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TOWN-GOWN SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN CAMPUS-ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

by

Andrew T. Perrone

A Dissertation

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Dissertation Chair: Monica Reid Kerrigan, Ed.D.

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Abstract

Andrew T. Perrone
TOWN-GOWN SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN CAMPUS-ADJACENT
NEIGHBORHOODS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY
2018-2019
Monica Reid Kerrigan, Ed.D.
Doctor of Education

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine the perceptions of a

sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent

neighborhoods of a college town. Employing an explanatory sequential design, the study

further explored any differing perceptions of a sense of community held after

participation in a community-wide program modeled after Texas A&M University's The

Big Event. Residents of owner-occupied homes in neighborhoods that have experienced

"studentification" (Smith, 2008) were surveyed with the Sense of Community Index 2

(Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008) in order to understand the established Psychological Sense

of Community (PSOC). Follow-up interviews were completed with Back To The Boro

participants and non-participants. Three findings emerged that coincided with the four

component subscales of PSOC. Finding One, "It's Going To Be Rowan-boro Soon,"

points to participant's sense of Membership and Reinforcement of Needs. Finding Two,

"We Don't Have This Chronic Issue With the Youth of the Community. They're Not the

Issue," illuminates the sense of Influence. And, Finding Three, "As Long As I Stay Here,

I'll Always Try to Build Bridges," articulates the sense of Shared Emotional Connection.

Ultimately, this study calls for shifts in both policy and practice that focus town-gown

relationships as more than a reaction to negative student behaviors. Recommendations are

made for educational leaders to transform these relationships.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. Furthermore, this study explores any differing perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town after participation in a community-wide university day of community service. By employing an explanatory sequential design, this study allows qualitative interviews to give detailed voice to the experiences of non-student neighbors in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The traditional measurement of psychological sense of community (PSOC) has been primarily quantitative. However, the mixed methods design of this study also provides detailed account of the experiences of these neighbors within the unique place and context of a campus-adjacent neighborhood in a college town. In completing this research study, I collected and analyzed quantitative survey data through the Sense of Community Index 2 – SCI-2 (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). After establishing the quantitative PSOC held by non-student residents within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods, the study followed-up with a qualitative interview approach of multiple typical cases detailing the experiences of neighbors within a campus-adjacent neighborhood of a college town. Data on the experiences of those having participated in the university day of community service were collected and analyzed as well as data from those who have never participated.

Background and Statement of Problem

Modern universities have grown increasingly concerned with the relationship they

hold with the local municipalities in which they physically reside (Fox, 2014; Gavazzi,

2016; Gumprecht, 2008). The common term, "town-gown," was established in the early

medieval times in order to characterize the relationship between the physical locale of the

town as well as the non-academic residents of the place – "town" – and the academic

institution as well as its members of the academic faculty and student body who were

symbolized by the traditional academic vestments of the cap and gown – "gown"

(Sonnad, 2003).

In modern American colleges and universities, the separation continued to be

evident through the 20th century as higher education institutions adopted a campus model

of self-sufficiency. Colleges and universities aimed to create an "invisible barrier"

between their campus and the community thus allowing students to rarely leave the

confines of campus. This self-imposed separation by colleges and universities

exacerbated the divide between town and gown while also stoking animosity and

resentment from host communities (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006).

As colleges and universities continued to expand throughout the latter half of the

20th century, resentment and animosity were further stoked by common concerns cited by

community members that are generally attributed to the presence of college students

within the community. Many of the challenges and negative impacts of students residing

in residential neighborhoods, such as noise, party-related concerns, property damage,

traffic, parking, alcohol-related concerns, trash, littering, and concern for devaluation of

property values, have been researched and documented extensively (Massey, Field &

Chan, 2014; Powell, 2013; Weiss, 2013). Furthermore, Powell (2013) points out how these common town-gown tensions are more intense and concentrated in the mixed and ever-changing shared communities of campus-adjacent neighborhoods.

In efforts to focus on and address the tensions that exist in town-gown relationships, colleges and universities have taken to focusing on engagement with community members as a means to improving these relations (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006). Brisbin and Hunter define "community engagement" as activities that "encourage collective interaction and the sharing of knowledge about community concerns" (2003, p. 469). One programming initiative with a focus on community engagement that has been gaining popularity at colleges and universities has been the introduction of large-scale, community-wide days of community service in college towns. Texas A&M University (TAMU) created a student-run community service event within their community of College Station/Bryant, Texas in 1982. This event was the first of its kind, and they named it "The Big Event." On a single-day, TAMU students spread out throughout their community and completed community service projects at the homes of their residential community neighbors. The Big Event was branded as a day for students to create "unity" with their neighbors and "say thank you" to their college home. Over the decades the event has grown at TAMU while other colleges and universities across the nation adopt the programming model (Bogue, 2014).

Publications, online resources, official websites, and promotional materials from multiple colleges and universities sponsoring Big Event projects detail the common goals and outcomes of these Big Event-style activities as creating unity between university students and the residential neighborhoods that house them and an opportunity for the

college students to extend a "thank you" to their host community. As this programming model spreads throughout institutions of higher education at the national level, it is unclear if these assumed outcomes of unity and thanks are achieved and observable in the town-gown relationships.

History: Back To The Boro – Rowan University & Glassboro, NJ

During the 2012-2013 academic year, student leaders from Rowan's Student Governement Association (SGA) approached the professional staff in Rowan University's Office of Service-Learning, Volunteerism & Community Engagement (SLVCE) with a request to co-sponsor SGA's annual Spring day of service event. The SGA student leaders were interested in expanding their event by modeling it more directly after The Big Event originated at TAMU. The Rowan students were particularly interested in this type of program because it gave them the opportunity to work directly with their neighbors in the community and have a positive impact in their town of Glassboro.

Rowan University's program, dubbed Back To The Boro, completed its first co-sponsored event between SLVCE and SGA in April 2013. In that first year, as well as the second year of the event, SGA students recruited the neighborhood participants to serve as host sites for volunteerism projects through door-to-door solicitation. Teams of students would spread out throughout Glassboro on foot, knock on doors, and extend the invitation to neighbors in hopes that they would have projects available for student volunteers to complete. Interested neighbors were asked to complete a Job Request Form so volunteers could be appropriately assigned to their project. In later years of the program the door-to-door solicitation was no longer necessary. Beginning in 2015,

neighborhood projects were recruited through retention of host sites from previous years as well as word-of-mouth amongst community members and partnerships with the Borough of Glassboro's Public Relations officials, the Glassboro Police Department, and the Glassboro Code Enforcement Office. Through these means, the participation in Back To The Boro continued to expand annually.

In Spring 2013, Back To The Boro consisted of 838 registered student volunteers completing projects at 59 different community host site locations. By Spring 2018, these numbers grew to witness over 1,600 registered student volunteers completing projects at 208 different community host site locations. As the program continued to expand, the only restrictive stipulations that the Rowan event team placed on the Job Requests from community neighbors were that the project must be able to be completed by unskilled student laborers within a 2-hour frame, the project must pass safety concerns, and the project site must be within the confines of the Borough of Glassboro. SGA students did not put any other restrictions or requirements on the neighbors requesting assistance. There was no expectation that the neighbor express a particular physical or financial limitation that compelled them to request assistance. As long as the project was hosted in Glassboro, and unskilled student volunteers could safely complete the project, SGA was committed to providing the volunteer assistance to the neighbor.

The student leaders from Rowan University's SGA were continuing in the mold of TAMU's Big Event mission that sought to offer thanks to their host community and build unity through relationships with non-student neighbors. In Spring 2016, the event grew in scope once again in an effort to continue to nurture these opportunities for relationship building. As the volunteerism projects were completed throughout

Glassboro, all student volunteers and non-student neighbors who were engaged at the varied work sites were invited back to Rowan's campus in order to share in a community barbeque. SGA saw this as an opportunity to invite Glassboro neighbors onto campus after they had hosted students at their homes. This community barbeque was initiated as an extension of Back To The Boro and an additional opportunity to build relationships with neighbors in hopes of furthering the goals of thanks and unity.

Significance of the Study

Higher education institutions and the communities that host them have a history of divide and tensions (Gumprecht, 2008; Smith, 2008; Sonnad, 2003). Research findings and reports of "best practices" have detailed links between improved town-gown relations and the efforts made in engagement with the town community (Fox, 2014, Gavazzi, 2016; Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006). Institutional leaders in higher education are interested in improving town-gown relations through community engagement activities, and leadership will benefit from research focused on the impacts of different practices and activities. Once provided with this data, higher education institutions can further develop these practices in order to truly achieve the stated outcomes of improved town-gown relations.

This research study is important because it provides the necessary data to assist university leaders in making decisions related to town-gown relations and community engagement. Gavazzi (2016) and Fox (2014) both cite that university leaders too often wait until a crisis erupts within the community before focusing on town-gown relations. Both researchers assert that it is better to have a pre-existing relationship in place before a crisis arises, and they stress the symbiotic nature of the town-gown relationship. Much of

the research into best practices for establishing these positive relationships prior to a crisis asserts that student community engagement is a powerful strategy for initiating this level of strategic planning (Fox, 2014). Fox's (2014) research also cites that critical success in town-gown relationship building through student community engagement must move beyond occasional or episodic activities. With this in mind, my current study focuses on the multidimensional construct of psychological sense of community (PSOC) in order to establish a richer understanding of the impact of a particular form of student community engagement. Powell (2015) asserts that student community engagement through volunteerism "may actually be seen to have a more complicated and perhaps even negative outcome than superficially apparent" (p. 14). My research is important because it investigates beyond the superficial and anecdotal, and provides university leaders with specific data that will help in establishing positive town-gown relationships in a proactive way before a crisis and aid in creating long-term, sustainable, positive communities.

Rather than addressing community engagement as a whole, this research focuses on a singular style of programming that has emerged in higher education as a potentially powerful means to the end of positive town-gown relations. Many colleges and universities are implementing a community engagement initiative modeled after Texas A&M University's (TAMU) day of service, The Big Event. Currently, there is no literature or research in the field that investigates the stated goals of "unity" and "thanks." Similarly, there is no current literature or research available in the field that links a Big Event-style day of service as a community engagement activity to the broader field of town-gown relations. This study extends the collection of data and literature within the

growing field of interest of town-gown relations as well as within the expanding trend of Big Event-style programming.

In order to conceptualize the impacts of these community engagement activities in the field of town-gown relations, this study also uses the construct of psychological sense of community (PSOC) (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) in order to understand the experiences of non-student neighbors in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of a college town. While PSOC has been offered as a valuable measurement in understanding community in campus-adjacent neighborhoods (Powell, 2015), it has not yet been utilized as a construct for exploring town-gown relations through the lens of participation in community engagement activities. The four elements of McMillan and Chavis' (1986) sense of community – Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and a Shared Emotional Connection – provide a good framework for measuring the presence of the stated outcomes of "unity" and "thanks" in Big Event-style programs. Furthermore, the mixed methods design of this study not only allows for the quantitative analysis of PSOC within the campus-adjacent neighborhood, but it also explains this data with a follow-up qualitative analysis of multiple participants that are representatively typical of the experiences of the residents in the context of these neighborhoods.

Research Questions

This research explored the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town as well as whether or not there is a differing perception of a sense of community held by non-student residents within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town after

participation in Back To The Boro, a Big Event-style community service day. It addressed the following five research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town?

2. What are the differences in the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town for participants and non-participants of the Back To The Boro community service day event?

3. How do non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town describe their relationship and experiences with students?

4. How do the experiences with students in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of the college town impact the sense of community of non-student residents?

5. How are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town influenced by participation in the Back To The Boro community service day?

Research Design

My research used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design in order to allow the qualitative strand of data collection to explain the initial set of quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). By using data and zoning information available through the local police department, this study focused on designated "party" patrol zones that have been established to address common town-gown concerns and tensions. These established "party" patrol zones coincide with the familiar understanding of a campus-adjacent neighborhood (Powell, 2014).

Upon establishing the parameters of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods through the lens of these "party" patrol zones, the first phase of the study involved collection of quantitative data from residential neighbors in these campus-adjacent neighborhoods by administering the Sense of Community Index 2 – SCI-2 (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). The SCI-2 was distributed to residential neighbors in owner-occupied homes throughout the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The distribution of the SCI-2 encompassed all non-student residents of the neighborhood living in owner-occupied housing whether they had participated in the Big Event-style program or not.

The second phase of the explanatory sequential study consisted of one-on-one interviews with a sampling of these same residential neighbor groups. Overall, this design allowed the qualitative strand of the research to further explain the findings of the initial quantitative strand (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The initial quantitative strand informed the instrument design of the follow-up qualitative strand (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) and guided the purposeful participant selection for the sampling of typical cases that were interviewed (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

Definition of Terms

Town-gown. The term has come to represent the relationship between a college or university and the municipality where the institution physically resides. The use of the term "town" traditionally represents the physical municipality as well as the town residents, administration, elected leaders, and other institutions. The use of the word "gown" represents the university role in the relationship. The reference to gowns is a reference to the academic regalia and robes that were traditionally worn by students at early medieval universities (Sonnad, 2003).

Campus-adjacent neighborhood. A neighborhood in a college town that borders the physical boundaries of the college campus. It is a residential neighborhood that often contains a growingly disproportionate percentage of renter-occupied housing to owner-occupied housing. In these neighborhoods, the three main constituencies of year-round residents, student renters, and landlords who are often absentee, represent different and increasingly conflicting interests (Powell, 2015).

Community engagement. Activities that "encourage collective interaction and the sharing of knowledge about community concerns" (Brisbin & Hunter, 2003, p. 469).

Psychological Sense of Community (PSOC). First presented in the work of Sarason (1974). Sense of community asserts that healthy communities exhibit interconnectedness between individuals. McMillan and Chavis (1986) advanced the work of Sarason by presenting a four-component model aimed at understanding how the psychological sense of community actually operates. McMillan and Chavis' four components of PSOC are: (1) Membership, (2) Reinforcement of Needs, (3) Influence, and (4) Shared Emotional Connection. There is debate in the field over whether sense of community is a group-level experience of community or an individual-level experience. This debate is represented in the choices related to exact titles and abbreviations utilized by researchers. While those researchers who view sense of community as a group-level experience opt to simply use the term "sense of community" and the accompanying abbreviation of SOC, those researchers who view sense of community as an individual-level experience opt to use the term "psychological sense of community" and the accompanying abbreviations of PSC or PSOC (Bess, Fisher, Sonn & Bishop, 2002).

Big Event-style program. The Big Event was founded at Texas A&M University in 1982 as a single-day of university campus service within the community of Bryant/College Station, Texas. The stated mission of The Big Event declares: "Through service-oriented activities, The Big Event promotes campus and community unity as students come together for one day to express their gratitude for the support from the surrounding community" (Bogue, 2014, p. 44). Students venture into the community and to neighbors homes to complete such projects as yard work, painting, cleaning, and other similar household and property tasks. As of 2014, it was estimated that smaller versions of The Big Event were operating at approximately 110 other colleges and universities beyond TAMU (Bogue, 2014).

Overview of Chapters

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design with a quantitative strand followed by a qualitative strand. This dissertation consists of five chapters, beginning with this first introductory chapter. In Chapter Two, which follows this introduction, I review the extant literature in the fields of town-gown relations, college community engagement with a focus on Big Event-style activities, and psychological sense of community. First, I discuss the history and definitions of college towns and town-gown relations. This is followed by a discussion of the relevant research into the benefits and negative impacts of the college town. This provides a foundational understanding of the community experience within these communities while also setting the context for the subsequent research which details common practices and research into attempts to bridge the divide. Next, I review the need for community engagement activities in town-gown relations. In this section, detailed information is also presented

related to Big Event-style activities as a form of community engagement opportunity. Finally, I introduce the concept of psychological sense of community (PSOC) as a framework for understanding the experience of non-student residential neighbors in campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. This section begins with definitions of PSOC as well as the varied usages of the concept in communities of diverse types. Then, it concludes with a link between PSOC and town-gown relations.

In Chapter Three, I present my methodology for this study. After a brief introduction to the research design and strategies of inquiry, I present the research questions that guided my study. I go on to explain the setting for the study before entering into the discussion of the overall research design. I outline the explanatory sequential mixed methods which includes a discussion of the sampling methods for both the quantitative strand as well as the qualitative strand of the study. This discussion follows a chronological format that reflects the sequential nature of the explanatory study. First, I outline the quantitative data collection, and follow it with the subsequent analysis of that data. Next, I separately present the strategies for qualitative data collection and the resulting analysis of that data. Finally, I discuss issues of validity as well as ethical considerations of the overall study.

Chapter Four presents the research findings from the quantitative strand as well as the major themes and descriptions that arose from the qualitative strand of the study. The chapter presents the findings of the study after the integration of the quantitative psychological sense of community held by non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a college town and the detailed qualitative experiences and perceptions with Rowan University students and the Back To The Boro event that impact this sense

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of community. This chapter includes detailed demographic information about the participants and selection for both the quantitative data collection as well as the follow-up qualitative interviews. The chapter also summarizes the major themes found in the quantitative SCI-2 as described by the qualitative data. Ultimately, after both strands of the mixed methods study are completed and analyzed, three major findings with multiple sub-findings within each of these major overall groupings are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the qualitative responses compare for Back To The Boro participants and non-participants within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town.

Chapter Five summarizes the study, discusses the findings, and considers the implications of the research. The chapter reviews the purpose and significance of this study, and advances the discussion of the stated research questions by offering conclusions for each question based on the research findings of this study as well as the existing literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Recommendations for policy, practice, and research in the field of higher education and town-gown relations will be presented in the implications section of this chapter with a focus on town-gown relations efforts pursued by local government administrators, university leaders, higher education practitioners, students, and the many varied stakeholders invested in these communities. All recommendations are drawn from the findings and conclusions revealed through this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Overview

This review of literature will focus on the areas of town-gown relations, college community engagement with a focus on Big Event-style activities, and psychological sense of community. Initially, I present the history and definitions of college towns and town-gown relations. Next, I elaborate on this foundation by discussing the relevant research into the benefits and negative impacts of the college town. This is followed by a review of community engagement literature and connection between community engagement activities and town-gown relations. There is also a focus on The Big Event-style activities in this section as a highlighted community engagement opportunity currently being developed at many colleges and universities. Lastly, the framework of psychological sense of community (PSOC) is outlined. This literature offers insight into understanding the experience of non-student residential neighbors in campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. This section begins with definitions of PSOC and examples of how the concept is used in diverse communities. The chapter concludes by linking PSOC and town-gown relations.

My study was designed to examine town-gown relations within campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. This study draws on the concepts of community engagement and PSOC to accomplish this examination. The unique research within this dissertation contributes to the field and current literature by shining the focus on town-gown relations through the lens of community engagement activities. By choosing to use the concept of PSOC as a framework for this examination, I gained a foundational

understanding of the sense of community held by non-student residents of these campus-adjacent neighborhoods as represented through their sense of membership and influence within the community as well as their fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection within the community. This current dissertation further examined these perceptions within the town-gown relationship with a focus on community engagement through volunteerism. More specifically, this research centered on participation in an annual single-day of community service known at many colleges and universities as "The Big Event." Utilization of a Big Event-style community service program in this mixed methods study served as a means of framing community engagement activities in a focused approach and allowed the participants to offer in-depth descriptions of their unique experiences within the context of their campus-adjacent neighborhoods and their specific engagement with university students. Powell (2015) cites that there is a dearth of literature related to these intergroup interactions in a college town and suggests that an exploration of the intergroup dynamics between the long-term residents of these neighborhoods and the short-term student tenants can be a mesosystem-level examination of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological framework. This study begins to fill this research gap.

College Town: History and Definitions

The relationship between higher education institutions (HEIs) and the local municipalities in which they physically reside has been researched and documented (Fox, 2014; Gavazzi, 2016; Gumprecht, 2003; Gumprecht, 2008; Smith, 2008). This field of research seeks to define the classification of a "college town" while also outlining many of the struggles and tensions inherent in the symbiotic relationship. In defining the

college town, scholars detail the history of the relationship between HEIs and their host communities (Gavazzi, 2016; Gumprecht, 2008; Sonnad, 2003). Through understanding the history, researchers seek to further understand the varied benefits and challenges inherent in the relationships (Fox, 2014; Gavazzi, 2016). Gumprecht (2008) describes the American college town as a unique place "where a college or university and the cultures it creates exert a dominant influence over the character of the town" (p. 1).

The history of town-gown relations dates back to the earliest universities in Europe. In fact, Sonnad (2003) asserts that the use of the term "gown" to designate the university role in the relationship was first established in the medieval era. The reference to gowns was a reference to the academic regalia and robes that the students wore to class. Although regalia is only worn for ceremonial purposes at the modern university, the robes were a more daily attire in medieval classrooms. While they served the practical purpose of keeping students warm in colder classrooms of the day, the robes also served the daily function of distinguishing students as separate from local residents of the city (Sonnad, 2003).

Medieval scholars were compelled to keep their students separate from what they believed to be the immorality of local city life. This separation was, in part, fueled by religious motivations of early academic institutions while also being linked to a sense of intellectual superiority. In pursuing this separation, early European universities created separate and independent enclaves for their students. The majority of a student's daily life could be carried out within the secluded walls of the university, including eating, sleeping, and recreation along with academic pursuits (Gavazzi, 2016).

Historically, the radical division between campus and community only grew more divided in American higher education. While European universities were physically constrained by limited space for expansion in compact European cities, American colleges and universities were not confined by centuries of history within their municipalities (Gavazzi, 2016). In fact, the term "campus" was first used in its currently understood collegiate meaning to describe the grassy area surrounding Nassau Hall at Princeton University (Bender, 1988). Throughout the 1800s, and particularly with the expansion created by the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862, American colleges and universities began to adopt the campus model. This segregated college students on campuses and apart from their local communities, often behind literal walls. With the ability to pursue all life activities in on-campus facilities, the division of town and gown became stark. Residence halls and dormitories offered housing; dining halls offered all necessary meals; and, recreational facilities, museums, sporting facilities, libraries, and other planned campus activities provided social and recreational fulfillment (Gumprecht, 2008). The stark division of campus and community only served to heighten resentments from local municipalities and residents. These resentments often manifested in HEIs being viewed as "shining cities on a hill" and exclusively separate "ivory towers" (Powell, 2013).

Extensive research has been conducted and published by Gumprecht (2003; 2006; 2008) in order to define and describe the unique nature of college towns. His early works (2003; 2006) focused on case study presentations of individual college towns, while his later work (2008) detailed eight college towns from a country-wide sample within the United States. In total, Gumprecht's research establishes college towns as distinct

geographic locales while also detailing the social and cultural features of these unique

locales. In defining the college town, Gumprecht (2003; 2008) also observed

characteristics that illuminate college towns as distinct communities. Using United States

Census data and United States Bureau of Labor Statistics data, Gumprecht (2003)

highlights eight fundamental differences between college towns and other American

cities. College town populations are: (1) youthful; (2) highly educated; (3) less likely to

work in factories, and more likely to work in education; (4) averaging higher family

incomes and lower unemployment; (5) transient; (6) more likely to rent and live in group

housing; (7) eccentric and unconventional; and (8) cosmopolitan (Gumprecht, 2003).

