than their counterparts to have prior offenses.
H2: Analysis partially rejected the null hypothesis that those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely to shoplift at dollar stores, liquor stores, and convenience stores than individuals from less socially disorganized neighborhoods.
H3: Analysis accepted the null hypothesis that those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely to receive a guilty outcome from the court process, whether by plea or by conviction, than their counterparts.
H4: Analysis accepted the null hypothesis that those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely than their counterparts to shoplift lower total dollar amounts.
H5: Analysis accepted the null hypothesis that those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely than their counterparts to shoplift non-necessity items.
H6: Analysis accepted the null hypothesis that those from socially disorganized neighborhoods will be more likely to fail to appear in court than their counterparts.

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