The foundation established by Gumprecht (2003; 2006; 2008) was further

elaborated upon in order to present a typology for classifying the nature of various

college towns (Gavazzi, 2015; Gavazzi 2016; Gavazzi & Fox, 2015; Gavazzi, Fox &

Martin, 2014). Building off of a marriage classification typology developed by Cuber and

Haroff (1965), this new town-gown typology utilized the metaphorical lens of viewing

town-gown relationships as similar to a marriage. The four-square typology of town-

gown relationships was developed by examining two distinct dimensions used to describe

the quality of interactions between campus and community. The two dimensions used for

the typology were: (1) the level of comfort experienced by campus and community

stakeholders, and (2) the level of effort required to maintain the town-gown relationship.

By combining these two dimensions, four town-gown types emerged: harmonious,

traditional, conflicted, and devitalized (Gavazzi, Fox & Martin, 2014).

Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014) present the harmonious relationship as the

optimal town-gown relationship. Characterized by high comfort levels and high effort

levels, this town-gown partnership exhibits a strong sense of connectedness and shared purpose through joint activities that are beneficial to both campus and the community. The traditional relationship type is presented as the most common default status for town-gown relations. With high comfort and low effort, the traditional type most often witnesses campus and community leaders selfishly acting independent of one another with little to no attention paid to common interests. The final two types are less optimal. The conflicted type is defined by high effort and low comfort. The extensive effort exerted toward persistently unresolved issues creates a cyclical relationship of conflict. Meanwhile, the devitalized relationship is comprised of low effort combined with low comfort. Gavazzi (2016) points out that these relationships are often observed in partnerships "gone bad." Whereas campus and community may have enjoyed a positive relationship, negative incidents have occurred that have pushed the partners to cease all efforts to do anything positive for the relationship. Often times, these devitalized and conflicted relationships are created and worsened by negative interactions with students and neighbors throughout the community.

While not utilizing the marriage typology framework, Powell (2013; 2014; 2015) has examined devitalized and conflicted relationships that exist within campus-adjacent neighborhoods. Through studying the interactions within these neighborhoods, Powell details extensive examples of "low comfort" experienced by non-student residents of the neighborhood. Powell's research recommends PSOC as a quantifiable measure for detailing the extent of this low comfort by suggesting that the four components of PSOC (Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection) will illuminate these concerns of comfort within the campus-adjacent neighborhood. It

has been observed in multiple studies (Powell, 2013; Powell, 2014; Weiss, 2013) that negative interactions with students result in reports of negative perceptions of the community relationships.

Significant research has focused on these negative relationships. In particular, research has settled onto the likelihood of college town populations to be transient and likely to rent and live in group housing. Gumprecht (2008) introduces the concept of a "student ghetto" which defines a neighborhood adjacent to a college or university that has witnessed a shift away from owner-occupied single-family homes to student rental properties or multi-family residences. Gumprecht's "student ghetto" is characterized by an 80/20 ratio of rental properties to owner-occupied homes. Similar research in the United Kingdom has established the concept of "studentification" (Hubbard, 2008; Sage, Smith & Hubbard, 2012; Smith, 2008). While this research is useful in describing and defining characteristics of a college town, it also harbors limitations in that it cannot classify the many different variations of a college town. Gumprecht's own literature acknowledges the diversity of college towns across the United States (2008). Therefore, it may only serve as a helpful foundation for definitions. However, many of the defining characteristics of "studentification" and the "student ghetto" are observed within the "campus-adjacent neighborhoods" as outlined by Powell (2014).

Similarly, the concepts of a student ghetto (Gumprecht, 2008) and studentification (Smith, 2008) serve to accentuate the negative impacts of student tenants entering residential communities. Hubbard (2008) acknowledges that the emerging field of research into these trends fails to fully document the positive contributions of students within a college town community as well as their ability to perpetuate nuisance. Further

research has sought to examine the impacts of students within college town communities – positive and negative.

Beneficial Impacts of the College Town

The research that presents the town-gown relationship as a mutually beneficial opportunity often focuses on best practices (Fox, 2014; Kemp, 2013; Sitler, Rudden, Holzman & Homsy, 2006). Similarly, researchers present many opportunities for university administrative leadership to partner with municipal administration and leadership for mutually beneficial purposes (Crawford, 2014; Gavazzi, 2016; Kemp, 2014; Sungu-Eryilmaz, 2009). Rarely, however, are the beneficial impacts of the college town or the town-gown relationship explored beyond the institutional level of the university or the municipality as a whole. Very little research exists that examines the stakeholders that do not possess an administrative stake in these relationships. There is a dearth of research that explores the impact on college students or neighborhood residents.

Many of the beneficial aspects of the town-gown relationship have focused on the economic benefits to the town as well as opportunities for various collaborations. Areas of economic benefit often focus on land use issues and downtown revitalization for local municipalities. In a policy focus report, Sungu-Eryilmaz (2009) discussed the impacts of land use on town-gown relationships. By focusing on university land use and development activities that have both worked and not worked at institutions across the United States, the report presented guidelines that indicated that it was vital for decision-making processes to be collaborative between university and community leaders. However, given that the sole focus of this report was on issues of land use and campus-community planning, it did not explore the role of individual students or local residents in

the relationship. Similarly, Crawford's (2014) historical analysis of university campus planning presented college and university campuses as valuable physical assets to the communities in which they reside. By investigating university campuses throughout history dating back to the 19th century, Crawford (2014) examines milestones and trends impacting higher education institutions and the sustainability of their communities. Campuses have the opportunity to lead communities in areas such as technology and sustainability, however this focus also becomes myopic toward issues of institutional campus planning with little attention given to individual stakeholders (Crawford, 2014).

Massey, Field, and Chan (2014) also focus on town-gown relations through a lens of economic development. Their research entered students and alumni into the field of literature. By using a mixed methods design, the research investigated town-gown relations through the perceptions and experiences of students. Utilizing concepts of sense of place and sense of community satisfaction, the researchers focused on retention efforts that can be made by towns in order to retain graduates. Their results indicate that opportunities to partner with the local community and create positive town-gown relationships led to college students and recent graduates establishing long-term residence in their college town. While this research was conducted at small and medium cities in Canada, the lessons learned concerning the tensions and conflicts that are often found in these town-gown relationships are transferrable to small and medium cities in the United States (Massey, Field & Chan, 2014).

In addition to the economic benefits afforded to towns through their relationship with local colleges and universities, there have also been social and cultural benefits as well. Gumprecht (2008) asserts that college campuses in college towns are often social

and cultural centers for their communities by providing opportunities for concerts, plays, sporting events, and other activities that may not exist in similarly-sized towns without local colleges or universities. Along with the available activities, Gumprecht (2008) also cites the physical resources that coincide with these events such as museums, ballrooms, banquet halls, auditoriums, parks, and green spaces that are also afforded to the community through the association with the university. When discussing the benefits of town-gown relationships, Gumprecht (2008) depicts a "cosmopolitan" and "unconventional place" where quality of life is high. Although, available resources, activities, and recreational or cultural spaces are not the sole measures of quality of life, Gumprecht's assertions offer an interesting link to the research of Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006) which stated that community members reported more positive town-gown relations when they had participated in a campus event within the past six months. The resources, activities, and recreational or cultural spaces available on university campuses provide ample opportunities for community members to engage and participate in the types of quality of life events proposed by Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper.

Negative Impacts of the College Town

Gumprecht (2008) also presents the impacts on quality of life that are generated by the annual influx of thousands of college-age residents into local communities. Whereas much of the research that presents the beneficial impacts of life in a college town focuses on land use, infrastructure, available resources, and relationships between various leadership stakeholders, the research available that offers negative impacts of life in a college town often focuses on impacts felt by individual residents in their daily lives. Negative interactions and experiences arise for community residents on a daily basis as a

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result of negative trends in student behavior, the dominant nature of student culture, the density of student populations in neighborhoods, and other factors of "studentification," (Smith, 2008) that disturb the social, cultural, physical, and economic realities of life in a college town (Fox, 2014).

Fox (2014) identifies four dimensions of the town-gown environment that must be navigated in efforts to avoid conflict between students and long-term residents. In understanding these common conflicts, Fox (2014) endeavors to assist in creating cooperative relationships that are modeled after many of the best practices observed in the field. Whereas the research of Smith (2008) focuses on the definition and impact of "studentification," and the work of Powell (2013; 2014) simply researches and states the results of such a shift within a community, Fox (2014) aims to promote cooperation among town and gown by providing a valuable framework for evaluating many of the common conflicts that arise in town-gown relationships. When observed, each of Fox's four dimensions can exhibit a shift within the community that brings stress and conflict.

A shift in the social fabric and demographic makeup of the community can be observed in the social dimension. Fox (2014) cites that many communities witness a slow, long-term transition from the traditional local community to a student community. This transition often "involves the replacement and/or displacement of established residents with a transient, generally young and single social grouping" (Fox, 2014, p. 20-21). This is consistent with the definition of "studentification" as the "unregulated in-migration of student populations into established communities" (Smith, 2008, p. 2558). Powell (2014) cites that campus-adjacent neighborhoods consist primarily of older adult homeowners who have aged in place and younger transient renters in their 20s. Tension

arises for the long-term local community as they witness their traditional social fabric shifting in this way.

Similarly, the cultural dimension of town-gown conflict centers on the differing goals and expectations that students desire from their community in contrast to the goals and expectations that local residents may uphold. Fox (2014) points out that high concentrations of young people living together will often have different cultural desires due to their lifestyle. "Party culture" and a lifestyle focused on the academic calendar and weekend parties create a series of "second hand harms" to the campus as well as the community (Weiss, 2013). Many of these issues such as noise, party-related concerns, property damage, traffic, parking, alcohol-related concerns, trash, and littering which can be defined within Fox's (2014) physical dimension are most commonly cited among the negative impacts of life in a college town (Fox, 2014; Gavazzi, 2016; Gumprecht, 2008; Massey, Field & Chan, 2014; Powell, 2014; Weiss, 2013).

Lastly within Fox's (2014) framework is the economic dimension of town-gown transition. This dimension observes the devaluation of property values and the economic transition of the housing market from owner-occupied dwellings to an increase in short-term rental units. Also economic in nature is the shift in local commerce away from traditional businesses focused on the needs and wishes of families and long-term local residents, and toward the economic and social desires of the student population such as bars, dance clubs, shops, boutiques, coffee shops, and other dining establishments (Fox, 2014). These four dimensions can be observed in action throughout much of the tension and negative impacts outlined in town-gown research.

Extensive research has been conducted into highlighting the negative physical impacts of town-gown relations. Many of these physical ills are also magnified as a neighborhood makes the shift toward studentification, and "the unregulated in-migration of student populations into established communities" (Smith, 2008, p. 2558). Massey, Field, and Chan (2014), in their mixed methods examination of opportunities for economic development in small and medium Canadian cities, cited rifts between students and community residents that resulted from issues of noise, property damage, traffic, parking, trash, litter, and perceptions of a party culture and party-related concerns. In the study, Massey, Field, and Chan (2014) highlight that, in focus group discussions held with 28 third- and fourth year undergraduates and graduate students, the neighbor's commonly cited issues were raised by students as evidence that their contributions to the community are often overlooked or underappreciated. The students in the study asserted that these perceptions from neighbors triggered resentment and feelings of exclusion from the community for many students. While Massey, Field, and Chan used this qualitative data as a factor that connects to a student's likelihood to remain within the college town community after graduation, the perception of negative student impacts on the community can certainly be connected to overall town-gown relations. Connections can be made here to both the marriage typology presented by Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014) as well as the overall concept of PSOC as presented by McMillan and Chavis (1986). These negative perceptions held by both students and town residents exhibit the "low comfort" levels that are present in the undesirable marriage types of conflicted and devitalized (Gavazzi, Fox & Martin, 2014). Similarly, these negative perceptions also have connections to the four components that make up PSOC: Membership,

Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Powell (2013) conducted a year-long ethnographic study into the culture of a neighborhood near a public university in a small Appalachian city. The goal of the study was to learn about the town-gown relations and interactions between the various groups that reside in this "campus-adjacent residential neighborhood." By using interviews as well as focus groups and other data collection methods, Powell (2013) was able to identify multiple themes across the community. Whereas Massey, Field, and Chan's (2014) research expressed the wedge issues between students and residential neighbors as student's beliefs regarding how neighbors perceive them, Powell's (2013) study confirmed that community members did, in fact, cite "an exacerbation of problems such as deteriorating properties, trash, and problem behavior that is linked to alcohol" (Powell, 2013, p. 8). Although the study focused on a singular college town in Appalachia, the observed themes remain consistent over multiple studies conducted by various researchers (Gavazzi & Fox, 2015; Harasta, 2008; Hubbard, 2008; Sage, Smith & Hubbard, 2012; Weiss, 2013). Powell (2013) cited issues of studentification, lack of collective efficacy shared by students and town residents, and overall inter-group dynamics as the driving forces for much of the tension. In later works, Powell (2015) asserted the link between these observed forces and the concept of PSOC, which provides a framework for understanding the scope and impact of the experiences within studentified campus-adjacent neighborhoods.

In attempts to further understand this scope and impact, other research has focused attention on the commonly interrelated issues of alcohol and party culture that

are associated with negative experiences in studentified campus-adjacent neighborhoods. Weiss (2013) investigated the phenomenon of a "party school" through the lens of theories from sociology and criminology. The research utilized a mixed methods design to examine a single large public university with approximately twenty-two thousand undergraduate students. Weiss dubbed the university Party University (PU) when reporting her findings.

The quantitative portion of the mixed methods study used data from two surveys – the Campus Crime Victimization Survey (CCVS) and the Revised Campus Crime Victimization Survey (CCVSr). While the CCVS consisted of approximately 300 closed-ended questions, the CCVSr expanded upon the CCVS by adding 30 open-ended questions. Both of these data collection methods were complimented by a series of semi-structured interviews with PU students. The themes that emerged revealed students' party experiences, perceptions, and overall party subculture.

To coincide with this data, and as a means to understand the community impact of the student party culture, Weiss also conducted a second separate but related qualitative study with non-student residents of "Party Town." These focus groups revealed the impacts of the party culture on the campus-adjacent neighborhoods surrounding PU, and they highlighted the conflicts and social interactions between students and residential neighbors. Weiss (2013) describes the incidents presented by the non-student neighbors as "second hand harms" that grow from the university party culture. Alcohol consumption and over-consumption are cited as intensifying factors in the harms caused to neighbors and property. In adding to the list of negative impacts (noise, trash, litter, and parking) often cited by town-gown scholars, Weiss (2013) also expanded on the often

non-specific mentions of "party-related concerns" and "alcohol-related concerns." Weiss'

research elucidated the specific acts that are commonly inflicted upon community

residents in these campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The non-student focus groups in Party

Town brought forth discussions of public urination on private property, students vomiting

in the street, crude, vulgar, and sexually offensive language used frequently at high

volumes throughout the neighborhood, and a general sense of a "hostile environment"

that is no longer friendly to children or families. All of these experiences further

showcase the daily reality of many long-term residents living in a neighborhood that has

transitioned away from what they had known into the newly "studentified" (Smith, 2008)

neighborhood.

Bridging the Town-Gown Divide

Recognizing the realities of the experiences in a college town, many towns,

universities, and researchers have begun to focus on efforts to bridge the divide between

town and gown. In efforts to understand and bridge this divide, further research has

investigated town-gown relationships from the perspectives of the varied stakeholders of

the university community as well as the surrounding neighborhood community, including

not only long-term residents of the community and students, but also University and

community administration leaders, business-owners, landlords, and University alumni

(Bruning, McGrew, & Cooper, 2006; Gavazzi, 2016; Harasta, 2008; Lawrence-Hughes,

2014; Powell, 2013; Powell, 2014). The research in the field highlights the divide

between university communities and their surrounding neighborhood communities by

providing perspectives from a variety of different viewpoints and experiences.

Several studies exist with a primary focus on the roles that can be played by leaders within both the university and the local government. Harasta (2008) examined how leadership at both the university and the community level viewed the town-gown relationship. This phenomenological study looked at a single university on the east coast of the United States. It focused solely on the perceptions of leadership by interviewing university leaders as well as community leaders. No students or individual residents of the community were involved in this research. Similarly, Lawrence-Hughes (2014) focused on the role of leadership without investigation into students or individual residents of the community. This study used a case study approach at two separate universities in order to understand how different universities handled campus expansion plans. Lawrence-Hughes (2014) sought to provide future university leaders with insight into campus expansion plans that may aid in negotiating with varied stakeholders. With this focus on university leadership, this qualitative study offers little in understanding the overall experiences of students or their residential neighbors.

An effort to incorporate the perspectives of the individual residents of the community into the field of research was introduced by Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006). Their research randomly surveyed 226 residents of a suburban Midwestern college town in order to ascertain their view of the town-gown relationship. While the research did not yield a large response and only investigated a single college town, it is still informative. The research revealed that there was a significant difference in respondents' trust in the university and respondents' perceptions of the university's investment in the community between those respondents who had participated in a campus event in the past six months and those respondents who had not participated in a

campus event in the past six months. These research findings offer insight into opportunities for improved town-gown relations between residential community members and students in a college town such as the investigation of my current study, which examines a specific form of engagement between residential community members and the university. The insight Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006) offered into the perceptions held by community residents toward the local HEI in a college town revealed that residents' perceptions of trust in the university and perceptions of the university's investment in the community were impacted by the resident's participation in campus events. Given that community engagement is defined as activities that "encourage collective interaction and the sharing of knowledge about community concerns" (Brisbin & Hunter, 2003, p. 469), Big Event-style community service programs offer unique opportunities for "collective interaction" as students venture directly to neighbors' homes in order to complete a variety of volunteer and service activities.

Powell (2013; 2014) also focuses on the nature of the relationship between residential community members and students in attempts to understand the intergroup dynamics between these two groups with data input from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. Powell conducted a qualitative ethnographic study of the students and residential neighbors that shared a neighborhood adjacent to a mid-sized public university in the Appalachian region of the United States. While the research presents recommendations for both university and local government leaders in order to improve relationships between town and gown, the primary focus is on qualitatively detailing the experiences of the students and residential neighbors sharing a community. The overarching goal of the research was to provide deeper understanding of the intergroup

dynamics and relationships present in campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The qualitative

design and ethnographic approach provided rich detail in explaining the experiences of

these stakeholder groups. While Powell's study focused on a singular community

adjacent to one mid-sized university in the United States, it provides a framework and

starting point for further research into the experiences within campus-adjacent

neighborhoods.

As the research in the field of town-gown relations expands, researchers are

attempting to collect data across multiple campuses and communities. While many

previous studies used qualitative methods at limited institutions and communities, recent

studies are seeking to employ quantitative methods across multiple sites. Gavazzi (2016)

created the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) in order to give HEIs and

community leaders a snapshot into the perceptions of their community relationships from

multiple stakeholder perspectives. This shift away from previous qualitative methods into

a quantitative measure provides one of the first efforts to collect and analyze data related

to town-gown relations across multiple diverse cases. As opposed to many of the

previously qualitative studies, which focused on a singular case study (Bruning, McGrew

& Cooper, 2006; Powell, 2013; Powell, 2014), the OCTA is significant because it

examines town-gown relations across multiple cases and contexts.

The OCTA used 16 core questions in order to measure the perceptions of effort

and comfort of both community members as well as members of the campus community.

For the OCTA, community members self-identified themselves as one of the following:

business owner, clergy, city official, local government employee, school district

employee, non-profit employee, or community member not identified as one of the

preceding categories. Campus community members were asked to self-identify as one of the following: student, faculty, administrator/staff, Board member, or alumni. Each group, community members and campus representatives, was asked to answer 16 specific questions related to their perceptions, contact, and relationships with the other.

The initial findings of the OCTA produced eight emergent themes in a pilot study conducted at a singular regional campus of a larger state university in the Midwestern United States. Further research continues to be conducted with the OCTA being utilized at multiple institutions. The goal for expanding the OCTA will not only be to allow additional campuses and communities to assess the status of their relationships, but it will also expand the data pool of town-gown relationships across multiple cities, towns, and regions. In subsequent iterations of the study, the researchers developed and included qualitative questions in order to allow respondents to describe their campus-community relationships more deeply.

One significant emergent theme that arose from these developments of the OCTA was the assertion that a clear method for enhancing town-gown relationships was through "engaging in more volunteer activities that increase visibility" (Gavazzi, 2016, p. 91). The OCTA study asserts that these efforts toward community volunteerism by the various university representatives are viewed as "an investment in the well-being of the community" (Gavazzi, 2016, p. 92). Both quantitatively and qualitatively, community member participants in the OCTA identify volunteerism as an effective act of engagement for university representatives seeking to establish more positive town-gown relations in the areas of the perceptions of effort and levels of comfort between stakeholder groups. This research connects well with the previous findings of Bruning, et

al. (2006), which stated that trust in the university and the perception of the university's investment in the community was impacted by the community member's participation in a campus event within the previous six months. While Bruning, et al. (2006) did not investigate different types of campus events, the growing literature in the field of town-gown relations has certainly taken a focus to community engagement in multiple approaches. In light of the initial findings of Bruning, et al. (2006), the emergent theme of volunteerism in the OCTA (2016) spurs further investigation into overall community engagement efforts within town-gown relations, but also volunteerism efforts, more specifically.

Community Engagement

This section will outline the efforts made to understand the experiences and learning achieved by community participants in service-learning and volunteerism activities. Connecting the experiences and learning achieved by community participants in volunteerism activities to the overall concept of PSOC will certainly aid in understanding town-gown relations as well as the impact of these volunteer activities.

Enos and Morton (2003) presented a framework for the development of community partnerships. They asserted that most partnerships begin as a transactional relationship based on short-term projects or one-time events. However, they also asserted that relationships have the ability to move from transactional to transformational when the partnerships work jointly over longer periods of time. Enos and Morton's (2003) research focused on the development of these relationships from the university perspective. While they presented several challenges that were identified by university faculty and administrators, they did not present the perspective of the community

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participants in the partnership. The community perspective was entered into the research dialogue by the later work of Bushouse (2005). This research asserted that community partner agencies had more positive views of the transactional relationships, and preferred this utilitarian approach over the more difficult transformational design.

The findings of such research as that of Enos and Morton (2003) as well as Bushouse (2005) presents significant insight for town-gown relations with respect to volunteerism efforts. Given that community residents and leaders from local community agencies express a stronger interest in transactional relationships focused on addressing immediate needs of community members rather than the long-term work of transforming community relationships, it is a difficult task to address community culture. It becomes evident that these issues of community culture must be addressed for long-term town-gown success, but short-term transactional successes can be effective in improving immediate perceptions within the community.

In the ethnographic study of the campus-adjacent neighborhood bordering "Mountainside State University," Powell (2014) asserted that the university's short-term mediation tactics of "bringing students and year-round residents together to facilitate mutual understanding and cooperation" (p. 122) did little to manifest the desired community outcomes among students and their residential neighbors. In fact, Powell suggests that these efforts from the University may do more harm than good. The research revealed that, to truly address the core of town-gown tensions in a campus-adjacent neighborhood, social structures such as "the transience of the neighborhood, the lack of intra and intergroup cohesion among residents, the de facto and de jure segregation patterns, and the increasing studentification of the neighborhood" (p. 121)

must be addressed. These findings suggest that such long-term issues rooted in cultural foundations are unlikely to be transformed through the transactional volunteerism presented in previous research (Bushouse, 2005; Enos & Morton, 2003). Powell (2014) calls for the development of collective efficacy by all neighborhood residents, students and non-students alike. Powell would go further in later work (2015) to offer PSOC as a framework for measuring community culture and the possible transformation experienced by members of the community through on-going activities that develop relationships.

A programming model exists in community engagement and volunteerism research that aims to broaden one-time transactional experiences into established long-term relationships. Texas A&M University (TAMU) created a student-run community service event within their community of College Station/Bryant, Texas in 1982. This event was the first of its kind, and they named it "The Big Event." On a single-day, TAMU students spread out throughout their community and completed community service projects at the homes of their residential community neighbors. The Big Event mission statement at TAMU states, "The Big Event promotes campus and community unity as students come together for one day to express their gratitude for the support from the surrounding community" (Bogue, 2014, p. 44). These statements of unity and community stand in contrast to the significant literature within town-gown research that details tensions experienced within college towns between the long-term community residents and the "short-term" student "visitors" (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006; Gumprecht, 2008; Harasta, 2008; Powell, 2013).

The Big Event was branded as a day for students to create "unity" with their neighbors and "say thank you" to their college home. Over the decades the event has

grown at TAMU while other colleges and universities across the nation adopt the programming model. While the single-day event can be characterized as a transactional volunteerism opportunity, Bogue (2014) explored the impact of the event as an annual program. In the qualitative study of the student leaders responsible for executing The Big Event at TAMU, she first used participant observation by shadowing the Big Event Executive Team through meetings, planning sessions, and trainings in order to immerse herself in the research area. Then, she conducted semi-structured interviews with members of the student Executive Team in order to investigate their experiences and knowledge related to their role within The Big Event at Texas A&M University. Bogue (2014) asserted that the growth and establishment of The Big Event as an annual event for TAMU students and residents of College Station/Bryant, Texas, created a lifelong commitment to service and servant leadership within the students responsible for the event. In expressing this commitment, student respondents declared a shift in their commitment to their neighbors.

Bogue's (2014) research indicates that participation in volunteerism activities such as The Big Event leads to a stronger commitment to servant leadership and active community engagement for students. In interviews, students expressed an impact on their tendencies toward servant leadership and lifelong commitment to serving a neighbor. However, this research does not examine The Big Event's impact on what Powell (2013; 2014) describes as the "collective efficacy of the community," or the student's perceptions of their abilities to get things done in collective action through a shared agenda with their immediate neighbors. Bogue's (2014) research is also limited in that it does not present any data from the experiences or perspectives of the residential

community members. This leaves out a significant component of the overall community. While student respondents declared a shift in their commitment to their neighbors, there is no research available that examines the shifts in commitment of residential community members toward students as a result of participation in a Big Event-style program.

Psychological Sense of Community

In order to expand the current body of research and include insight into the collective efficacy of the community, Powell (2015) presented the construct of psychological sense of community (PSOC) as a potential framework for understanding the overall health of a campus-adjacent neighborhood. PSOC measures four component factors: Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Powell (2015) asserts that, by measuring these four subscales, PSOC offers a valuable measurement in understanding heterogeneous communities such as campus-adjacent neighborhoods in college towns. While such a study has not been documented, it is important to detail the roots of PSOC as well as the varied usages of the construct in different communities. PSOC has been examined in a variety of community contexts, but has not yet been explored sufficiently in town-gown relationships. My research addresses this void and investigated the impact on the development and maintenance of PSOC in campus-adjacent neighborhoods through participation in an annual Big Event-style volunteer program.

Sarason (1974) observed that healthy communities exhibit interconnectedness between individuals. As a result, the concept of psychological sense of community (PSOC) was established. McMillan and Chavis (1986) expanded upon Sarason's theory by offering a four-component model that details how PSOC operates and how it can be

observed. These four components were: (1) Membership, (2) Reinforcement of Needs, (3) Influence, and (4) Shared Emotional Connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In summarizing "sense of community," McMillan and Chavis defined it as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (1986, p. 9). As the field of study expanded, PSOC research grew to incorporate different conceptions of "community." The initial model presented by McMillan and Chavis (1986) examined community as a territorial place like a neighborhood or town. In addition to these territorial place-based measurements, further research has been conducted into places of community that are focused on specific settings or locations (Bess, Fisher, Sonn & Bishop, 2002). Setting-specific research has examined communities established within churches (Miers & Fisher, 2002), schools (Bateman, 2002), workplaces (Mahan, Garrard, Lewis & Newbrough, 2002), and university settings (Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1996; Pretty, 1990). These original place and territorial definitions have continued to be expanded within the field to include sense of community within groups or populations that do not share a common space, such as various types of virtual communities (Blanchard, 2008; Roberts, Smith & Pollock, 2002; Tonteri, Kosonen, Ellonen & Tarkiainen, 2011).

In order to further examine the ways in which PSOC actually operates, a measurement was developed. The Sense of Community Index - SCI (Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman & Chavis, 1990) aimed to measure the presence of the four components of PSOC. The SCI consisted of a 12-item scale with true-false responses. In response to concerns related to variability, consistency, and reliability, a revision of the

SCI was developed with 24 items on a 4-point Likert scale. This Sense of Community Index version 2 – SCI-2, was analyzed to show consistent reliability (Chavis, Lee & Acosta, 2008). The development of a reliable instrument that exhibits validity is a significant contribution to the field of study and the understanding of PSOC.

Powell (2013; 2014; 2015) has begun to research residential neighborhoods in college towns through the lens of the psychological sense of community. In a year-long ethnographic study conducted in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of a single college town that is home to a medium-size public university. The study involved observations, formal and informal interviews, and a series of focus groups – one with student residents of the neighborhood, one with year-round residents of the neighborhood, and one with a mix of the two groups. Through her research, Powell notes that residential neighborhoods that reside adjacent to a HEI campus often lack a common shared sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). She notes that the three stakeholder populations of students, year-round residents, and landlords each have different interests and experiences within the neighborhood community. Similarly factoring into the lack of a shared sense of community is the finding that these diverse groups of community members also exhibit differing degrees of attachment to the place (Low & Altman, 1992). The work of Powell (2013; 2014; 2015) links the psychological sense of community framework (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) and the Sense of Community Index – SCI measurement (Perkins, et al., 1990) to the examination of town-gown relationships in neighborhoods adjacent to university campuses.

Powell (2015) contends that PSOC is an applicable construct for examining the many town-gown issues and concerns documented within the unique communities of

campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a college town. As observed in the college town and town-gown literature, the components of PSOC are ever-present in the town-gown relationship and the daily lives of long-term residential neighbors in a college town. The senses of membership and influence, the ability to have needs met by the community, and a shared emotional connection within the community are integral components to the lived experience of non-students in campus-adjacent neighborhoods (Powell, 2015). These components of PSOC are strongly connected to the comfort and effort dimensions outlined in the town-gown marriage typology presented by Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014). Overall, these themes present themselves across much of the literature and research related to town-gown relations.

PSOC has also been used as a measure in other university settings. Pretty (1990) investigated PSOC in residence hall communities on college campuses. Lounsbury and DeNeui (1996) expanded beyond the single location-specific place of a residence hall to investigate PSOC at the campus-level. Their research presented an internally consistent scale to measure PSOC at the college or university level. The study asserted that PSOC has an inverse relationship to college size by reporting that smaller colleges exhibited a stronger sense of community. Additionally, Lounsbury and DeNeui (1996) found that students living on-campus reported higher PSOC than students living off-campus. This study furthered the understanding of PSOC in university settings.

In addition to the previous studies examining the PSOC experienced by college students, researchers have also explored the sense of community of university communities as a workplace (Mahan, Garrard, Lewis & Newbrough, 2002). While it utilized a university as the workplace setting for the study and it provided useful data in

linking the concept of trust to the broadening understanding of community at work, this study provides little contribution to examining town-gown relations or the college town community. PSOC has not been utilized in examining the unique town-gown relationships created when campus-adjacent neighborhoods are "studentified" (Smith, 2008).

One link where the existing body of research into PSOC can be applied to aid in town-gown relations is in understanding the connection between PSOC and concepts of civic participation and neighboring behaviors (Pancer, 2015). Chavis and Wandersman (1990) asserted a link between citizen participation in neighborhood or block associations and a higher reported level of PSOC. This research was significant because it created a foundation for future research to explore different types of citizen participation and the relationship to PSOC. One such study was an investigation of participation as a volunteer with local neighborhood organizations (Ohmer, 2007). Through distribution of quantitative surveys, the researcher demonstrated a relationship between participation as a volunteer within a neighborhood organization and sense of community among residents of the neighborhood. These findings were further supported by a recent meta-analysis of 34 studies examining the links between citizen participation and sense of community (Talo, Mannarini & Rochira, 2014), which revealed a significant relationship between citizen participation and sense of community across all studies. Overall, these studies related to citizen neighborhood participation are significant because they offer effective strategies for developing a sense of community within a diverse community such as a campus-adjacent neighborhood in a college town.

Additional insight related to building relationships in the diverse communities shared by students and long-term residents in a college town can be gleaned from research in the field of "neighboring." Unger and Wandersman (1985) define neighboring by the interaction between neighbors and the sense of attachment that each person feels toward both their neighbors and their neighborhood as a whole. Neighboring behaviors can be observed in such acts as borrowing items from a neighbor or having a conversation with a person on the block, but neighboring can also be observed in the feeling that people in the neighborhood would support you if you needed help. Neighborhoods with high levels of reported neighboring also report residents with higher levels of civic participation (Pancer, 2015). The overall mission of the Big Event-style program and many of the individual tasks completed at neighbor's homes during the day of the event are aimed towards these types of neighboring activities - providing labor and support for common household and yard tasks, building relationships through conversation and shared tasks, and the overall support of helping a neighbor with a chore when they have expressed a need for help (Bogue, 2014).

In addition to the benefits of increased sense of community, citizen participation and neighboring, activities also promote other valuable outcomes for engaged members of the community. Involvement in civic activities has been demonstrated to foster more friendships and social contacts for participants than non-participants (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich & Chavis, 1990). Similarly, research has revealed that participation in volunteer civic activities breaks down stereotypes about those different from one's self while also providing the participant with opportunities to learn more about themselves and their community through understanding the perspective of another

community member with different experiences (Pancer, 2015). This becomes valuable in college town campus-adjacent neighborhoods where the cultural clash can be observed between students and long-term residents (Gumprecht, 2008).

Given the link established between involvement in campus activities and improved town-gown relations (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006) as well as the link between civic participation and higher levels of PSOC (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990) and the relationship of volunteerism and neighboring activities to PSOC (Ohmer, 2007, Pancer, 2015; Unger & Wandersman, 1985), my research study contributes to the knowledge field of town-gown relations and college town relationships in campus-adjacent neighborhoods by providing an examination of PSOC among long-term residents through their participation in a specific type of civic volunteer activity – The Big Event-style day of community service.

Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction to Design and Strategies of Inquiry

Each year, Rowan University hosts an annual event on a Sunday in April, called *Back To The Boro*. This event is fashioned in the model of a Big Event community service day. In April 2018, the sixth year of the event as a co-sponsored event between Rowan's Student Government Association and Office of Volunteerism, over 1600 Rowan student volunteers registered to spread out over the Borough of Glassboro in order to complete household tasks, yard work, and odd jobs at the request of residential neighbors in the college town. In total, Rowan volunteers assisted in projects at 208 different residential neighbor properties.

Rowan University has continued to grow and expand in recent years. The Rowan University Long Range Master Facilities Plan of 2007 states that the headcount of enrolled students in Fall 2006 was 9578 (Rowan University, 2007). According to enrollment reports disseminated by the Rowan University College of Education in January 2018, those enrollment numbers expanded to 14,778 in Fall 2014 and further to 18,484 in Fall 2017 (Rowan University, 2018). As these enrollment numbers continued to grow, the number of rental properties filled by student tenants in the surrounding residential neighborhoods has similarly increased. This expansion into campus-adjacent neighborhoods has also brought many of the indicators of a "college town" including the on-going transition from owner-occupied homes to multi-occupancy housing (Gumprecht, 2008). I was interested in the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. I

was also interested in whether or not there is a differing perception of a sense of community held by non-student residents within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town after participation in Back To The Boro, the Big Event-style community service day.

As stated in the research of Massey, Field, and Chan (2014), town-gown tensions arise most commonly through incidents of noise, party-related concerns, property damage, traffic, parking, alcohol-related concerns, trash, littering, and concern for devaluation of property values. Many of these commonly cited incidents are strongly connected with weekend activity of college students in campus-adjacent neighborhoods (Powell, 2014). It was vital to identify parameters for establishing the boundaries of these unique neighborhoods within Glassboro, New Jersey.

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used in order to allow a qualitative strand of data collection to explain the initial set of quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixed methods research is designed to collect, analyze, and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data in order to better understand the research problem and address the research questions. When mixed, the quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and provide a deeper, richer analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In the explanatory sequential design, the second, qualitative strand of the research can "either confirm or disconfirm inferences from the first strand or provide further explanation for its findings" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 153). In this study, the mixed methods design served to provide the in-depth qualitative follow-up explanations of the initial quantitative findings. Additionally, the results of the initial quantitative strand informed the instrument design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) and

participant selection of the follow-up qualitative strand (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

The first phase of the study involved the collection of quantitative data from residential neighbors in campus-adjacent neighborhoods by administering the Sense of Community Index 2 – SCI-2 (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). The SCI-2 was distributed to residential neighbors throughout the campus-adjacent neighborhoods, including both participants and non-participants in the Back To The Boro event. Data were analyzed in order to examine the perceptions held by Back To The Boro participants and non-participants as unique groups. The second phase of the study involved qualitative data collected from a purposeful sample of these same residential neighbor groups through one-on-one interviews.

Drawing on the research in the field of community psychology and the psychological sense of community (PSOC), this study first established the quantitative sense of community within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods by using the SCI-2 and followed-up with a qualitative approach in order to detail the experiences of these neighbors within the unique place and context of a campus-adjacent neighborhood in a college town. This approach also allowed the different experiences of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants to be explored in-depth (Teddlie & Taskakkori, 2009). Bess, Fisher, Sonn, and Bishop (2002) assert that expanding the exploration of PSOC to include qualitative strands of inquiry helps to describe the essence of PSOC because much of PSOC is linked to contexts such as perspectives tied to a specific time or place, perspectives of particular stakeholders, and cultural or historical influences. The sequential explanatory mixed methods design of the current study provided the ability to

analyze the sense of community within the campus-adjacent neighborhood through the established quantitative instrument of the SCI-2 while also explaining this data with a qualitative follow-up analysis of the unique experiences of the residents in the context of this neighborhood and their participation in Back To The Boro.

Research Questions

This research explored the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town as well as whether or not there is a differing perception of a sense of community held by non-student residents within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town after participation in Back To The Boro, a Big Event-style community service day. It addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town?

2. What are the differences in the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town for participants and non-participants of the Back To The Boro community service day event?

3. How do non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town describe their relationship and experiences with students?

4. How do the experiences with students in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of the college town impact the sense of community of non-student residents?

5. How are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town influenced by participation in the Back To The Boro community service day?

Sampling

Setting. The research setting for this current study was a suburban community in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The community setting for this research is home to a medium-sized public university consisting of approximately 18,000 students annually within the community. This university-community setting is also host to an annual Big Event-style community service day each Spring, Back To The Boro.

Back To The Boro was begun in Spring 2013 with 838 registered student volunteers completing projects at 59 community host sites. By Spring 2018, the event had grown to have over 1,600 registered student volunteers completing projects at 208 community host sites. Projects are solicited solely from residents of the Borough of Glassboro. Any resident interested in hosting student volunteers at their house in order to complete a project must fill out a Job Request Form. Each submitted form's project is then vetted by the Back To The Boro leadership team in order to confirm that the project meets safety concerns and can be completed by unskilled student volunteers. Once these standards are confirmed, the project is added as a host site. The projects spread throughout the entirety of the Borough of Glassboro, including but not limited to the campus-adjacent neighborhoods identified in this study.

Within this community, the campus-adjacent neighborhoods were identified through communication with the local police department. Campus-adjacent neighborhoods are defined by a unique culture that results from the annual influx of

college students as well as the other characteristics of "studentification" (Smith, 2008).

These indicators of studentification are such things as a transition from owner-occupied

houses to multi-occupant dwellings, concerns for devaluation of property, and increases

in party-related concerns such as noise, property damage, alcohol-related concerns, trash,

littering, and traffic/parking issues. In recent years, the Glassboro Police Department

established Patrol Zones to combat these very concerns on weekend "party" nights of

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The four "party" Patrol Zones can clearly be seen as

bordering Rowan University's campus (see Figure 1). The neighborhoods encompassed

by these police-designated Patrol Zones served as the clearly defined neighborhood

parameters for Glassboro's campus-adjacent neighborhoods.

Participants. Participants in this current study were non-student residential

neighbors living in owner-occupied housing within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods

as outlined by the Glassboro Police Department's "party" Patrol Zones. Through rental

property registration data available through the Glassboro Code Enforcement office, each

rental property in these neighborhoods was identified in order to determine which

properties are rentals and which properties are owner-occupied. All owner-occupied

properties within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods identified through the Glassboro

Police Department's "party" Patrol Zones were considered within the participant pool for

the research study. A cross-reference of the participant lists for previous Back To The

Boro events revealed that there were a total of 33 residential properties within these

campus-adjacent neighborhoods that had participated in previous Back To The Boro
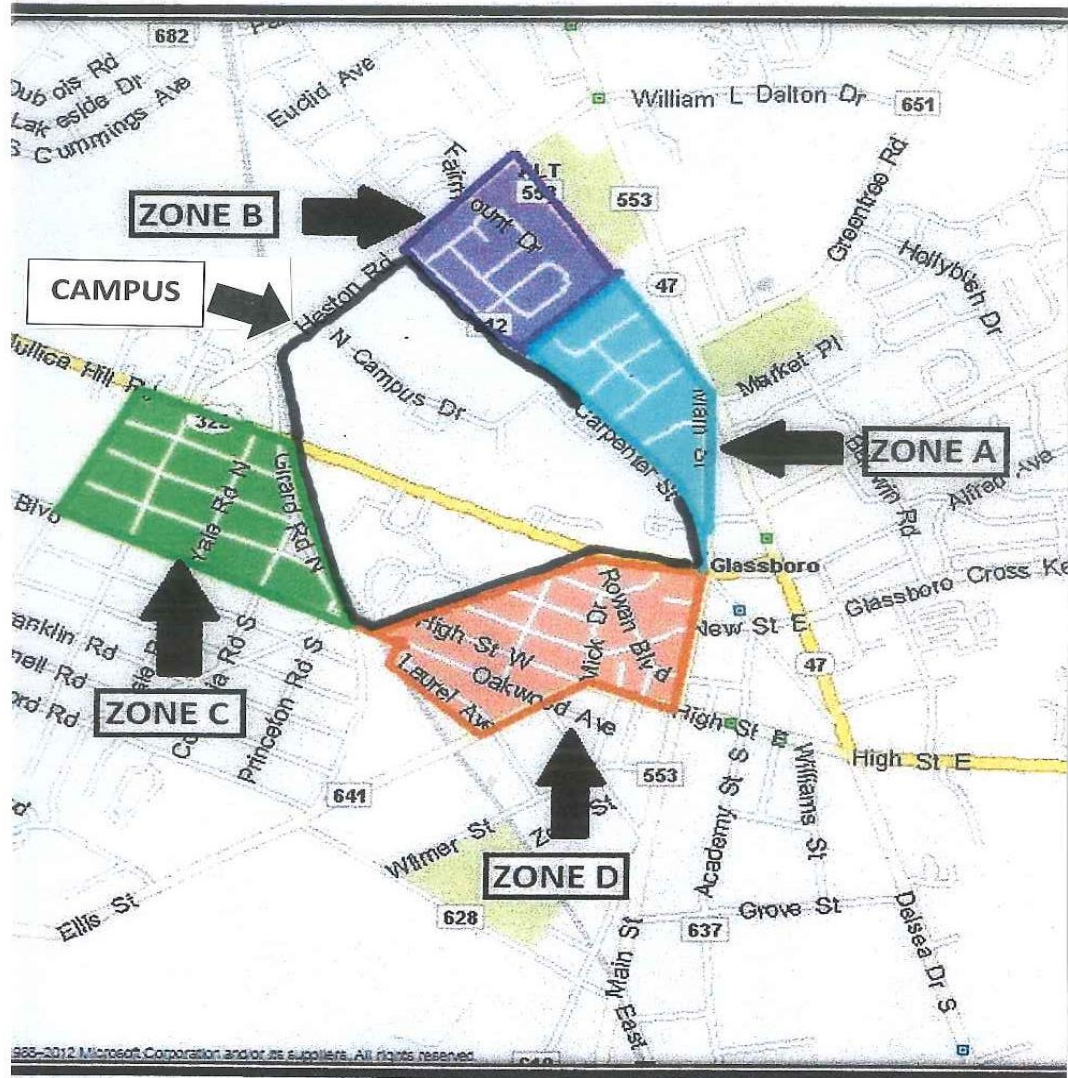
Figure 1. Glassboro Police Department Party Patrol Zones

community service day events. This information allowed the participant pool to be stratified into two groups – those residential neighbors participating in the event, and those residential neighbors who had never participated in the event. This stratification aided the research by establishing the non-participant group as the control group in relation to the Back To The Boro participants.

In the initial quantitative strand of the research study, all previous Back To The Boro participants and all non-student residential neighbors living in owner-occupied housing within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods received a hand-delivered SCI-2 survey. The analysis of the survey results led to a purposeful selection of typical cases that were included as representative cases in the qualitative strand of the sequential explanatory study.

Quantitative Data Collection

I collected in two phases through two separate forms of collection in a mixed methods design. After determining which properties within the "party" Patrol Zones were owner-occupied residences, the SCI-2 survey was distributed to all owner-occupied residential neighbor properties within these zones. The survey was hand-delivered to each home address. Given that the "party" Patrol Zones are confined to designated areas with distinct boundaries, it was feasible to hand-deliver the survey throughout these neighborhoods. The choice to hand-deliver was also related to convenience due to the fact that the Glassboro Code Enforcement office provided registration data for the rental properties, but was not able to provide email or electronic contact information for non-rental properties throughout the community.

The survey included preliminary demographic data, name and address as an Informed Consent for participation in the quantitative portion of the study (see Appendix A). Attached to the Informed Consent was the SCI-2 instrument (see Appendix B). I conducted in-person follow-up with those addresses that had not returned their survey after two weeks. Each returned survey was marked with a number that was logged with the corresponding address for that particular survey. As surveys were returned, the

numbering system allowed me to determine which distributed surveys had not been returned to date. This data also allowed me to determine whether the respondent had been a past participant in the Back To The Boro event, while also assisting in participant solicitation for the forthcoming qualitative strand of the study.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In order to clean and organize the data for analysis, I entered the survey responses into Microsoft Excel after hand-delivering the SCI-2 and collecting completed surveys. By doing so, I was able to determine if there was any missing data and register whether survey respondents indicated their willingness to participate in follow-up interviews by providing their contact information in the space provided.

After completing the quantitative data collection through the SCI-2 surveys, the survey responses were stratified into two groupings – Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. The SCI-2 reports a quantitative sum of the "Total Sense of Community" as well as four PSOC subscales: "Membership," "Reinforcement of Needs," "Influence," and "Shared Emotional Connection." Using SPSS-24, descriptive statistics were generated for Total Sense of Community as well as the four subscales within the two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. This analysis guided the selection of participants for the qualitative phase of the study. The descriptive statistics were used to identify the average Total Sense of Community score within the group of Back To The Boro participants as well as the group of non-participants. Descriptive statistics were also used to identify the average scores on each of the four PSOC subscales. In an effort to identify the most typically average participants, I

focused not only on the Total Sense of Community scores, but also on the scores within the subscales.

First, I identified the average score across the cumulative Total Sense of Community for both Back To The Boro participants as well as non-participants. Then, I identified the survey respondents within each of the respondent groupings who scored with minimal deviation from this average overall score. After determining which survey participants scored similarly in comparison to the overall cumulative score in each of the respondent groupings, I then examined the descriptive statistics within the four subscales for these survey participants. In order to select the most typically average participants, four survey participants from each of the respondent groupings were selected for participation in the follow-up interviews based on their average scores within the subscales. The representative participants were selected based on the amount of deviation from the average scores within the subscales rather than the deviation from the average score on overall Total Sense of Community. This method allowed for the selection of participants who scored typically average across all subscales rather than simply scoring with a cumulative average score after all four subscales were added together. This selection dictated that the qualitative strand of the study included eight participants, four Back To The Boro participants and four non-participants.

Qualitative Data Collection

As the strands of the study were integrated, the crossover nature of the study allowed for the descriptive statistics that arose in the quantitative stage to be explored in more detail during the subsequent qualitative phase of the study (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Prior to participating in an interview, participants were asked to review and

complete Informed Consent forms for participation in the qualitative portion of the study as well as consenting to being audio recorded as a component of participation (see Appendix C). The qualitative strand used a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix D). Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to ask probing follow-up questions while also allowing interviewees to give depth and detail to their stories (Creswell, 2014).

Throughout the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to share experiences related to the college town community as well as experiences with college students. The commonly cited tension points – noise, party-related concerns, property damage, traffic, parking, alcohol-related concerns, trash, littering, and concern for devaluation of property values (Gavazzi, 2016; Gumprecht, 2008; Massey, Field, and Chan, 2014; Powell, 2014; Smith, 2008; Weiss, 2013) – were noted for probing follow-up questions. Interview participants were also asked to detail their experiences with the college students through the Back To The Boro program. Further discussion generated contrast and comparison from the residential neighbor's perceptions of the experiences with college students producing the commonly cited tension issues and the experiences with college students engaged through the Back To The Boro program. Residential neighbor participants who had participated in Back To The Boro were asked to reflect on any perceived transformations in their own perceptions over time and through engagement with students in this program.

This study drew on the research of Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006) which stated that resident's perceptions of trust in the university and perceptions of the university's investment in the community were impacted by the resident's participation in

campus events within a previous six month period. The SCI-2 was used to frame the semi-structured questions into the areas of total sense of community as well as the four subscales of Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection. These qualitative interviews provided the opportunity to explore the impact on resident's perceptions as related specifically to a Big Event-style community service event as the method of engagement. The interviews focused on residential neighbor's perceptions of students of the university as opposed to the university as an entity. However, interviewees were given the latitude to discuss their sense of community and experiences in relation to any community stakeholders, including students, the university as an entity, university leaders, Borough administration, landlords, fellow neighbors, or any others that they believed to be significant.

Qualitative Data Analysis

All interviews were conducted at a location of the interviewee's choosing, either at their home or at a reserved meeting room on Rowan University's campus. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim as Microsoft Word documents. All files were saved on designated Rowan University drives. From the Microsoft Word transcriptions, I created a coding matrix in Microsoft Excel by using the methods outlined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). Within these steps, I used a process of first-cycle structural coding followed by a series of second-cycle pattern coding (Saldana, 2013). The emergent themes were then verified through triangulation of the different data sources, including rounds of member checking with interview participants to check on the accuracy of the themes, interpretations, and conclusions. I took notes on any

additional information provided by participants as they reviewed their own interview as well as the overall themes across all interviews.

Finally, the discussion of findings and implications integrated the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the mixed methods study. This analysis focused on integrating the outcomes of both phases of the study in order to address the initial research questions. Combining the findings of the two phases helped to explain the statistical data from the quantitative phase with elaborate, in-depth qualitative data (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

Validity, Credibility, and Trustworthiness

In efforts to maintain validity, credibility and trustworthiness, it was important to address how the study was designed in order to solicit consistent data related to the research questions. My dissertation research was focused on the on-going lived experiences of non-student residents within campus-adjacent neighborhoods, and how the participation in a Big Event-style community engagement program can impact their sense of community within these neighborhoods. The study investigated the residential neighbor's perceptions of college students in their community as well as how these perceptions may be transformed through on-going engagement with students through participation in the Back To The Boro event. The research design allowed for the initial quantitative statement of overall sense of community through the SCI-2 survey, as well as the in-depth follow-up qualitative interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The SCI-2 survey instrument has been tested and revised in order to address issues of validity and reliability. Through revisions, it has been proven to be a valid measurement instrument in addressing the four elements of McMillan and Chavis' (1986)

sense of community (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). The SCI-2 was also analyzed and

shown to be a reliable instrument for measuring overall PSOC as well (coefficient alpha

= .94). Similarly, the four subscales of PSOC were also proven to be reliable with

coefficient alpha scores of .79 to .86 (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008).

In the qualitative strand of the sequential mixed methods study, it is important that

the research findings are both credible and trustworthy (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Trustworthiness is defined as the extent to which a researcher can show that the research

findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). One main

component of trustworthiness is credibility, which "may be defined as whether or not a

research report is 'credible' to the participants whom the researchers studied" (Teddlie &

Tashakkori, 2009, p. 26). In order to maintain trustworthiness and credibility in this

mixed methods research study, I utilized triangulation of multiple data sources as well as

multiple methods to investigate the research questions. Within this triangulation of the

data and methods, I also utilized thick descriptions of the context and research setting so

comparisons can be made by other researchers within their own contexts and settings

while also completing member checking with the qualitative participants in the study.

This process of asking participants to check on the accuracy of the themes,

interpretations, and conclusions of the researcher "is a particularly powerful technique for

determining the trustworthiness" of a study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 295).

Ethical Considerations

As a researcher, it is important to consider how I impact the study in my role.

Understanding that I work at Rowan University in a community engagement capacity and

I have regular interaction with Glassboro residents, Police, Borough administrators,

University leaders, and students throughout the community, there were ethical issues that I needed to consider. Every effort was made to maintain separation between my role as the researcher and my role as a University administrator. I was certain to inform all participants that this research was a scholarly effort as a doctoral student and it was separate from my office duties. Furthermore, I was explicit in informing participants that, while the final dissertation outcome of the study would be submitted to the Department of Educational Services and Leadership in the College of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education at Rowan University, the data collected and analyzed in this study was not requested or commissioned by University administration.

Participation in the research study was not required in order to participate in the overall Back To The Boro community service event, nor were the individual responses to any stage of the study used to influence the eligibility to participate in future Back To The Boro events. All participants were over the age of 18, and all participation was completely voluntary. Participants were afforded the opportunity to remove themselves from the study at any time.

Closing Summary

In trying to bridge the gap in the existing literature, my dissertation research aimed to address the psychological sense of community in a college town as well as the relationship and perception of college students in a growing college town as impacted by the experiences of residential neighbor participants in a Big Event-style community service day. In investigating the current literature in the fields of town-gown relations, the nature of college towns, and higher education community engagement, there was a

recognized lack of research that explores how these relationships impact one another. The mixed methods approach of this study begins to establish a field of research into the interactions of these relationships. This research utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach in an effort to understand the PSOC experienced in campus-adjacent neighborhoods and the extent to which the participation in these Big Event-style community service day activities provide a more nuanced image of college students.

The mixed methods integration of both quantitative and qualitative inquiry allowed for better understanding of the research phenomenon. Collection of quantitative data through the SCI-2 survey instrument distributed to owner-occupied residences in designated campus-adjacent neighborhoods provided statistical data, while qualitative interviews with a sample selection of non-student neighborhood residents provided rich detail that illustrated the unique experiences and perceptions of residential neighbors in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of a college town (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Chapter 4

Findings

The focus of this study was to examine the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. Utilizing an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, this study also furthered the investigation by exploring perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town after participation in a community-wide university day of community service. In order to do so, the traditionally quantitative measurement of psychological sense of community (PSOC) was used in the initial strand of the study by collecting data through the Sense of Community Index 2 – SCI-2 (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). The subsequent qualitative strand of the study provided rich descriptions of the experiences of these neighbors within the unique place and context of their neighborhoods. This chapter presents the findings related to the sense of community held by non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a college town as well as the detailed accounts of the experience and perceptions with Rowan University students and the Back To The Boro event that impact this sense of community. The goal of this chapter will be to present the findings from the quantitative strand as well as the major themes and descriptions that arose from the qualitative strand of the study. The chapter presents the findings of the study after the integration of the quantitative and qualitative strands. This design allowed the qualitative strand to explain an initial set of quantitative results, and better understand the research problem and questions through a deeper, richer analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In presenting the qualitative findings from the

study, there are three major findings with multiple sub-findings within each of these major overall groupings. The sub-findings share common themes and ideas that aggregate together into the wider, major findings. Discussion of how these sub-findings relate to one another as well as how they connect under the major findings will be presented in the qualitative section of this chapter.

This study addresses the following five research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town?

2. What are the differences in the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town for participants and non-participants of the Back To The Boro community service day event?

3. How do non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town describe their relationship and experiences with students?

4. How do the experiences with students in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of the college town impact the sense of community of non-student residents?

5. How are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town influenced by participation in the Back To The Boro community service day?

Along with the major findings of the study, this chapter also includes detailed demographic information about the participants and selection for both the quantitative data collection as well as the follow-up qualitative interviews. Furthermore, this chapter will include a summary of the major themes found in the quantitative SCI-2 as described

by the qualitative data. The chapter will conclude with a comparative discussion of how Back To The Boro participants detailed their experiences in the qualitative data in relation to how non-participants detailed their experiences within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data collection was conducted in four designated neighborhoods located adjacent to Rowan University's main campus in Glassboro, New Jersey. These neighborhoods were selected by using data and zoning information available through the local police department that designated these specific neighborhoods as "party" Patrol Zones (see Figure 1) due to the prevalence of common town-gown concerns and tensions that are often observed in a campus-adjacent neighborhood (Powell, 2014). The Sense of Community Index 2 – SCI-2 was administered to collect the quantitative data (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). The SCI-2 was distributed to all residential neighbors in owner-occupied homes throughout the designated campus-adjacent neighborhoods.

In total, the SCI-2 survey was hand-delivered to 290 owner-occupied homes over a six-week span. As seen in Table 1, the canvassing yielded 92 completed surveys, which represent an overall response rate of 31.7%. In further detail, the distribution of responses across each of the four neighborhood zones was also generally consistent. Neighborhood Zone A yielded 17 completed surveys from the total of 50 owner-occupied homes, which represents a response rate of 34.0%; Neighborhood Zone B yielded 19 completed surveys from the total of 61 owner-occupied homes, which represents a response rate of 31.1%; Neighborhood Zone C yielded 37 completed surveys from the total of 119 owner-occupied homes, which represents a response rate of 31.1%; and,

Table 1

Quantitative Response Rates and Zones

Zone	Total Owner-Occupied Homes	Completed Surveys	Response Rate %
A	50	17	34.0
B	61	19	31.1
C	119	37	31.1
D	60	19	31.7
Total	290	92	31.7

Neighborhood Zone D yielded 19 completed surveys from the total of 60 owner-occupied homes, which represents a response rate of 31.7%.

Furthermore, the neighborhood canvassing revealed the demographic count of the overall participation in the annual Back To The Boro event within these four neighborhoods. Of the 290 owner-occupied homes within these four zones, 33 of these homes have participated in a Back To The Boro event. This represents 11.4% of the owner-occupied homes in these neighborhoods. When disaggregated by zone, the Back To The Boro participation also remains generally consistent across the four neighborhoods with Zone A containing four Back To The Boro participants representing 8.0% of the owner-occupied homes in the zone, Zone B containing seven Back To The Boro participants representing 11.5% of the owner-occupied homes in the zone, Zone C containing 13 Back To The Boro participants representing 10.9% of the owner-occupied homes in the zone, and Zone D containing nine Back To The Boro participants representing 15.0% of the owner-occupied homes in the zone. Furthermore, similar to the response rates and demographic distribution of the overall survey responses across all

Table 2

Demographics of Quantitative Participants

Zone	Total Owner-Occupied Homes	Total Back To The Boro Participants	% of Owner-Occupied Homes	Total Back To The Boro Participants Completing Survey
A	50	4	8.0	2
B	61	7	11.5	5
C	119	13	10.9	3
D	60	9	15.0	3
Total	290	33	11.4	13

four neighborhoods, the responses from Back To The Boro participants was also generally consistent across the four neighborhoods with two Back To The Boro participants responding to the survey in Zone A, five Back To The Boro participants responding to the survey in Zone B, three Back To The Boro participants responding to the survey in Zone C, and three Back To The Boro participants responding to the survey in Zone D. Table 2 illustrates these demographic counts for overall participation as well as participation by zone.

Once the cleaned and organized data were entered to Microsoft Excel, I exported the data to SPSS-24 in order to calculate descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics not only depicted the psychological sense of community held by the respondents, but also guided the participant selection process for the follow-up qualitative strand of the study.

Qualitative Data

Due to the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the qualitative data were collected after the quantitative data were collected and analyzed. At this integration stage, the descriptive statistics that arose in the quantitative stage were explored in more detail

through the qualitative follow-up in order to better understand the research phenomenon (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) and the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to ask probing follow-up questions in order to further understand the depth and detail of the interviewee's stories (Creswell, 2014).

When completing the SCI-2 survey, respondents indicated whether they would be open to participating in an in-depth follow-up interview for the qualitative strand of the study by providing a contact phone number or email address along with their name and address on the survey. The survey respondents were stratified into two groups: past Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. Within these two groups, the analysis of the survey results led to a purposeful selection of typical cases to be representative in the qualitative interviews of the study. This method guided the selection of participants who scored typically average across all subscales of the SCI-2 rather than simply scoring with a cumulative average score of the Total PSOC. This selection dictated that eight interviews were completed, four Back To The Boro participants and four non-participants. Pseudonyms have been assigned to the eight interview participants in order to protect their identity from being known. Verbatim comments from participant's interviews were selected to best represent the findings of the study, and they are presented in this chapter.

Qualitative Participants

In accordance with the design of the study, eight neighborhood residents of owner-occupied homes took part in the interview phase of the research. The eight interviewees consisted of four Back To The Boro participants and four non-participants

Table 3

Demographics of Qualitative Participants

Interviewee	Back To The Boro Participation (Y/N)	Zone
1	Y	A
2	Y	C
3	Y	B
4	Y	B
5	N	C
6	N	D
7	N	C
8	N	C

that were selected through a purposeful selection of typical cases based on the descriptive

statistics provided through the quantitative phase. Table 3 presents the eight interviewees

along with their zone and confirmation of Back To The Boro participation. The eight

interview participants represented all four of the neighborhood zones. Each interviewee

was logged with a sequential pseudonym in order to protect their identity. Interviewees 1-

4 were the Back To The Boro participants, while Interviewees 5-8 were the non-

participants. The demographic data related to their zone and participation in Back To The

Boro were as follows: Interviewee 1 participated in Back To The Boro and lives in Zone

A; Interviewee 2 participated in Back To The Boro and lives in Zone C; Interviewee 3

participated in Back To The Boro and lives in Zone B; Interviewee 4 participated in Back

To The Boro and lives in Zone B; Interviewee 5 was a non-participant and lives in Zone

C; Interviewee 6 was a non-participant and lives in Zone D; Interviewee 7 was a non-

participant and lives in Zone C; and, Interviewee 8 was a non-participant and lives in

Zone C.

The study design allowed the qualitative interviews to help better understand the research phenomenon and deepen the understanding of the data collected in the quantitative strand of the research (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The major findings from this study were elucidated through these qualitative interviews. The findings are not simply in the existence of the components of psychological sense of community, but rather in the interviewees' detailed descriptions of their unique experiences with community and the factors related to their sense of community within their specific time, place, and context. Below, I will outline these findings through both the quantitative descriptive data as well as the rich descriptions provided by the representative interviewees.

Introduction of Findings

This study began with quantitative data provided through the completion of the SCI-2 survey by residents of owner-occupied homes in campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town. The quantitative data guided the purposeful selection of participants in the subsequent qualitative phase of the study. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings will be discussed below. All findings will be presented in the sequential order in which the data were collected and analyzed. The quantitative findings from the SCI-2 will be discussed first in order to establish the foundation for the overall sense of community experienced by residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The findings related to the differing senses of community experienced by Back To The Boro participants and non-participants will also be introduced. Then, the qualitative findings from the resident's interviews will be presented in order to more deeply understand the unique experiences in these neighborhoods. The interviewee's own words will be used in

order to present the three main findings of the overall study. Ultimately, the qualitative

phase of the study provided data that was consistent with the survey data provided in the

quantitative phase. The major findings of the study, as presented below in the qualitative

findings section of this chapter, were primarily drawn from understanding the unique

details of the resident's experience living in these neighborhoods.

Psychological Sense of Community in Quantitative Responses

The psychological sense of community (PSOC) of non-student residents living

within campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town establishes the foundation of

this study. PSOC asserts that healthy communities exhibit interconnectedness between

individuals (Sarason, 1974). In defining the components of these healthy communities,

PSOC was expanded to outline four components: (1) Membership, (2) Reinforcement of

Needs, (3) Influence, and (4) Shared Emotional Connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Next, a 12-item scale of true-false responses, known as The Sense of Community Index –

SCI (Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman & Chavis, 1990), was developed in order to

measure how PSOC actually operates along with the presence of the four components.

This ultimately led to a revised version, known as the Sense of Community Index version

2 – SCI-2 (Chavis, Lee & Acosta, 2008).

In completing the SCI-2, participants were asked to answer 24 items on a 4-point

Likert scale. Each response was given a numeric point value within the Likert scale: Not

At All = 0; Somewhat = 1; Mostly = 2; and Completely = 3. The "Total Sense of

Community Index" was determined per participant by totaling the complete sum of all

responses from Question 1 through Question 24. As a result, the minimum potential score

a participant could receive for Total Sense of Community is zero, while the maximum potential score is 72.

In order to quantify the four individual components of PSOC, four subscales are imbedded within the survey. The sum of the scores represented in Question 1 through Question 6 establishes the score related to "Reinforcement of Needs." The sum of the scores represented in Question 7 through Question 12 establishes the score related to "Membership." The sum of the scores represented in Question 13 through Question 18 establishes the score related to "Influence." The sum of the scores represented in Question 19 through Question 24 establishes the score related to "Shared Emotional Connection." Subsequently, the minimum potential score a participant could receive for any of the four individual subscales is zero, while the maximum potential score is 18.

Descriptive statistics were tabulated for overall Total Sense of Community as well as each of the survey subscales. Additionally, the descriptive statistics were disaggregated by the two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants.

Total sense of community index. All non-student residents of owner-occupied homes within the four designated campus-adjacent neighborhoods were asked to complete the SCI-2 survey. The aim in this was to establish a baseline understanding of the psychological sense of community held by these residents. In total, there are 290 owner-occupied homes within these four neighborhoods. After canvassing these neighborhoods and soliciting responses, 92 non-student residents completed the SCI-2. Upon tabulating the responses, descriptive statistics were run for the Total Sense of Community Index which is the cumulative score for the subscales of Reinforcement of

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Table 4

Overall SCI-2 Response Scores

| | Minimum | | Maximum | | |
	Potential	Actual	Potential	Actual	Mean
Total SCI (Q1 - Q24)	0	3	72	59	29.5
Reinforcement of Needs (Q1 - Q6)	0	0	18	18	8.1
Membership (Q7 - Q12)	0	0	18	17	7.3
Influence (Q13 - Q18)	0	0	18	13	6.5
Shared Emotional Connection (Q19 - Q24)	0	0	18	18	7.7

Needs, Membership, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection. As illustrated in Table 4, the overall mean score for Total Sense of Community Index across all non-student residents within the four designated campus-adjacent neighborhoods was 29.5. Given the construction of the SCI-2 survey, the lowest possible score that can be calculated here is zero while the highest possible score could be 72. Of the 92 respondents in this study, while the mean score was 29.5, the lowest score received was 3.0 while the highest score received was 59.0 (see Table 4).

Next, the Total Sense of Community Index statistics were disaggregated by the two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. Table 5 depicts the disaggregated data, and presents the mean score for Total Sense of Community Index of Back To The Boro participants was 28.0. The mean score for Total

Table 5

SCI-2 Response Scores for Back To The Boro Participants and Non-participants

	Back To The Boro			Non-Back To The Boro		
	Low	High	Mean	Low	High	Mean
Reinforcement of Needs (Q1 - Q6)	0	12	7.7	0	18	8.2
Membership (Q7 - Q12)	2	11	6.5	0	17	7.4
Influence (Q13 - Q18)	2	13	6.5	0	13	6.5
Shared Emotional Connection (Q19 - Q24)	2	17	7.2	0	18	7.7
Total SCI (Q1 - Q24)	12	48	28	3	59	29.7

Note. Reinforcement of Needs: Minimum = 0, Maximum = 18; Membership: Minimum = 0, Maximum = 18; Influence: Minimum = 0, Maximum = 18; Shared Emotional Connection: Minimum = 0, Maximum = 18; Total SCI: Minimum = 0, Maximum = 72.

Sense of Community Index of non-participants was 29.7. For Back To The Boro participants, the lowest score received was 12.0 while the highest score received was 48.0. For non-participants in Back To The Boro, the lowest score received was 3.0 while the highest score received was 59.0 (see Table 5).

This study was not concerned with determining magnitude or establishing statistical significance of the differences in descriptive statistics within the overall Total Sense of Community or any of the four subscales. The disaggregated data related to Total

Sense of Community Index is noteworthy because it indicates that there is little difference in the average Total Sense of Community between Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. In fact, the disaggregated descriptive statistics show that the average Total Sense of Community score is higher for those that have never participated in Back To The Boro than those who have participated in Back To The Boro at some time. The specific details of these experiences will be discussed in more depth in the qualitative phase of this study.

Reinforcement of needs. McMillan and Chavis (1986) summarized the subscale of Reinforcement of Needs as being a primary function of a strong community that is often guided by the concept of shared values. They state that a strong community allows individuals to meet their own needs while also fulfilling the needs of others within the community. The degree to which a community member's individual values are congruent with the wider community values is a strong factor in this component of the overall sense of community.

The total scores for Question 1 through Question 6 of the SCI-2 presents the score for the Reinforcement of Needs subscale component. The overall mean score for Reinforcement of Needs across all non-student residents within the four designated campus-adjacent neighborhoods was 8.1. The lowest possible score that can be calculated here is zero while the highest possible score could be 18.0. While the mean score was 8.1 for the 92 respondents in this study, the lowest score received was zero, and the highest score received was 18.0 (see Table 4).

Next, the Reinforcement of Needs statistics were disaggregated by the two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. The mean

score for Reinforcement of Needs of Back To The Boro participants was 7.7. The mean

score for Reinforcement of Needs of non-participants was 8.2. For Back To The Boro

participants, the lowest score received was zero while the highest score received was

12.0. For non-participants in Back To The Boro, the lowest score received was zero while

the highest score received was 18.0 (see Table 5).

Similar to the disaggregated data for the Total Sense of Community Index, the

disaggregated data related to the Reinforcement of Needs subscale component is

noteworthy because it indicates the difference in the mean scores between Back To The

Boro participants and non-participants is minimal. In fact, as was the case with the Total

Sense of Community Index, the average score is higher for Reinforcement of Needs for

those that have never participated in Back To The Boro than those who have participated

in Back To The Boro at some time.

Membership. The component of Membership is summarized as having five

attributes: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal

investment, and a common symbol system. When considered as a collective, these five

attributes generate the sense of who is and who is not a part of the designated community

(McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

The SCI-2 score for the subscale component of Membership is calculated through

the total scores for Question 7 through Question 12 of the survey. After calculating the

responses, descriptive statistics were run for the subscale. The mean score for

Membership across all non-student residents within the four designated campus-adjacent

neighborhoods was 7.3. The lowest possible score that can be calculated here is zero

while the highest possible score could be 18.0. While the mean score was 7.3 for the 92

respondents in this study, the lowest score received was zero, and the highest score received was 17.0 (see Table 4).

When the statistics for Membership were disaggregated by the two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants, the mean score for Membership of Back To The Boro participants was 6.5. The mean score for Membership of non-participants was 7.4. For Back To The Boro participants, the lowest score received was 2.0 while the highest score received was 11.0. For non-participants in Back To The Boro, the lowest score received was zero while the highest score received was 17.0 (see Table 5).

Again, the disaggregated data indicates that there is little difference in the mean scores for Membership between Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. In fact, once again, the average score is higher for the Membership subscale for those that have never participated in Back To The Boro than those who have participated in Back To The Boro at some time.

Influence. The subscale component of Influence works as "a bidirectional concept." It states that members of a group will be attracted to a particular group if they believe that they have some influence over the group. Equally, however, group success hinges on the group's ability to have influence over the members. In PSOC, these two forces work simultaneously in establishing the influence component (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

The SCI-2 score for the subscale component of Influence is calculated through the total scores for Question 13 through Question 18 of the survey. The mean score for Influence across all non-student residents within the four designated campus-adjacent

neighborhoods was 6.5. The lowest possible score that can be calculated here is zero while the highest possible score could be 18.0. The lowest score received was zero, and the highest score received was 13.0 (see Table 4).

Disaggregated statistics for Influence focused on the two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants revealed the mean score for Influence of Back To The Boro participants to be 6.5. The mean score for Influence of non-participants was also 6.5. For Back To The Boro participants, the lowest score received was 2.0 while the highest score received was 13.0. For non-participants in Back To The Boro, the lowest score received was zero while the highest score received was 13.0 (see Table 5).

The mean score for the Influence subscale is noteworthy because it presents the lowest overall scores within the subscales making up the overall Total Sense of Community within this population. It indicates that the sense of Influence likely has a strong negative impact on PSOC. This finding will be explored in more depth during the qualitative phase. Furthermore, as the Influence data was disaggregated, it was found that Back To The Boro participants and non-participants in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods responded with the same mean score in the component of Influence as it relates to the sense of community for non-student residents. This too will be explored in more depth during the qualitative phase.

Shared emotional connection. McMillan and Chavis summarized shared emotional connection by stating that "strong communities are those that offer members positive ways to interact, important events to share and ways to resolve them positively,

opportunities to honor members, opportunities to invest in the community, and

opportunities to experience a spiritual bond among members" (1986, p. 14).

Shared Emotional Connection is calculated on the SCI-2 through the total scores

for Question 19 through Question 24 of the survey. The mean score for Shared Emotional

Connection across all non-student residents within the four designated campus-adjacent

neighborhoods was 7.7. The lowest possible score that can be calculated here is zero

while the highest possible score could be 18.0. The lowest score received among the 92

respondents was zero, and the highest score received was 18.0 (see Table 4).

When the statistics for Shared Emotional Connection were disaggregated by the

two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants, the mean

score for Back To The Boro participants was 7.2. The mean score for non-participants

was 7.7. For Back To The Boro participants, the lowest score received was 2.0 while the

highest score received was 17.0. For non-participants in Back To The Boro, the lowest

score received was zero while the highest score received was 18.0 (see Table 5).

Similar to other subscale components, the disaggregated data for Shared

Emotional Connection indicates that there is little difference in the mean scores between

Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. The average score for this subscale

was once again higher for those that have never participated in Back To The Boro than

those who have participated in Back To The Boro at some time.

Quantitative Data Summary

The descriptive statistics generated through the SCI-2 survey provided the initial

quantitative understanding of the PSOC held by non-student residents of campus-adjacent

neighborhoods of the college town. These descriptive statistics were also used to produce

a purposeful selection of participants in the follow-up qualitative phase, which was designed to explore PSOC in more detail and depth (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

This study did not endeavor to determine magnitude or statistical significance between the descriptive statistics. The quantitative data revealed that minor difference appeared in the Total Sense of Community Index when SCI-2 responses were disaggregated by the two stratified groupings of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. Furthermore, when the Total Sense of Community Index scores are broken down to their four component subscales, the quantitative data showed little or no difference in the mean scores across Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. In fact, any difference that was revealed indicated that the sense of community scores were reported to be higher for non-participants of Back To The Boro. Following the explanatory sequential design, this quantitative data was used to guide the participant selection in the subsequent qualitative strand and inform the semi-structured interview protocols (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2008).

Introduction of Qualitative Findings

This study was designed to not only provide quantitative data related to PSOC, but also to allow the voices of non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods to be heard and give rich descriptions that illuminate their specific experiences. The research findings presented in the following Qualitative Findings section explain the quantitative data and strengthen the understanding of non-student resident PSOC in campus-adjacent neighborhoods (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Eight representative residents of the campus-

adjacent neighborhoods were interviewed in order to explore the quantitative data and PSOC more deeply. Four interviewees represented Back To The Boro participants, while four interviewees represented non-participants. The interviewees were selected as representative participants based on the amount of deviation from the average scores within the four subscales as opposed to the deviation from the average score on overall Total Sense of Community because this allowed for the selection of interviewees who were typically average across all subscales rather than simply scoring a cumulative average score on the complete SCI-2. This research unveiled three major findings related to the unique experience of non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a college town that are shared regardless of a resident's participation in a community-wide day of service such as Back To The Boro. The decision to interview representative participants from within both Back To The Boro participants as well as non-participants afforded the ability to analyze the qualitative data across the stratified cases.

Finding 1: "It's Going To Be Rowan-boro Soon."

To begin each interview, each interviewee was asked to discuss their community and detail their experience over the last 10 years. This question was designed to be open-ended and allow the interviewees to reflect on their community in any way that they interpret it. The participants consistently discussed the impacts of change on their overall lifestyle and quality of life. Commonly, interviewees discussed their community as changing from residential or family-oriented to a community that is being "overrun" with rental properties, with a particular focus on "college rentals." Major Finding 1, as exemplified by Interviewee 8's statement: "It's going to be Rowan-boro soon," represents the change and lifestyle impacts experienced by non-student residents of the campus-

adjacent neighborhoods. This overall finding is the aggregate of four separate sub-findings that each represents a different component of how non-student residents experience the changes or perceive an impact on their overall lifestyle. Change in membership within the community and the subsequent lifestyle impacts is brought forth in the sub-finding, "It's no longer our community. We're living in their community." The lifestyle impacts associated with party-related concerns and negative actions or behaviors of students (Weiss, 2013) are presented within the sub-finding, "More students means more trouble," while the negative lifestyle impacts associated with "second-hand harms" and physical or esthetic changes to the neighborhood are represented in the sub-finding, "You can just tell the college houses by walking up and down." Lastly, the positive impacts perceived by non-student residents through their proximity to the university and life in a college town are heard in the sub-finding, "It's a very metropolitan little town."

The themes consistently connect with the PSOC components of Membership and Reinforcement of Needs. As explained by Interviewee 4, this change and the resulting lifestyle impacts were related due to "all that goes with rentals, and young people, and things of that nature." Interviewee 1 summarized the experience by stating,

So, at one point in time, we were the community. And now, with all these student lodgings, you know, we're the smaller one now. It's no longer our community. We're living in their community. Even though that's not how it started.

As can be heard in the voice of Interviewee 1, non-student residents observed the components of Membership shifting around them. The physical boundaries of their community were changing as the college campus expanded, but their overall sense of belonging and identification with their community shifted as well when they sensed that

the community was no longer "their community," but was becoming the student's. In turn, these shifts in membership also impact their sense of Reinforcement of Needs because they no longer feel that their needs are congruent with the wider community values of a now predominantly student rental community.

"It's no longer our community. We're living in their community." When the non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a college town were discussing the change that they have perceived in their community, they naturally talked about their perceptions of how the community used to be as well as how they believe a community ideally should be.

The change and lifestyle impacts within their community were experienced as a strain because it impacted the resident's sense of Membership as well as their sense of a Reinforcement of Needs. As stated by McMillan and Chavis (1986), Reinforcement of Needs is essential to a strong community in that it allows individuals to meet their own needs while simultaneously fulfilling the needs of others. Congruence between community members' individual values and the wider community values will have a strong connection to overall sense of community. Building beyond these concepts of shared values, the sense of Membership outlines five component attributes that contribute to overall sense of community. The five components of membership are: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, and a common symbol system (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Non-student residents in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of this college town expressed changes in membership and reinforcement of needs. While they were seeing the university's campus expanding and altering the physical boundaries of the

neighborhoods, they were also experiencing significant changes in their emotional safety, sense of belonging and identification, and their own personal investment. Interviewee 2 outlined the impacts on emotional safety by stating,

> I probably will not be here in 10 years. I originally was going to be here till the day I died. But you know, more and more of the neighbors left. The ones that have remained are older, and you know, they're always telling me, 'My son or daughter says get out of there, let's go.' Other ones are like, 'My neighbor is old, what if she moves? I'm afraid, and then the college kids are going to come.' They shouldn't have to be afraid.

Interviewee 2 is summarizing a sense of fear among older residents that comes from the changes occurring around them. As long-term residents sell their homes or leave the neighborhood, the remaining residents experience a sense of unease with the expectation that the home will become another college rental and further the transition to a student community. This uneasiness with the change is experienced as fear for some residents, and it manifests as instability in the sense of emotional safety.

The sense of belonging and identification changes often focused on the resident's sense that this was no longer "their community." The perception that the college and the college students were becoming the dominant force within the community was exemplified in the ruminations of Interviewee 8: "I'm wondering, is there ever going to be a cut-off point? Or, is it eventually it's all going to be college? That's what I'm saying. It's going to be Rowan-boro soon." This interviewee went on to state, "Everything is Rowan this, and Rowan that, and Rowan Rowan . . . and it's sucking the rest of the town

a little bit dry." Interviewee 7 echoed this perception when considering the likely future of the community:

It won't be Glassboro anymore. It'll be ... I hate to use this term because so many people use it, but it's gonna be like Rowanville. The only thing in town will be the college and the services that it supports, you know.

As these residents observe these changes occurring within the community, their personal investment also changes. For example, Interviewee 1 commented, "the transition over time has deteriorated. The advantages to me decrease every year." With this perception that community participation has diminishing advantages as time goes on, Interviewee 1 articulated the shift in personal investment. The diminished personal advantages are linked to a deteriorating sense of community. As a result, non-student residents of the town feel disinvested from the community due to their disconnection from the university. The sense that the community is shifting into one that is geared only toward "the college and the services that it supports" leads these residents to question their investment in the overall community.

The discussion of how the community has changed and how it used to be is also connected with reflections on how the community should be. However, the interviews revealed that the non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a college town are not optimistic for this idealized conception of community. Interviewee 3 reflected on the memories of the community in the past:

Uh, yeah I miss the chit-chat in the neighborhood. You could always go over to somebody's house and have a cup of tea or a drink or a beer or we would, you

know, if it snowed we would walk around and have a campfire at somebody's

house. So, I miss that.

Meanwhile, Interviewee 7 lamented this same notion when stating,

Even if the kids are perfect in every way, shape or form, it doesn't provide me

with neighbors to commiserate with. To be social with. To enjoy a hamburger on

a Saturday afternoon with and go swimming in my pool.

This focus on the idealized needs that aim to be met within community life is not directed

at a tangible memory of how the community used to be, but instead focuses on the

perception of how a community should be.

"More students means more trouble." When talking about community changes

and the lifestyle impacts felt in their lives, non-student residents of campus-adjacent

neighborhoods in a college town all discussed the negative lifestyle impacts brought on

by the conduct of college students. These conduct negatives were direct impacts brought

about through specific actions and conduct of college students within the community. All

non-student residents recounted specific instances of conduct behaviors that negatively

impact their sense of community.

Participants described the specific conduct and direct impacts as "disturbances of

the peace." Most frequently, this conduct was experienced in the forms of parties, noise,

and other late night disturbances. Interviewee 5 described the experience by recounting,

"it would be so dead silent and the sound would travel and my husband and I would be

like, 'Oh my God, I'm gonna kill myself if this continues.'" Interviewee 7 summarized

the overall connection between increases in these disturbances and the influx of college

students within the community by stating, "More students means more trouble. More noise, more parties, more foul language, more bad behavior."

Furthermore, as interviewees reflected on the "bad behavior" that they have endured, they also discussed their responses to this behavior. Most often, residents identified contacting the police as recourse in instances of negative student conduct. However, even though residents talk about contacting the police in response to negative behaviors, they speak about it as something that they have "had to do" or were "forced" to do. Interviewee 5 explained these calls to the police by stating, "I'm somebody who would never call the police, they don't get arrested or anything, but you kind of have to call right away just so that they know that this isn't going to be." This interviewee elaborated on this notion by describing these calls to police as being an effort to "nip it in the bud." Overall, these efforts exemplify the residents' attempts to maintain the community standards and values that they believe to be central to the experience of shared community life.

"You can just tell the college houses by walking up and down." While the direct impacts of student conduct and behaviors were widely discussed in the interviews, the lifestyle impacts that were negatively experienced by non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods were not exclusively relegated to these areas. All interviewees also discussed negative lifestyle impacts that resulted from other less direct, non-conduct factors. All non-student residents recounted how their lifestyle and community have been negatively impacted indirectly through the change that they have witnessed in the membership of the community.

All interviewees addressed concerns related to parking and traffic within the community. Again, residents perceive a connection between these negatives and the change in membership within the community due to the influx of student rental properties. Multiple interviewees ranked the issues of parking and traffic as primary concerns over all others. Interviewee 3 stated, "I think the biggest thorn in our side is the temporary multiple car parking. That's a big thing for us." Interviewee 8 stated, "My biggest thing is the traffic, and the parking." And, Interviewee 6 stated, "Our biggest issues have been parking." Ultimately, Interviewee 5 summarized the common concern that these issues are related to infrastructure and the community's capacity by stating, "the town may just be a little bit too small to handle it all. And that would be the roadways."

Furthermore, as interviewees reflected on the concerns related to parking, there was often a connection made to other esthetics and the general "look" of the community. Interviewee 7 pointed out, "Sometimes you'll see cars pulled up in the front of the yard just like haphazardly parked in the lawn." While Interviewee 5 showed concern for indirect impacts of the number of cars parked in the driveway of a rental property:

> it's a nice house, but they, you know, it's bumper to bumper with the cars, then we're probably eights cars squeezing to a four-car driveway. Stuff like that you wish you didn't have to see. Just for purposes of the way the neighborhood looks and stuff like that.

Esthetic impacts to the neighborhood "look" were also connected to parking and seen by Interviewee 1 to damage property:

the transitioning from having two cars in the driveway to having seven or eight

cars in the driveway with their now their wheels are hanging two or three feet off

the driveway onto the lawn, putting ruts in it, just generally detracting from the

appearance of this as a community. You know, it's unfortunate, but that's one of

the things that you see happen.

Overall, residents expressed that the change to rental properties has brought about

a stark contrast that is visible between rental properties and the owner-occupied homes.

In fact, Interviewee 8 articulated a common sentiment surrounding this stark contrast:

"You can just tell the college houses by walking up and down. You can tell. I mean,

because not a lot of the homes are well-kept." Furthermore, the perception that college

student rental properties are not well-kept is exacerbated by equal concerns for trash and

debris throughout the community. Interviewee 7 expressed concern for "Trash, trash all

over the yards," while Interviewee 2 provided more detail about the types of trash to be

found as, "Well, anything from a condom to a jagged liquor bottle that's broken and

shattered, uh, beer cans, soda cans, fast food cans."

Ultimately, all interviewees connected both the direct, conduct-related impacts of

the presence of students as well as the non-conduct-related impacts to their financial

stability, their future, and their retirement. Home values were a repeating theme

throughout interviews. Interviewee 6 declared, "that's the one thing that really worries me

about being in this area. You know, if I reach the point where I have to sell my house, I

don't know the value of the house." Interviewee 1 elaborated,

And, part of the problem is there that our house doesn't carry the equity that it

used to carry when it was a neighborhood. You know? So, will we walk away

from here with enough revenue to keep our retirement budget in place?

Commonly, interviewees asserted the perception that the nature of the community as it is

today does not offer them the options that they once would have had if they chose to sell

their home. Interviewee 4 asserted, "I can't sell this except to somebody who's gonna

rent." And, Interviewee 7 further stated,

The only people that are chomping at the bit to buy it are the landlords. They're

gonna get a smoking hot deal on a house and then they're gonna jam a three

bedroom home with eight kids and turn the dining room into a bedroom and turn

the kitchen into a bedroom. You know what I mean? It's ridiculous so it really

becomes a financial thing.

Interviewee 8 described having "mixed feelings sometimes because this was supposed to

be left for my kids." As many of the residents ponder their future and finances, they no

longer perceive their community as being able to fulfill their needs or the long-term needs

of their family due to the change in membership throughout the community.

"It's a very metropolitan little town." Interviewees were also able to identify

benefits that are drawn from the change in the community. It is noteworthy, however, that

these positives were commonly linked to the wider growth of the university and the town,

rather than to the direct influx of students in the neighborhoods. While there were

concerns raised for lacking infrastructure in the areas of parking and traffic, the growth of

the town in recent years was seen to be a benefit to other infrastructure and business

needs. Interviewee 1 asserted,

I mean, not many towns get to have their downtown area totally updated with new

construction drawing names of businesses, the library, or the bookstore was

probably one of the first things. And, things came up around it. So, I mean, you

know, this is a rare opportunity for a town. I mean, I don't care where you go,

most towns don't have that kind of influx of capital to transition and update what

was really an obsolete town.

The growth was viewed as a wide-ranging benefit that impacted all community

stakeholders. Interviewee 5 articulated this by stating,

It's very nice and I'm anxious to see the end result because they are going to be

doing more and more from what I understand within the town and the center of

the town and everything. Um, not just for Rowan but the town in general.

Finding 2: "We Don't Have This Chronic Issue With the Youth of the Community.

They're Not the Issue."

As was seen in the quantitative data, the non-student residents of campus-adjacent

neighborhoods in this college town reported low scores in the subscale of Influence. This

component of overall sense of community operates as "bidirectional" because community

members will be attracted to a group if they believe that they have influence over the

group while simultaneously allowing the community to have influence over them as

members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Regardless of participation in the Back To The Boro event, respondents

consistently reported that the sense of influence was the weakest of their components of

PSOC. The qualitative phase of the study resulted in the finding that describes the nature

of the influence and the residents' perceptions therein. A portion of each interview asked

each interviewee to reflect upon who holds influence within their community, how it is wielded, and the interviewee's sense of their own influence. The questions were open-ended in order to avoid leading the interviewees toward certain ends. The participants described not only on the PSOC component of Influence, but also on the sense of responsibility – who holds responsibility for the state of the community as well as who should take responsibility for addressing the changes within the community. Commonly, interviewees perceived themselves and other non-student residents to have little to no influence. Other stakeholders such as town administration/leadership, the University, and landlords are seen as having more influence and power within the community. Residents express belief that they are "whistling in the wind," given "lip service," and simply being told "what they want to hear."

Beyond the influence and power around town decisions, residents also widely discussed responsibility. What was noteworthy in these reflections was the consistent focus on constituencies other than students. Responsibility was expressed as a concern for the town administration/leadership, the University, the landlords, as well as the students' parents/families. However, it was interesting to note that interviewees extended significant understanding towards students as "kids" who are learning from their first "freedom."

Major Finding 2, as exemplified by the statement of Interviewee 1: "We don't have this issue with the youth of the community. They're not the issue," represents the perceptions of influence and responsibility held by non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. This overall finding is the aggregate of three separate sub-findings that each represents a different component of how non-student residents perceive

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influence within their community as well as who they perceive to be responsible for addressing the negative impacts on the sense of community within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The perception held by non-student residents that they wield little to no influence over the course of the community is brought forth in the sub-finding, "Whistling in the wind." The perception that responsibility for the negative impacts on sense of community rests with multiple stakeholders other than the students themselves is presented within the sub-finding, "Now you feel a little bit overrun, and I don't necessarily blame the students." Lastly, qualitative data revealed that, while non-student residents perceived the multiple other stakeholders to be responsible for addressing negative impacts, they were specific to assert that the expectations and responsibility for students is different due to their stage in life. This perception is heard in the sub-finding, "Kids being kids."

"Whistling in the wind." The quantitative data exposed that influence was a concern for non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in this college town. Through the residents' own words, further examinations of the explanations and descriptions of this influence were completed. All interviewees discussed resident influence. Overall, these reflections revealed that residents perceived themselves to have little or no influence within their community as change is happening around them. Interviewee 8 stated,

> And, the whole thing is too, now you've got to take into consideration that when all this was in planning before this all became this, nobody really sat down and considered 'Well, how about the residents that are gonna stay or are still there?' You know, it's more like 'to hell with them.' This is exactly how some of us feel.

The perception that changes and decisions were happening around them without any

personal influence in the outcomes was common. As Interviewee 1 described,

it should be important to the college and to the town fathers to address the

residents like they have some vested interest here. But, we feel like this is

something they're doing to us.

When asked to reflect on ways that residents may be able to have influence,

interviewees pointed to established, town-wide forum meetings. However, whereas

Interviewee 4 stated, "I appreciate these meetings where you can at least voice, and to

some people who may have some way to influence this," Interviewee 6 described these

meetings as simply "complaint meetings" where residents achieve few successes. In fact,

Interviewee 3 plainly stated, "We don't go to the meetings. We don't, you know? We're in

general not um, complainers. We just work within the compliance of what the situation

is."

"Now you feel a little bit overrun, and I don't necessarily blame the

students." Naturally, when discussing their perceived lack of influence, interview

respondents reflected on who they believed to possess the most influence. Consistently

throughout interviews, perceived responsibility and resentment was spread throughout

multiple constituencies other than students.

All interviewees spoke about the role and influence of landlords within the

community. Residents described landlords as divested from the community with their

sole interest being financial profit. Interviewee 5 described this as,

The problem with the neighborhood is that you have these landlords who want to

get as many students as they can in there. They don't care what the house looks

like. They don't care, and they are just packing them in there as opposed to when I

initially moved in the neighborhood. You'd have three or four guys, three or four

girls living in a house. It was more of a normal situation as opposed to these

money hungry landlords not really caring about the accommodations or anything.

When considering landlords, Interviewee 4 asserted that, "There are some that really

don't care, and it's a business proposition." In describing the ripple effect of a "bad

landlord," Interviewee 3 stated, "once you get a bad landlord, and he lets the property go

down, everybody's screwed." The notion of a residential home being converted into "a

business proposition" also inspired Interviewee 6 to declare, "And that I resent. I resent

the landlords."

Not all interviewees were as direct in placing blame on a singular constituency.

What was more common was to hear responses that divided influence and responsibility

throughout various stakeholders. Interviewee 7 articulated the diverse responsibility in a

single statement:

I would love to see the landlords take a much more aggressive role. I would like

to see the town take a much more aggressive role and the university I think

working hand in hand, everybody would get a lot more accomplished.

Yet, other interviewees discussed the responsibility of different constituencies as

disparate points throughout their interview. For example, Interviewee 5 who was quoted

above as perceiving landlords to have responsibility because "they don't care" and "just

pack them in," also went on to place responsibility with the town

administration/leadership as well as the students' parents/families. In reference to the

town, it was stated that,

the people who run Glassboro have a responsibility and I don't think they take that

responsibility very seriously … Now you feel a little bit overrun and I don't

necessarily blame the students or the school, I totally understand growth.

Probably my bigger issue is with the town. I think they do a poor job of regulating

their rentals.

And, in reference to the students' parents/families, this same interviewee stated, "But

kids that are raised well, and raised to be respectful and kind, even when they do get a

little out of hand, will know to reign it back in."

In a similar example of split responsibility, Interviewee 4 who was quoted above

stating the perception that landlords "really don't care" and simply maintain homes as "a

business proposition," also went on to place responsibility with the University as well as

the students' parents/families. Interviewee 4 asserted the belief that the University

administration/leadership should be required to live within the boundaries of these

campus-adjacent neighborhoods because "when you have administration separated from

the actual community that they're supposed to be administering, I don't think that's a good

idea." This notion of detachment from responsibility is also heard in the reference made

to the responsibility of parents with regard to the students in the neighborhoods: "Hey,

this is our neighborhood your child is living in, and you expect me to act in your stead? I

don't think so, you know?"

"Kids being kids." Following with the notion that parents must take more

responsibility for their children while they reside in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods

during their college careers, interviewees consistently spoke of students in the frame of

"kids." Interviews revealed attempts at understanding the different stage of life the

students are in as they live in the neighborhoods. The non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods were often able to detach individual students from their behavior as well as individual students from the perception of the collective mass of students. Justifications of "kids being kids" were used as neighbors discussed the desired lifestyle of college students. Similarly, neighbors often reflected on their own experiences in youth in an effort to "get it." These attempts at understanding also aided Interviewee 4 in declaring that "it's not all of them … the bad seeds." In fact, the perception of "kids" enjoying youth and vitality inspired positive choices by non-student residents. Interviewee 6 summarized this notion by stating, "I think it keeps you young, because you're seeing a lot of young people out."

Interviewees were generally able to separate the individual students from their behavior. Interview participants expressed a level of understanding of the phase of life that students are in. For example, Interviewee 2 expressed, "It's what makes me try to remember when that wall is shaking at 2:30 in the morning that they're kids being kids, they've been in school all week, they're letting off steam, and I get it." This notion of understanding and "getting it" is also apparent in the justifications of Interviewee 5: "They're just so like they don't know what to do with themselves. They've got freedom." The understanding and justifications were also offered toward college students along with a reflection on the interviewee's own youth, as exemplified by Interviewee 7:

> College kids wanting to be college kids. I get it. I was a college kid. I went to
> undergrad, graduate school, I get it. You want to party. You want to have fun.
> They don't want to be hassled by the old guy behind them who's got a kid. They
> want to be free to do what they want to do and I would love to let them be free to

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do what they want to do and reciprocally I don't want to be bothered by their

noisiness.

Similarly, other interviewees also considered their own youth. Interviewee 1 reflected,

So, we don't have this chronic issue with the youth of the community. They're not

the issue. I don't think this is a bad place or bad environment to live. I think it's

just, you know, I guess my not paying attention to it, and when we were of

college age we thought we were grown ups, and had good sense. Okay, well now

I'm 70 and I watch these kids walk up to my fence and take a leak, you know?

And, it's just like, AHHH. Some of these stupid things.

In fact, when interviewees discussed the negative behaviors and conduct that impact their

lives, they were generally able to discuss the behavior as separate from the individuals.

As Interviewee 1 was recounting the parties that negatively impacted the neighborhood, it

was also stated, "So, it wasn't the fact that they were having a party. It was their conduct

at the party." This sentiment was echoed by Interviewee 4: "I am not angry at Rowan

students per se. I'm angry at behavior." In the instances when interviewees would refer

directly to students as individuals who are responsible for their choices and behaviors,

interview participants made efforts to separate these "bad ones" as outliers. Interviewee 3

described the overall sense of living within the campus-adjacent neighborhood as more

student rental properties were arising:

Really, we came into it with the worst possible expectation. Like 'oh my gosh,

there goes the neighborhood. It's gonna be fast cars and loud parties' . . . Right, so

that's what you think it's going to be. And, it's not like that. Our experience is that

it's not like that.

The experience is most often described as being positive more often than not. Interviewee 4 quantified it at "like a 80% positive, 20% negative," and in elaborating on the 80/20 experience, Interviewee 4 stated,

> It's not all of them, and unfortunately in any huge group there's the bad ones get all the publicity. And, so unfortunately the larger the group you get, the more the larger that group of bad seeds.

Ultimately, the non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods attempt to draw positive outcomes from the presence of their student neighbors in a college town. While Interviewee 6 stated that, "It keeps you young," Interviewee 3 expressed that the presence of youthful college students in the neighborhood holds up a mirror to their own choices. Inspired by the lives of the surrounding college neighbors, Interviewee 3 reflected,

> And if you see the kids outside, you know, having a party, or sitting outside on the deck. We're - you know, we'll look at each other like, 'What are we doing in the house? We need to go sit outside and put the radio on! We can't be these old people sitting in the house.' So it reminds you that life is, you know, kind of short, and you should be out there on the spring day. Like, there's nothing in the house you need to do.

Finding 3: "As Long As I Stay Here, I'll Always Try to Build Bridges."

The quantitative data showed that the non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in this college town were generally consistent in their sense of a Shared Emotional Connection. This subscale defines strong communities as "those that offer members positive ways to interact, important events to share and ways to resolve them

positively, opportunities to honor members, opportunities to invest in the community, and opportunities to experience a spiritual bond among members" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 14). Regardless of participation in the Back To The Boro event, the quantitative responses in the Shared Emotional Connection subscale remained generally consistent. The qualitative phase of the study resulted in the finding that describes the nature of the relationships and interactions that impact these perceptions. Each interview asked interviewees to reflect upon their relationships and experiences with Rowan students within their community. The questions were open-ended in order to allow interviewees to discuss any formative experiences that they may have had in order to establish their perceptions. The participants described the PSOC component of Shared Emotional Connection as it relates to both their immediate student neighbors as well as the general student body of Rowan University students. Commonly, interviewees expressed difficulty in developing relationships with their immediate student neighbors. Consistent with PSOC, the short-term transient nature of college student tenants was a repeating theme.

Beyond the lack of relationships and interactions with immediate neighbors, residents all discussed their own positive experiences interacting with Rowan University students in some way. For some, these interactions occurred in the context of a formal University activity such as Back To The Boro. For others, the interactions were at informal times or through non-University events. Regardless of the context for the interactions, all interviewees expressed the importance of interaction in some form.

Major Finding 3, as exemplified by the statement of Interviewee 2: "As long as I stay here, I'll always try to build bridges," represents the shared emotional connections

and efforts towards building relationships and interactions between students and non-student residents in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. This overall finding is the aggregate of two separate sub-findings that each represents a different component of how non-student residents perceive the experience of building relationships and interacting with students in the community. The perception held by non-student residents that, while relationships and interactions are important, they are limited is brought forth in the sub-finding, "Because they don't know us, they don't know how nice we are!" The positive experiences and interactions with students are heard in the sub-finding, "It's nice when they're nice kids."

"Because they don't know us. They don't know how nice we are!" All interview participants discussed the need for interaction and relationship-building between neighbors. Common within these discussions was a perception that the campus-adjacent neighborhoods are lacking in these efforts. Simple things such as a wave or a hello are even rare. Interviewee 4 stated, "And none of them ever come over or introduce themselves. This year for the first time, I'm gonna say in the last decade, I actually had a couple of students say hello to me." Interviewee 6 confirmed that these instances of waves and pleasantries are the most common possibility: "Other than the occasional, if I'm in the yard, y'know, 'Hi,' kind of a thing. Just walking by. Usually, they have headphones on, so they're just like, a wave, or something like that."

In reflecting on the unique context of life in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of a college town, Interviewee 2 stated,

I need some peace of mind. But as long as I stay here, I'll always try to build

bridges wherever I can. I'll try to wave. And you know what? Sometimes, when

you make an effort, some people just don't want it. They just want to be in their

house. They want to just live in their neighborhood. This is not the world we live

in, here. Here, there are new faces. You have to make an effort. So I'll always try

to make an effort.

Interviewee 3 went on to take the responsibility upon themselves to make an effort. In

conjunction with a sense that the college student neighbors are "kids" and may have

learning to do, Interviewee 3 stated with sympathetic understanding, "And I think part of

it is like a hesitancy on the kids' part. Because they don't know us. They don't know how

nice we are!"

A common reflection within the interviews was the efforts to build these

relationships and move beyond simple pleasantries. The most frequently discussed

obstacle was the short-term transience of college students in the neighborhoods.

Consistent with the PSOC component of Shared Emotional Connection, interviewees

asserted that it is difficult to develop the necessary connections of community that come

with investment and bonds among members when a significant portion of the community

members are short-term transients. Interviewee 5 summarized this notion:

Well, I mean, I will say there are, I guess, one of the most difficult things is they

usually don't stay more than a year … So I think that the reason that we don't have

more of a relationship- because the times that we did, they stayed for more than a

year. So you had time to.

Furthermore, Interviewee 7 expressed a common concern related to the short-term

transient nature of college student neighbors by articulating the connection to the

emotional safety of the non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods:

Since you know they're not going to be around for the long haul, forging these relationships is hard and can be painful. You know, if you find- if you are lucky enough to have a group of kids that's in a house for any more than a year, you start getting fond of them like, 'Hey, you know, these are good kids. God I love having you here.' And then they leave and you're like, 'Oh. For Christ's sake, who am I going to get next? Who's moving in now?'

"It's nice when they're nice kids." All interviewees recounted some experiences with Rowan University students that were positive in some way. Some of these interactions were formulated in organized University-sponsored events such as Back To The Boro, Get FIT, and Unified Sports. Other interactions were formulated in informal or non-University activities such as local church functions, neighborly interactions, and babysitting. All interactions were framed as positive, regardless of whether they were formal University activities or not.

A common theme within these discussions was the perception that interactions "humanize" both the students and the non-student residents for each other. When discussing Back To The Boro, Interviewee 4 stated, "I honestly think it does a positive thing, and one is this. First off it makes us human to the students, okay?" Furthermore, "You actually, you make the student the same as one of your nephews, nieces, grandparent, children, or whatever, and opposite you, they see you as something different." Interviewee 6 and Interviewee 8, both of whom had never participated in Back To The Boro, discussed the event in their interviews as a positive for the community. Interviewee 6 stated, "I think that's great because I think that's where people can see the kids as just nice kids." Interviewee 8 framed it as a neighborly opportunity by asserting,

"Oh, I think that's awesome. I think they should, uh, like the winter's coming up, I think they should even like maybe start shoveling the walks and stuff. Don't even ask, just do it."

All interview participants provided experiences that emphasized positive interactions with Rowan University students. Several participants were specific to highlight particular activities and programs that they perceived to be highly effective in creating positive experiences. Both Interviewee 2 as well as Interviewee 8 discussed Rowan University's Unified Sports program which partners Rowan University students with community Special Olympians on athletic teams. Interviewee 2 stated,

> Um, Rowan has done wonderful things for that kid in there. He plays Unified basketball, he plays Unified soccer. We've made a lot of good friends. Rowan is constantly rethinking how it can help with Olympian athletes.

This sentiment was echoed by Interviewee 8 when discussing participation in Unified Sports:

> As long as you're cool with him, I'm good. Which they are. I think they know [him] because he's been playing, with the Unified Sports, and there's other regular college kids go there too.

Interviewees also articulated a connection between participation in a University-sponsored activity and the opportunity to strengthen relationships within the neighborhood as well. Interviewee 2 shared the experience,

> Another unique thing is, if you partake in a Rowan activity, sometimes you luck out and you find that some of the kids that are involved are actually on the same street as you. It happened to me last night. We do Get FIT. Which is a wonderful

program. And one of the girls happens to be a Greek, and she lives in one of the

houses down there.

Given that interviewees consistently expressed difficulty in establishing relationships

with student neighbors, opportunities such as this were highlighted. This was also the

case in recounting experiences of relationship-building that materialized through informal

interactions and impromptu events. Interviewee 1 exemplified these opportunities

through the experience of inviting student neighbors over after their party had been

broken up by police in response to a complaint call logged by Interviewee 1:

But again, that one night, the chemistry was just right and the guys that were still

there that we ended up inviting to come over to our deck and sit down and have a

beer and pizza, that just… It was very spontaneous, and, you know, we talked

about the common problem as a resident living next to college housing. And, you

know, they were at that point in time, they were the more mature. They weren't

the 18, 19, 20 year olds. They were the 21 year olds, the 22 year olds … The

experience we had with the guys coming over and sitting down and having a beer

and pizza with us, that was just a unique, very high memory. That was a good

experience.

Ultimately, non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in this

college town expressed overwhelmingly positive outcomes from interactions between

students and non-students. Interviewee 3 summarized the positives gleaned from Back To

The Boro by focusing on the relationship benefits for the non-student residents:

It's cool just to chit-chat with them and you know, when you're at college, I

believe, when you're in college, the world is your oyster. Everything's gonna go

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your way, every lucky break is gonna come your way. And you feel fully

prepared for what's next. It's nice to catch people in that phase. They're not

disillusioned yet.

Interviewee 2, on the other hand, focused on the community impacts of the positive

perceptions of activities such as Back To The Boro:

You can tell when they do this, they're there because they want to. Uh, that's the

wonderful thing. That's one of the times I will walk around the neighborhood, the

day they come. Just because you see, you know, a little bit less chaos. You know,

a little more order is restored. They're cleaning this up, or making this look nice.

And, it's just nice seeing kids do great things. Positive things, you know. Not the

things that I think about every day.

Qualitative Data Summary

At the conclusion of both phases of the study, three findings emerged after

integrating the quantitative data provided by the SCI-2 with the qualitative data drawn

from interviews with eight non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a

college town. This study was designed to enable a comparison between the experiences

of Back To The Boro participants and non-participants. While the study revealed that

there was little difference in the quantitative PSOC between these two groups, it also

revealed that there was little difference in how the two groups expressed these

experiences qualitatively as well. The concerns within the four components of PSOC

were voiced similarly across both groups, and the research process concluded with the

same major findings.

As both participants and non-participants discussed their sense of Membership and Reinforcement of Needs, there were equal expressions of loss in quality of life associated with the significant changes. Interviewee 1, who is a Back To The Boro participant, described the perception that "It's no longer our community. We're living in their community," whereas Interviewee 7 and Interviewee 8, who both represent non-participants, described the community as becoming "Rowanville" and "Rowan-boro" respectively. Despite the use of different language, the perception remains the same. Non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods experience the changes to their communities as a loss. Regardless of their interaction with Rowan students through Back To The Boro as a form of engagement, all research participants cite negative behaviors of students, esthetic changes to the community, loss of a peer group, parking and traffic impacts, and financial concerns related to property values and a primarily rental community.

The similarity in the expression of concerns was also echoed in the lack of a sense of Influence held by all non-student residents in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. All interview participants described influence and responsibility for the direction of the community as resting with other stakeholders beyond the non-student residents themselves. This perception rang true regardless of participation in Back To The Boro. Interviewees 3, 4, 5, and 6 targeted landlords, with Interviewee 6 succinctly summarizing this perception by declaring, "I resent the landlords." However, landlords were not the only stakeholders perceived to have influence and responsibility. Interviewee 4 and Interviewee 7, a Back To The Boro participant and a non-participant, both broadened the scope of responsibility to include University leadership, Borough administration, as well

as parents. The perception that many varied stakeholders possess influence and responsibility was overwhelmingly heard across all qualitative participants in the study. Equally heard within this finding was also that the non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods granted leeway of understanding and justifications of the actions and responsibility of the students themselves. While the Back To The Boro participant, Interviewee 2, expressed this as "kids being kids" and the non-participant, Interviewee 7, expanded on the perception by connecting personal nostalgia in the statement, "College kids wanting to be college kids. I get it. I was a college kid," the sentiment is the same. Non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods express the ability to "resent" such stakeholders as landlords, but simultaneously express the ability to detach the students as individuals from their behaviors and the "bad seeds."

Ultimately, this study investigated the experience of participating in Back To The Boro as a form of engagement. This Big Event-style programming initiative certainly provides the opportunity to impact the Shared Emotional Connection component of PSOC. In fact, both participants and non-participants described Back To The Boro as a positive opportunity for engagement. However, it was not discussed as having any more significant impact than many other forms of engagement available to members of the community, both formally through the university and informally through membership in the community. Qualitative participants described varied positive experiences and outcomes from engagement and interaction with students throughout the community, and emphasized the need to "build bridges." Interviewee 4 described a humanizing benefit of Back To The Boro by stating, "First off it makes us human to the students, okay?" Whereas Interviewee 6 stated, despite never having participated in Back To The Boro, "I

think that's great because I think that's where people can see the kids as just nice kids."

However, the perceptions of shared emotional connection were heard with equal strength

in discussions of organized university activities such as Get FIT and Unified Sports as

well as informal opportunities such as local church ceremonies and impromptu pizza

parties in residential backyards.

All interviewees were asked to check on the accuracy of these themes,

interpretations, conclusions, and findings of the research. The themes and findings were

verified through rounds of member checking. The researcher allowed participants to

review the themes and findings of the overall study as well as how their own interview fit

in across all interviews. The three findings produced through the integration of the

quantitative and qualitative data was presented here, and it will be used in the subsequent

chapter to answer the specific research questions for this study. The major findings help

to understand the psychological sense of community of non-student residents of a

campus-adjacent neighborhood in a college town, and explain the relationships,

experiences, and perceptions of college students. In Chapter Five, this sense of

community and the non-student resident's perceptions of students will be discussed in

depth.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications

This chapter summarizes the study, discusses the findings, and considers the implications of the research. In summarizing, this chapter will review the purpose and significance of this study as well as the stated research questions. Each research question will be reviewed in the discussion section. This review will present conclusions for each question based on the findings presented in Chapter Four as well the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The implications section of this chapter will present recommendations for policy, practice, and research in the field of higher education and town-gown relations. Particular attention will be given to psychological sense of community (PSOC) in campus-adjacent neighborhoods as well as the engagement efforts that are implemented by university leadership and students. All recommendations are drawn from the findings and conclusions revealed through this study.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to examine the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. The study concentrated specifically on the community engagement of the non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. This study explored the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents after participation in a community-wide university day of community service. Using the psychological sense of community (PSOC) measurement established by McMillan and Chavis (1986), this mixed methods study was designed to

provide both quantitative data related to PSOC and in-depth qualitative explanations of the experiences of non-student residents in campus-adjacent neighborhoods.

University and community leaders will benefit from specific data related to town-gown relationships. By using the multidimensional construct of PSOC, leaders will be able to focus on being proactive in connecting with non-student residents and taking an initial step in developing positive town-gown relations in campus-adjacent neighborhoods. Recent research in the field has asserted the need for enhanced community engagement efforts in town-gown relationships (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006; Fox, 2014; Gavazzi, 2016). Furthermore, while some researchers emphasize the value of student volunteer and community service efforts as a form of positive town-gown community engagement (Fox, 2014; Gavazzi, 2016), others caution that volunteerism efforts are more complicated and may have negative impacts at times (Powell, 2015). It is clear, however, that there is a dearth of research that explores the impact of community engagement by students on the sense of community perceived by neighborhood residents. This research begins to fill that research gap while also focusing on Big Event-style programming as a single type of volunteerism. This is a valuable element to understanding town-gown relations through community engagement.

This study was designed to address the following five research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town?

2. What are the differences in the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the

college town for participants and non-participants of the Back To The Boro

community service day event?

3. How do non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of

the college town describe their relationship and experiences with students?

4. How do the experiences with students in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of

the college town impact the sense of community of non-student residents?

5. How are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student

residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town

influenced by participation in the Back To The Boro community service day?

Discussion of Research Questions and Findings

While Chapter Two reviewed the existing literature and research in the fields of

town-gown relations, college towns, community engagement, Big Event-style

programming, and psychological sense of community (PSOC), Chapter Four presented

the major findings of this current study. These findings along with the existing literature

in the field will be used to answer the research questions through the framework of PSOC

presented by McMillan and Chavis (1986). In this section, each of the five research

questions will be addressed individually before guiding the discussion of implications for

policy, practice, and research in the subsequent section.

Research question one. *What are the perceptions of a sense of community held*

by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town?

Psychological sense of community (PSOC) is low among the non-student residents of the

campus-adjacent neighborhoods of this college town. Across all four subscales –

Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection - in

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the SCI-2 instrument (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008), the data showed low scores from respondents. The SCI-2 asks participants to answer 24 items on a 4-point Likert scale. Each response was given a numeric point value within the Likert scale: Not At All = 0; Somewhat = 1; Mostly = 2; and Completely = 3. The total PSOC score for each respondent is determined by the sum of all responses to the complete 24-item survey. Given that there are 24 questions that each received a maximum score of 3, the total possible maximum score that a respondent could receive on the SCI-2 is 72. The data from the quantitative strand of this study shows that the average Total Sense of Community registered by the non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods in this study was 29.5. This places the average response to each of the 24 total questions at a "Somewhat" response of 1.2.

Furthermore, as the data is broken down by each of the component subscales within PSOC – Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connections – the response scores are similarly consistently low. While there is no one subscale that stands apart as receiving uniquely high scores, there is a clear low score among the subscales. Utilizing the same scoring system that establishes the total sense of community, each subscale tabulates the sum scores for six designated questions from the SCI-2 in order to establish the score related to that particular subscale. Given that there are six questions designated for each subscale with a maximum score of 3 per each question, the total possible maximum score that a respondent could receive for each subscale is 18. The data presented the scores for each subscale as follows: Membership/7.3; Reinforcement of Needs/8.1; Influence/6.5; and Shared Emotional Connection/7.7. This clearly shows that the overall scores within the Influence subscale

report back as consistently lowest for the sense of community of non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of this college town.

Through follow-up in the qualitative strand of this mixed methods study, we were able to determine the specific factors and perceptions that create the total PSOC as well as each component subscale. Much of the discussion within the qualitative interviews is mirrored within existing literature reviewed in Chapter Two. In discussions of membership, all interviewees talked about the change that they see occurring in their neighborhoods as long-term, traditional residents are being displaced by short-term, college student rental properties. This gives voice to the non-student resident's experience with the concept of "studentification" (Smith, 2008). As stated in Chapter Two, the concept of studentification is useful in providing a general foundation for definitions within town-gown literature. However, the concept is limited in that it does not account for the many classifications and variations of college towns. Prompted by the research in campus-adjacent neighborhoods conducted by Powell (2014), this study presented the specific experience of non-student residents in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of a college town with studentification and the PSOC component of Membership.

The qualitative interviews also gave voice to the connections between PSOC and the four dimensions of the town-gown environment presented by Fox (2014). The four dimensions of Social, Physical, Cultural, and Economic provide a valuable framework for evaluating town-gown relationships. However, the data presented in this current research provided specific details related to how these dimensions are experienced in the unique campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The social dimension and the PSOC component of

membership are witnessed in the interviewees comments related to "Rowanville" or "Rowan-boro" as well as in the discussions of being "overrun" with college rental properties. This is the experience of studentification. Fox's (2014) cultural, physical, and economic dimensions are heard in connection with interviewees' perception of the PSOC component of Reinforcement of Needs. While Fox points out that high concentrations of young people living together often have different lifestyles and cultural desires, the interviewees in this study often overlooked these concerns as "kids being kids." Interviewees reported being very understanding of the cultural differences with their student neighbors. The negative perception held by non-student residents was not necessarily within the cultural dimension, but found itself more in the physical dimension defined by noise, party-related concerns, property damage, traffic, parking, alcohol-related concerns, trash, and littering. In fact, interviewees were able to make the distinction between the individual student neighbors and their conduct or behavior. These behaviors within the physical dimension were overwhelmingly cited as the contributor to the negative impacts on their reinforcement of needs as opposed to the cultural dimension desires for a different lifestyle among college students. Lastly, the interviewees articulated Fox's economic dimension in their discussions of property values and their long-term plans for their future and retirement. However, much like the factors within the other dimensions, interviewees focused their attention on the role of other stakeholders such as landlords, Borough administration, and the University. While they expressed a desire for reinforcement of the need for economic security in their home values and retirement, the interviewees directed this responsibility toward other stakeholders rather than their student neighbors.

The notion that other stakeholders carry responsibility for the sense of community within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods was emphasized in discussions of influence as well. As was presented in the quantitative data, the PSOC subscale of Influence received the lowest average scores among the subscales. This was also heard consistently in the qualitative interviews as well. When interviewees discussed simply receiving "lip service" from town and university leadership or believing that leadership did not care to consider non-student residents when expansion plans were being developed, the interviewees were voicing their experience with influence. This connects with recommendations echoed in literature for all stakeholders to be represented in campus planning (Crawford, 2014; Sungu-Eryilmaz, 2009). Similarly, this is consistent with the assertion that sense of community in campus-adjacent neighborhoods is bolstered when residents have a sense of efficacy (Powell, 2013). The low PSOC scores for influence as well as the qualitative descriptions from interviewees point to an absence in these areas of representation in campus planning and overall sense of efficacy within the community.

Utilizing the four-square typology of town-gown relationships which uses the two dimensions of (1) the level of comfort experienced by campus and community stakeholders, and (2) the level of effort required to maintain the town-gown relationship to determine the four town-gown types – harmonious, traditional, conflicted, and devitalized – (Gavazzi, Fox & Martin, 2014), this town-gown relationship described by non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods is certainly one of low comfort. Gavazzi, Fox and Martin (2014) present the harmonious relationship, where comfort and effort are both perceived to be high, as the optimal town-gown relationship. Non-student residents in this study are expressing their perception that comfort is low

when they articulate "whistling in the wind," being told "to hell with them" when decisions are made related to campus and community planning, and having neighborhood changes done to them or thrust upon them rather than being consulted collaboratively. The sense of community within campus-adjacent neighborhoods is consistent with the low comfort town-gown types: conflicted or devitalized (Gavazzi, Fox & Martin, 2014).

There was, however, considerable discussion related to the PSOC component of Shared Emotional Connection. All interviewees discussed some level of experience interacting with students, neighbors, and the university. The discussions of interaction with university events highlighted the findings of Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006), which asserted a positive connection between town-gown relations and participation in a campus event within the past six months. However, the consistently low scores on all subscales within the SCI-2 as well as interviewees' articulation of the dual reality of "understanding" the change within their community and "college kids wanting to be college kids," while also having "resentment" and being "afraid" that more "college kids are going to come," challenges the assertion that many efforts to bring students and non-student neighbors together in order to facilitate understanding will often do more harm than good (Powell, 2014). The current research revealed no mentions of harm being done with increased interactions between students and non-student residents. This study certainly brings into question whether these programming efforts aimed at increasing community engagement are the ultimate cure that many university and community leaders often wish them to be. While this research does not affirm the notion that more harm than good may come as a result, the low scores on all SCI-2 subscales as well as the

qualitative findings of the study are consistent with Powell's (2014) emphasis of focusing

on the structural issues at the core of town-gown tensions.

Research question two. *What are the differences in the perceptions of a sense of*

community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of

the college town for participants and non-participants of the Back To The Boro

community service day event? The data in this study showed that the difference in how

non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of this college town

articulate their perceptions of a sense of community when separated into the groupings of

participants and non-participants of the Back To The Boro community service day event

is minor, at best. In fact, when examining the quantitative data reported through the SCI-

2 survey (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008), Back To The Boro participants consistently

reported lower scores than their non-participant neighbors. With a total possible

maximum score that a respondent could receive on the SCI-2 of 72, both participants and

non-participants reported low overall PSOC scores. Back To The Boro participants

scored an average Total Sense of Community of 28.0, while non-participants scored an

average of 29.7.

Furthermore, the responses were similarly consistently low when the data was

broken down by each of the component subscales within PSOC – Membership,

Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connections. The total

possible maximum score that a respondent could receive for each subscale is 18. The data

presented the scores for each subscale as follows: Membership for participants/6.5 vs.

Membership for non-participants/7.4; Reinforcement of Needs for participants/7.7 vs.

Reinforcement of Needs for non-participants/8.2; Influence for participants/6.5 vs.

Influence for non-participants/6.5; and Shared Emotional Connection for participants/7.2 vs. Shared Emotional Connection for non-participants/7.7. This clearly shows that there is little difference in the perceptions of a sense of community of non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of this college town when stratified by their participation in the Back To The Boro community service event. In fact, when differences were reported, the quantitative data showed that participants reported lower scores more consistently than their non-participant neighbors.

As a mixed methods study, the qualitative interviews gave voice to the specific factors and perceptions that contributed to the sense of community for participants and non-participants of Back To The Boro. The data presented in the qualitative interviews furthered much of the existing literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Bruning, McGrew and Cooper (2006) asserted that there was a positive connection between town-gown relations and participation in a campus event within the past six months. However, that research did not investigate different forms of engagement. It simply tells us that engagement of some kind is important for a positive connection in town-gown relations. The findings in our current study do not contradict the findings of Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper because they do not imply that non-participants in Back To The Boro are not otherwise engaged with the university community. The qualitative data showed that non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods are engaged in a variety of university activities and interact with students in many ways whether they are participants in Back To The Boro or not. The study did not reveal any particular form of engagement to be unique, including Back To The Boro. The qualitative findings in this current study merely tell us that Back To The Boro participants and non-participants articulate their

perceptions of a sense of community similarly as non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town.

Furthermore, the findings in this current study do not support the assertion that community engagement through volunteerism has a unique ability to positively impact town-gown relationships. The notion that volunteerism as a form of community engagement is prevalent within the literature. It is often cited as a suggested form of engagement that can positively address the ills of negative town-gown relations (Gavazzi, 2016) through promotion of neighboring behaviors (Unger and Wandersman, 1985) and the opportunity to break down stereotypes of the other (Pancer, 2015). While each of these positive outcomes was expressed through qualitative data collection, volunteerism as community engagement was not revealed to exhibit a unique ability to positively impact town-gown relationships. Interview participants discussed the positive neighboring behaviors experienced through Back To The Boro when they mentioned "they're cleaning this up, or making this look nice." These neighborly acts allowed for "a little less chaos" and "a little more order is restored." Similarly, the breaking down of stereotypes through volunteerism was described in the qualitative data as "first off it makes us human to the students." Yet, while these benefits were observed by participants, the positive impact on sense of community that is suggested in the literature (Gavazzi, 2016; Pancer, 2015; Unger and Wandersman, 1985) was not observed.

Additionally, the specific form of volunteerism represented by Big Event-style community service programs has a stated goal of creating "unity" within college town communities (Bogue, 2014). While qualitative participants in the current study reported positive experiences and perceptions through the Back To The Boro engagement, they

did not report significantly different perceptions due to this particular form of engagement. Ultimately, this study affirms the research of Powell (2014), which stated that, while collective interaction between students and non-student residents may be a positive in campus-adjacent neighborhoods, it may not have the ultimate desired effect of positive sense of community without also addressing structural issues such as "the transience of the neighborhood, the lack of intra and intergroup cohesion among residents, the de facto and de jure segregation patterns, and the increasing studentification of the neighborhood" (Powell, 2014, p. 121). Qualitative participants in this current study experienced positive interactions with students through Back To The Boro and other engagement opportunities while they also reported low scores on all components of PSOC. While it is uncertain how PSOC would be reported if there were no such engagement opportunities as Back To The Boro or the other activities highlighted by qualitative participants, the notion remains that something is still missing from the sense of community "even if the kids are perfect in every way, shape or form" (Interviewee 7, 2018).

Research question three. *How do non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town describe their relationship and experiences with students?* In the qualitative strand of this mixed methods study, non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of this college town detailed minimal relationships with limited interaction with their student neighbors. Interviewees highlighted the changes within the membership of their community neighborhoods as more residences were converted to rental properties and more college students moved in. They defined this as being "overrun" with college students. This influx of college student

neighbors was also consistently connected by interviewees in this current study to negative experiences such as noise, party-related concerns, property damage, traffic, parking, alcohol-related concerns, trash, littering, and concern for devaluation of property values, which is consistent with previous research in the field (Massey, Field & Chan, 2014). Similarly, this current study found that non-student residents in campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town experienced the "second-hand harms" (Weiss, 2013) that produced the perception that the neighborhood is no longer friendly for children and families. As outlined in Chapter Four, these negative experiences were described by interview participants in Finding 1 with such comments as "more students means more trouble" and "you can just tell the college houses by walking up and down." This finding is consistent with issues presented throughout the literature that asserts that negative impacts of student culture are experienced by non-student neighbors in a more acute way as the student population of the neighborhood increases and the indicators of studentification become more prevalent (Gumprecht, 2008; Smith, 2008).

The shifts in membership and the resulting negative experiences expressed in Finding 1 affirm the emergence of the "student ghetto" (Gumprecht, 2008) and the impacts of "studentification" (Smith, 2008), which highlight the shift away from owner-occupied single-family homes to student rental properties that begin to alter the character of the neighborhood. Non-student residents highlighted negative experiences on weekend nights due to parties and late night activities, but they also emphasized the daily harm to their sense of community through the visible manifestations of the change to their neighborhood. Studentification and the student ghetto are experienced on a daily basis for non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods as the density of the student

population shifts and the student culture becomes the dominant culture of the community. Interviewees discussed homes and yards not being well kept, trash being strewn throughout yards and neighborhood streets, driveways and streets being overwhelmed with parked cars, and traffic issues that are exacerbated during the school year. Interview participants clearly articulated their experience with students as a shift toward studentification by asserting ideas such as "it's no longer our community. We're living in their community."

The findings in this current study emphasize these impacts in the unique neighborhoods that are directly adjacent to campus. Fox (2014) offers four dimensions of the town-gown environment: Social, Cultural, Physical, and Economic. While these four dimensions may be observable throughout the entire college town, the campus-adjacent neighborhoods experience this differently due to the rapid and severe studentification that is unique to these particular neighborhoods. It is possible that these particular neighborhoods experience these transitions and impacts more acutely and earlier than other neighborhoods of the college town.

Participants in this current study experienced the shift in the social dimension and discussed the displacement of established residents, overwhelmingly. Similarly, interviewees articulated Fox's (2014) cultural dimension which focuses on conflicting goals and expectations for community life between students and non-students and the physical dimension which focuses on the physical manifestations of this divergent culture with rich descriptions of a student party culture and second-hand harms (Weiss, 2013) experienced by residents. And, lastly, the economic dimension was a significant concern for residents as they evaluated their future and finances because the overall shifts in the

community are seen as having negative economic impacts through devaluation of property values and general desirability of the neighborhood community to potential non-rental homebuyers. Due to the rapid studentification present in campus-adjacent neighborhoods, the participants in this current study perceived the shifts in the four dimensions of the town-gown relationship as synonymous with their experience with students.

While interview participants were clear to express many of the negative impacts of the experiences with student neighbors in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods, they also made a point to discuss the need and desire to develop richer relationships with these same students. Finding 3 in this current study presents the assertion that non-student residents "always try to build bridges." Interview participants openly discussed the difficulty in developing relationships with student neighbors. They often expressed that students and non-students could get along very well if they were more likely to interact. When Interviewee 3 stated, "they don't know us. They don't know how nice we are!" it was in the context of describing the hesitancy on the part of the students to approach neighbors for interaction. This notion connects with the perceptions held by the student participants in Massey, Field, and Chan's (2014) focus groups. That study asserted that student residents of college town neighborhoods believed their contributions to the community were often overlooked or underappreciated due to the perception that students were primarily a negative influence. These perceptions were documented as triggering resentment and feelings of exclusion from the community within the student populations. These perceptions and feelings of student participants in the research of Massey, et al

(2014) were also observed by non-student residents in this current study to be an impediment to community relationships.

As a result of the difficulty in building relationships, the qualitative findings of this study point to the desire of non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods to increase positive interaction with student neighbors. Interviewee 3 summarized the desire to interact more with students by stating, "because they don't know us. They don't know how nice we are!" Interviewee 5 also desired more interaction with students and wished to develop relationships because, "it's nice when they're nice kids." Both interviewees asserted the notion that more interaction allows more opportunities to learn how nice the other could be in a reciprocal relationship between students and non-student neighbors. These positive opportunities for interaction were cited equally for organized, University-sponsored activities such as Back To The Boro, Get FIT, and Unified Sports, as well as informal, non-university activities such as community church interactions and impromptu neighborly pizza parties. It is noteworthy that these positive interaction opportunities were the memories that evoked specific references to specific individual students when interviewees were recounting their stories. Rather than addressing students en masse as a collective as was often the case in negative reflections, these positive experiences prompted interview participants to discuss specific students as individuals.

Research question four. *How do the experiences with students in a campus-adjacent neighborhood of the college town impact the sense of community of non-student residents?* Psychological sense of community (PSOC) is composed of four parts – Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection

(McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The qualitative findings of this study revealed that the experiences with students in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of this college town did have an impact on the sense of community of non-student residents.

Interviewees expressed concerns over the changing membership of their neighborhoods and difficulty in fulfilling their community needs as non-students as these membership changes occur. These changes were perceived to be so stark that, when asked to speak broadly about their experience with students, interviewees equated their experience with students with these shifts. In the subscales of Membership and Reinforcement of Needs, interviewees discussed the changing demographics and physical appearance of the neighborhood as well as a diminished perception that the community could offer them the support and fulfillment that they desire, but they did not make a connection between these changes and direct experiences or relationships with specific students. They simply perceived the changes to their neighborhood to be a single, overwhelming "experience" with students.

Similar to the cultural dimension of town-gown relations presented by Fox (2014), interviewees cited cultural differences and opposing needs from the culture of students. When discussing these cultural clashes with students, interviewees used phrases such as "kids being kids" and "I get it. You want to party. You want to have fun." In detailing how their experiences with students throughout their neighborhood have impacted their perception of a sense of community, they were able to separate the students as individuals from their negative behaviors. Non-student residents affirmed many of the negative impacts of studentification (Smith, 2008) cited throughout previous studies (Fox, 2014; Gumprecht, 2008; Massey, Field, & Chan, 2014; Powell, 2013;

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Weiss, 2013), but focused more on overwhelming changes and culture shifts than on direct experience or relationships with individual students.

The subscale of Shared Emotional Connection was the primary area where direct experience or relationships with students were expressed as positively impactful. The qualitative findings showed that non-student residents cited many interactions with students that supported positive connections. These experiences came through formal organized activities such as Back To The Boro, Get FIT – Fitness, Integration, and Training – (a program run through Rowan's School of Health Professions that works to improve access to fitness, nutrition, and wellness programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their caregivers), and Unified Sports (a sports club where Rowan students and Special Olympics Athletes come together to competitively play a variety of sports on the same team throughout the year), as well as through informal interactions in church settings or throughout the neighborhood. These interactions afforded neighbors with the opportunities to create the shared emotional connections that are documented in PSOC. In areas of Shared Emotional Connection, qualitative participants discussed these varied positive interactions with students as impactful to their overall sense of community, but they overwhelmingly asserted disappointment with the lack of interaction with student neighbors in the community. They asserted that more interaction with student neighbors could have more positive impact on overall sense of community.

Positive interactions and shared experiences with students were not enough to reverse other negative experiences with PSOC. Interviewees were clear to express that factors beyond interactions and experiences with students had an impact on PSOC. It was

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in the subscale of Influence where the interview participants reported perceptions that are detrimental to the sense of community. These issues of influence negatively impacted the sense of community, but had little connection to the experience with students. As their neighborhood was changing, non-student residents began to feel less influence over the direction and character of their community, and detailed multiple constituencies that held significant influence beyond that of the non-student residents. In fact, influence was mentioned in relation to Borough leaders, the University, landlords, and parents of students, but not necessarily students themselves. This finding that areas of Influence are not positively influenced through experiences and relationships with students reinforces that shared experiences and relationships between students and non-student residents are a benefit to campus-adjacent neighborhoods, but they are not necessarily the ultimate agent of change for all components of PSOC (Powell, 2014).

> **Research question five.** *How are the perceptions of a sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the college town influenced by participation in the Back To The Boro community service day?* The findings in this study indicated that there was little to no difference in sense of community for those who participated and those who did not participate in the Back To The Boro event. Overall, Back To The Boro was talked about well by both participants and non-participants. It was interesting to note that non-participants were equally apt to mention Back To The Boro as a positive neighborhood experience even without having participated themselves. The positive town-gown relationship benefits were evident even without participating. However, while Back To The Boro was spoken of as a positive experience, the event was not discussed in any particularly more significant way than

other positive engagement opportunities cited by non-student residents in the qualitative interviews.

Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006) stated that community engagement matters in positive town-gown relationships. Their research revealed that community residents who had participated in a campus event within the past six months expressed higher levels of perceived trust in the local university as well as increased perceptions of the university's investment in the community. Also, the research surrounding the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) further stated that volunteerism is a strong positive interaction to pursue in these town-gown relationships (Gavazzi, 2016). Ultimately, Back To The Boro provided non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods a positive experience to point to, but not an experience that can be cited as significantly more impactful than other forms of positive engagement.

The findings from this study raise questions about whether or not Big Event-style programming accomplishes the lofty goal of town-gown "unity" expressed in the founding mission statement developed at Texas A&M University (Bogue, 2014). This current study endeavored to investigate whether or not Big Event-style community service programming was particularly strong in developing positive town-gown relationships. There are links established in research literature between civic participation and higher levels of PSOC (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990) as well as the relationship of PSOC to volunteerism and neighboring activities such as the tasks completed through Back To The Boro (Ohmer, 2007; Pancer, 2015; Unger & Wandersman, 1985). Bogue's research asserts that participation in university volunteerism programs such as The Big Event leads students to more active community engagement. However, this commitment

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is expressed as a lifelong dedication to servant leadership and serving a neighbor rather than an immediate commitment to non-student neighbors. Bogue's research also focused exclusively on the experience of students involved with the program as opposed to the focus on non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods in this current study.

Qualitative participants in this current study discussed the positive experience and perception of student participants in the Back To The Boro event, but discussed it as a transactional experience that is positive but separate from the other negative experiences of life in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. While Bogue's research asserts that students may describe Big Event-style programming as a transformational servant leadership experience, this current study revealed that the non-student community participants in Big Event-style programs assert that the relationships and sense of community are not transformed. This current study asserts that Big Event-style community service events are certainly a positive town-gown experience, but simply one in a constellation of experiences that will foster positive relationships throughout campus-adjacent neighborhoods in a college town.

It is evident throughout the literature in the fields of community engagement as well as town-gown relations that community culture must be addressed in order to achieve town-gown success. In order for this long-term success to be achieved, efforts must shift from transactional to transformational (Bushouse, 2005; Enos & Morton, 2003; Powell, 2014). While Back To The Boro seeks to establish on-going relationships between students and community members that go beyond transactional to transformational, participants in this study did not express that this was a shared

perception within the community. Furthermore, this current study reveals that the relationships fostered through positive town-gown experiences such as Big Event-style programs and the short-term positives of the transactional neighborly acts completed during the event do not counteract the daily negative impacts of studentification in campus-adjacent neighborhoods.

Implications

  Policy. There are policy implications that can be proposed as a result of the findings of this study related to psychological sense of community (PSOC) held by non-student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. The findings indicate that policy changes can be enacted at the local government level in the specific context of Rowan University and Glassboro, New Jersey, but also in the broader context of town-gown relationships in general. Policymakers in the local government will benefit from developing policies with the components of PSOC in mind. These policy implications are born from the findings that confirm that the four component factors of Membership, Reinforcement of Needs, Influence, and Shared Emotional Connection are necessary for strong PSOC (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), and they fall into the categories of collaboration and communication.

  While research suggests that collaborative processes are invaluable in decision-making related to university land use and development activities as a university expands within a college town (Sungu-Eryilmaz, 2009), collaboration and solicitation of involvement from the non-student residents of neighborhoods have not been highlighted. In addition to focusing on the relationships and collaboration between university and community leaders, local processes and policies should be developed with involvement

from neighborhood constituencies and general neighborhood residents beyond the Borough administrative leadership. Genuine involvement in a collaborative process will work toward assuaging the anxieties and negative perceptions of a lack of influence possessed by non-student residents. Research participants clearly articulated the perception that non-student community members had little to no influence over the direction and decisions within the community, and they asserted their interest in greater involvement and influence.

Municipalities should explore ways to develop policies in order to work collaboratively with not only the university leadership and local law enforcement, but also with the landlords as important stakeholders. It is important to note the finding that qualitative participants cited multiple constituencies that held significant influence throughout the community other than themselves and their student neighbors. Interviewees were inflexible in their perception that landlords and Borough leaders along with University leadership have significant influence and responsibility for the sense of community in the neighborhoods. Borough policies should be created that encourage collaboration and positive involvement with landlords in the process of educating students living in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods about the values of being a good neighbor and the responsibilities of community membership.

Furthermore, interviewees described their interactions with local government leaders as "whistling in the wind" and simply receiving "lip service." Effective communication policies and procedures may address the perception that residents complain without any action being taken to address the concerns. This offers the opportunity to establish new policies and procedures focused on documenting concerns

as they are raised, following through on addressing or remediating the concern, and subsequently reporting the outcome to the public. Creating and adhering to communication protocols will support the effort to improve neighborhood residents' sense of influence within their community.

Additionally, in addressing many of the negative behaviors and "second-hand harms" experienced when living in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods, very little discussion came up in the qualitative findings of the efforts and policies established by the Borough administration to address these behaviors. Community members easily cited efforts made by police to address behaviors as they are occurring, but Borough leaders and administrators were not perceived to be proactive in addressing neighborhood concerns. This suggests that efforts can be improved upon and more widely discussed in town forums in order to disseminate accurate information. Current policies and procedures can be refined and expanded in order to address the evolving needs of the neighborhoods. For example, the Glassboro Police Department established their "party" Patrol Zones on weekend nights. These same zones were used in this study as the geographic parameters for establishing the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. While the zones themselves and the policies and procedures adhered to by the officers do not need to change, the efforts can be expanded in order to disseminate information to community members. Patrol Zone protocol can be expanded in order to inform residents of the proactive steps already being taken by officers in these areas to address community expectations. Many residents express concern for what happens when an officer visits a student-rental house, and many are also skeptical that a visit from officers ever carries any significant consequences. These residents will benefit from expanded protocols that

include more proactive steps and information sharing with the community that will make residents more aware of the responses to negative behaviors. The increased confidence in the responsiveness to complaints and concerns may lead to increases in the areas of Influence and Reinforcement of Needs.

Practice. This study was designed in the hope that it would inform the engagement practices of university administrators, student affairs professionals, and Borough administrators, as well as student and non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in the college town. Particular attention was focused on Big Event-style programs that proclaim the stated goals of "unity" and "thanks." While Back To The Boro as a Big Event-style program was not revealed to be the magical town-gown experience that manifested positive overall PSOC in a more effective or conclusive manner than many other forms of community engagement, the event was still reported to have been a positive.

In practice, university administrators and students should continue to employ Big Event-style programming. In fact, these practices should be expanded because participants in this study consistently cited infrequent and insufficient interactions with student neighbors on a day-to-day basis. While the interactions at events and activities are viewed as positive, the general interactions throughout the neighborhood on a daily basis are often lacking. Expanded Big Event-style programming should be addressed in practice, and might ameliorate this perception by addressing the prevailing norm of two separate cultures living alongside one another. Efforts such as expanding Back To The Boro beyond the single day of volunteerism and focusing programming efforts and resources on developing the same relationships over the course of the entire academic

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year, or even multiple years in on-going relationships, would also have impact on the structural issues at the core of town-gown tensions (Powell, 2014). This would focus on developing relationships that move from the single-day of transactional volunteerism to transformational partnerships that work jointly over longer periods of time (Enos & Morton, 2003).

Additionally, educational efforts and resources can be aimed at more regular interaction at the neighborhood level. As students decide to leave campus housing and university apartments for the houses situated within the residential campus-adjacent neighborhoods, programs and informational campaigns should be developed as collaborative efforts between the university, Borough administrators, landlords, and neighborhood leaders in order to welcome these new tenants to the neighborhood and impart community expectations. Likewise, providing resources and opportunities for regular interaction between students and their non-student neighbors will likely have a similarly positive impact on overall PSOC and commitment to the community. The findings from this study suggest that informal interactions with the immediate neighbors within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods are vitally important to PSOC, and equally impactful as a large-scale university event. In fact, the large-scale Big Event-style program may have influenced the non-student residents' perceptions of college students, but it likely did not impact their perceptions of the specific students residing within their neighborhood or on their block. Consistent, daily interactions are necessary for that level of transformation.

Beyond the educational efforts and resources aimed at improving students' commitment to their campus-adjacent neighborhood communities, opportunities exist for

university leaders to glean positive practices from this research. It is incumbent upon university leadership to take responsibility for their role in building and maintaining positive relationships with neighborhood residents. University leaders cannot view community issues in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods as solely the outcome of students behaving badly. Study participants were consistently able to separate the students as individuals from their negative behaviors. The students in the neighborhoods became "kids being kids." There was not an equal leeway conceded, however, when considering the influence and responsibility held by the University or other stakeholders such as Borough administration or landlords. Community members believe that the university as an entity and administrative leaders as individuals have a responsibility to the town community as well.

It is important to note that, while non-student community members express concerns related to direct experiences and relationships with students, the components that make up the sense of community are impacted by the actions or inactions of university leadership as often as by the behaviors of students. Study participants cited influence as the weakest subscale of PSOC in their community. They detailed multiple constituencies that held significant influence beyond themselves and their student neighbors. In fact, influence was mentioned in relation to Borough leaders, the University, landlords, and parents of students, but not necessarily students themselves. University leaders must wield their influence and interact with community residents in order to nurture these relationships in a way that is similar to the efforts to create opportunities for positive interaction between students and community members. Town forums and public opportunities to interact should be approached with awareness of the

perception held by residents of their lack of influence and the "lip service" paid to them by leaders. The transient nature of student renters carries significant challenges that make transformational relationships difficult, however relationships with university administration and leaders should be more consistent, long-term, and established.

Research. This current research study is simply an initial step in the wider investigation of psychological sense of community (PSOC) in campus-adjacent neighborhoods. Similarly, it is just the beginning of a larger conversation related to Big Event-style programming as a town-gown initiative. The data in this study presented the PSOC of non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in this college town as being low. This provides an interesting opportunity for exploration of PSOC as experienced by the student residents of these same neighborhoods. By adding this next layer of research, the overall PSOC and health of the community can be examined by comparing the experiences and perceptions of students with those of the non-student residents.

Another expansion of the understanding of PSOC within the college town would be to broaden this current research beyond the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. Research should be considered that examines PSOC across the entire college town as opposed to simply the campus-adjacent neighborhoods. This will allow for investigators to begin determining if these campus-adjacent neighborhoods are extreme cases where the experiences with tensions are unique, or if the perceptions of the components of PSOC are similar throughout all areas of a college town.

Beyond new research in the areas of PSOC, town-gown relations, and campus-adjacent neighborhoods, this study also aimed to explore the Back To The Boro

community-wide university day of community service event as a form of community engagement. As a starting point, this study used the research of Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006), which stated that there was a positive connection between town-gown relations and participation in a campus event within the past six months. While the findings of this study revealed that Big Event-style programming did not have a significant impact on the PSOC and perceptions of non-student residents, further research should be conducted into other forms of involvement. This provides the opportunity to explore if any unique form of involvement matters more than another. Does involvement that utilizes resources and facilities like Unified Sports have a more significant impact? Does involvement that fosters contact with faculty like the Get FIT program have a more significant impact? Do student-led initiatives have differing impact from efforts led by administrators? Research should be conducted that explores additional forms of involvement in order to deepen the understanding of Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper's (2006) foundational research.

Finally, this study investigated PSOC and the experience that non-student residents have had with Back To The Boro. There is still a dearth of research available in the field related to the student's experience with Big Event-style programming. Research is needed that helps to understand if students are truly being educated through these programming efforts. Examining the experiences of the student residents of the campus-adjacent neighborhoods will broaden the understanding of both PSOC as well as Big Event-style programming. A similarly designed study that looks at student residents rather than non-student residents would provide complimentary research to the findings of this study. Determining the PSOC of student residents of campus-adjacent

neighborhoods, and exploring any differing perceptions of PSOC for students who have volunteered through Back To The Boro compared with those students who have never volunteered with Back To The Boro will be a valuable addition to the literature and research in the field.

Limitations

Acknowledging the inherent limitations that are present in this study allows me to have a stronger focus in the research and offer potential areas for future research in the field. It also contextualizes the study and encourages the reader to judge the study with these limitations in mind (Rossman and Rallis, 2012). The design and nature of this study looked at the psychological sense of community (PSOC) for non-student residents in owner-occupied homes in campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a single college town. This is a small population of a larger town. I did not study the entire town of Glassboro, New Jersey. The demographic focus of this study was limited to non-student residents of owner-occupied homes in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of the town. Due to the availability of data through the Borough Code Enforcement Office, the study was only able to distinguish between owner-occupied houses and rental houses. The data was not available to distinguish between rental units that were occupied by students and rental units that were occupied by non-students. Also, while there are other sections of the town with residents who have participated in the Back To The Boro program, the proximity to campus and the density of college student rentals in the campus-adjacent neighborhoods made it a prime setting for an initial study. A focus on participants outside of this scope, such as non-student residents from all neighborhoods of the town or non-student residents

who were renters rather than residents of owner-occupied homes, would have changed this study.

This mixed methods study was conducted in a transforming, suburban community with rapid growth around a higher education institution. Although I use the term "college town" throughout the study for ease of reference, Glassboro, New Jersey does not match the specific definition of college town as outlined by Gumprecht's eight fundamental differences between college towns and other American cities (2003). In particular, this study was limited to the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a host community that is home to a growing university. The impacts of studentification (Smith, 2008) are experienced in a unique way in these neighborhoods. As such, I do not attempt to generalize my findings to the common definition of a college town (Gumprecht, 2003). Instead, through mixing of quantitative data collected through the SCI-2 measurement of psychological sense of community and analysis of qualitative interview data, I offer findings that will be helpful to communities that host higher education institutions and experience impacts of studentification in campus-adjacent neighborhoods.

While these limitations may influence the findings of the study, it is still clear that this current research offers insight, implications, and data that improve the scope of research in the field. These additional factors offer areas for potential future research.

Conclusion

This study revealed that non-student residents of campus-adjacent neighborhoods in this college town have an overall low sense of community. It also showed that participation in the Back To The Boro community-wide day of service event did not alter how research participants described the overall sense of community. While the

experiences with Back To The Boro were generally positive, these experiences did not reverse the other negative perceptions and experiences with studentification that led to low psychological sense of community (PSOC). The shift from a predominantly residential, family neighborhood to a neighborhood with a high density of student rental properties has impacted the sense of membership within the community. The clashing of different cultures and the sense that "kids will be kids" has impacted the ability to address reinforcement of needs. Furthermore, the "second-hand harms" and other negative experiences related to student behaviors exacerbated these negative perceptions. The research allowed participants to elaborate on their perceptions of PSOC, which revealed that the sense of influence was the component of PSOC that held the lowest score. However, residents asserted that this lack of influence was not associated with students. Instead, residents view that their influence is superseded by that of the Borough, the University, and the landlords, which leaves the residents at the lowest rung of influence and merely receiving "lip service" from those with true influence.

As this study further examined PSOC in campus-adjacent neighborhoods, it looked at participation in the Back To The Boro event and examined whether or not participants perceived PSOC differently than non-participants. While the research indicated that there was little to no difference in PSOC for Back To The Boro participants, it opens the conversation related to town-gown relations and various forms of community engagement. It is clear that community engagement is a vital component of town-gown relationships, and Big Event-style programming is a positive addition to the myriad ways that colleges and students engage with the communities in which they

reside. The next steps will be in developing policies, practices, and research that nurtures

transformational understanding and furthers the lasting depth of these relationships.

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Appendix A

Quantitative Informed Consent

<u>Town-Gown Sense of Community in Campus-Adjacent Neighborhoods: A Mixed Methods Study</u>

Informed Consent for Participation

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in a research study about understanding the sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town. This study is being conducted by researchers in the Department of Educational Services & Leadership at Rowan University. The Principal Investigator of the study is Dr. Monica Kerrigan.

Participation in this study is voluntary. In order to participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older. If you agree to participate in this study, you will initially be asked to complete a short survey. We are inviting you to participate in this survey because your residence has been identified as a non-rental within one of four residential zones surrounding and adjacent to the Rowan University campus. All non-rental properties within these campus-adjacent neighborhoods are being invited to participate in the survey. The survey may take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

In addition to the survey, we will be asking a smaller group of up to 24 respondents to continue with the study by completing a one-on-one interview with the researcher in order to discuss the research topic further. If you agree to participate in this second portion of the research, you would be interviewed for approximately 60-minutes. You would also receive and complete an additional informed consent sheet for the interview portion of the research at that time.

There is little risk in participating in this study; after the survey and/or interview, you may have questions about your participation and how the information will be used to assess the sense of community in the campus-adjacent neighborhood, which will be answered immediately by a member of the study team.

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. No one other than the researchers would know whether you participated in the study. Study findings will be presented only in summary form and your name will not be used in any report or publications. At times, a pseudonym will be used in place of your name and identifying information.

Participating in this study may not benefit you directly, but it will help us learn how to positively impact the sense of community held by non-student residents of a campus-adjacent neighborhood in a college town. *Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this study, this will have no effect on the services or benefits you are currently receiving.* You may skip any questions you don't want to answer and withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Monica Kerrigan in Rowan University's College of Education Department of Educational Services & Leadership at 856-256-4500 x3658 or via email at kerriganm@rowan.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Rowan University Glassboro IRB at 856-256-4078.

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YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE.

Social and Behavioral IRB Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and **I have received a copy of this description.**

Name *(Printed)*: _____

Address: _____

Contact Information *(Phone and/or Email)*: _____

_____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ **Date**: _____

Appendix B

SCI-2 Quantitative Instrument

Rowan University

Town-Gown Sense of Community in Campus-Adjacent Neighborhoods: A Mixed Methods Study

Sense of Community Index

SENSE OF COMMUNITY INDEX II

The following questions about community refer to: your neighborhood adjacent to the Rowan University campus.

How important is it to you to feel a sense of community with other community members?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Prefer Not to be Part of This Community	Not Important at All	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

How well do each of the following statements represent how you *feel* about this community?

	NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MOSTLY	COMPLETELY
1. I GET IMPORTANT NEEDS OF MINE MET BECAUSE I AM PART OF THIS COMMUNITY.	O	O	O	O
2. COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND I VALUE THE SAME THINGS.	O	O	O	O
3. THIS COMMUNITY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING THE NEEDS OF ITS MEMBERS MET.	O	O	O	O
4. BEING A MEMBER OF THIS COMMUNITY MAKES ME FEEL GOOD.	O	O	O	O
5. WHEN I HAVE A PROBLEM, I CAN TALK ABOUT IT WITH MEMBERS OF THIS COMMUNITY.	O	O	O	O
6. PEOPLE IN THIS COMMUNITY HAVE SIMILAR NEEDS, PRIORITIES, AND GOALS.	O	O	O	O
7. I CAN TRUST PEOPLE IN THIS COMMUNITY.	O	O	O	O

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	NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MOSTLY	COMPLETELY
8. I CAN RECOGNIZE MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMUNITY.	O	O	O	O
9. MOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS KNOW ME.	O	O	O	O
10. THIS COMMUNITY HAS SYMBOLS AND EXPRESSIONS OF MEMBERSHIP SUCH AS CLOTHES, SIGNS, ART, ARCHITECTURE, LOGOS, LANDMARKS, AND FLAGS THAT PEOPLE CAN RECOGNIZE.	O	O	O	O
11. I PUT A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT INTO BEING PART OF THIS COMMUNITY.	O	O	O	O
12. BEING A MEMBER OF THIS COMMUNITY IS A PART OF MY IDENTITY.	O	O	O	O
13. FITTING INTO THIS COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT TO ME.	O	O	O	O
14. THIS COMMUNITY CAN INFLUENCE OTHER COMMUNITIES.	O	O	O	O
15. I CARE ABOUT WHAT OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS THINK OF ME.	O	O	O	O
16. I HAVE INFLUENCE OVER WHAT THIS COMMUNITY IS LIKE.	O	O	O	O
17. IF THERE IS A PROBLEM IN THIS COMMUNITY, MEMBERS CAN GET IT SOLVED.	O	O	O	O
18. THIS COMMUNITY HAS GOOD LEADERS.	O	O	O	O
19. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME TO BE A PART OF THIS COMMUNITY.	O	O	O	O
20. I AM WITH OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS A LOT AND ENJOY BEING WITH THEM.	O	O	O	O
21. I EXPECT TO BE A PART OF THIS COMMUNITY FOR A LONG TIME.	O	O	O	O
22. MEMBERS OF THIS COMMUNITY HAVE SHARED IMPORTANT EVENTS TOGETHER, SUCH AS HOLIDAYS, CELEBRATIONS, OR DISASTERS.	O	O	O	O
23. I FEEL HOPEFUL ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THIS COMMUNITY.	O	O	O	O
24. MEMBERS OF THIS COMMUNITY CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER.	O	O	O	O

Version Date: 7/14/18

Appendix C

Qualitative Informed Consent

Rowan University

Town-Gown Sense of Community in Campus-Adjacent Neighborhoods: A Mixed Methods Study

Informed Consent for Interview

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to continue in this study.

You have already agreed to participate in a research study about understanding the sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town conducted by Dr. Monica Kerrigan. We are asking for your consent and permission to complete a one-on-one interview. Participation in this phase of the study is voluntary. The interview will be used for analysis by the research team. The interview will last approximately 60-minutes.

There is little risk in participating in this study; after the interview, you may have questions about your participation and how the information will be used to assess the sense of community in the campus-adjacent neighborhood, which will be answered immediately by a member of the study team.

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. No one other than the researchers would know whether you participated in the study. Study findings will be presented only in summary form and your name will not be used in any report or publications. At times, a pseudonym will be used in place of your name and identifying information. Interview recordings and transcription files will be stored for six years on the Rowan University Cloud drive.

Participating in this study may not benefit you directly, but it will help us learn how to positively impact the sense of community held by non-student residents of a campus-adjacent neighborhood in a college town. *Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this study, this will have no effect on the services or benefits you are currently receiving.* You may skip any questions you don't want to answer and withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to interview you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Monica Kerrigan in Rowan University's College of Education Department of Educational Services & Leadership at 856-256-4500 x3658 or via email at kerriganm@rowan.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Rowan University Glassboro IRB at 856-256-4078.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE.

Social and Behavioral IRB Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and **I have received a copy of this description.**

Name *(Printed)*: _____

Signature: _____ **Date**: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ **Date**: _____

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<u>Town-Gown Sense of Community in Campus-Adjacent Neighborhoods: A Mixed Methods Study</u>

Informed Consent Addendum for Audio Recording

As stated above, you have already agreed to participate in a research study about understanding the sense of community held by non-student residents within the campus-adjacent neighborhoods of a college town conducted by Dr. Monica Kerrigan. Additionally, we are asking for your consent and permission to allow us to audio record that interview as part of the research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study. Participation in this phase of the study is voluntary. The recording will be used for analysis by the research team.

The recording will include your name, local address, and full recording of your detailed interview. The recording will be digitally recorded, stored on a working password-protected laptop, transcribed by the researcher, and copied to a Rowan University Cloud drive. Interview recordings and transcription files will be stored for six years on the Rowan University Cloud drive.

Your signature on this addendum form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Monica Kerrigan in Rowan University's College of Education Department of Educational Services & Leadership at 856-256-4500 x3658 or via email at kerriganm@rowan.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Rowan University Glassboro IRB at 856-256-4078.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE.

Social and Behavioral IRB Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and **I have received a copy of this description.**

Name *(Printed)*: _____

Signature: _____ **Date**: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ **Date**: _____

Appendix D

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Rowan University

Town-Gown Sense of Community in Campus-Adjacent Neighborhoods: A Mixed Methods Study

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL --- Non-B2B

1. How long have you lived in this house?
2. How would you describe the last 10 years in this neighborhood?
3. Do you work in this community?
   a. If so, how do you engage with different members of the community through your work?
      i. Do you engage with Rowan students through your work?
4. Are you involved in any community groups or organizations?
   a. If so, how do you engage with different members of the community through your involvement with these groups or organizations?
      i. Do you engage with Rowan students through your involvement in these groups or organizations?
5. Do you volunteer in this community?
   a. If so, how do you engage with different members of the community through your volunteerism?
      i. Do you engage with Rowan students through your volunteerism?

6. Do you participate in any community events or activities?
   a. Why do you participate in these particular events/activities?
   b. Why are these events/activities an important part of this community?
7. What is unique about this community?
8. Do you get anything from living here that you couldn't get anywhere else?
   a. Are there any shared values in this community?
9. How do you feel about being a member of this community?
   a. What are the biggest contributors to that feeling for you?

10. Do you know your neighbors, and do they know you?
    a. How and why does everyone come to know one another?
    b. How important is it to you that members of your community know each other?
11. What are the different groups that make up this community?
12. What are the most common interactions that you have with these other groups?
13. What do you talk to your neighbors about?
14. How and where do most of your interactions with neighbors occur?

15. Tell me about your relationship and experiences with Rowan students.
    a. Has this changed as the university grows and more properties in your neighborhood are converted to student rental properties?
       i. Can you give me examples? Tell me some stories?
       ii. How would you describe your most frequent interactions with Rowan students?

16. What do you do in situations where you need help/assistance (getting mail, holding a spare key, watching the house while you're away, shoveling snow, yard work, heavy lifting, cup of sugar, help in an emergency…)?
    a. Do you ever trust Rowan student neighbors with any of these types of things?

17. Who has the most influence over what this community is like?
    a. How do they exert that influence?
    b. What does it look like when they are influencing the community?
18. How strong is your voice in guiding the community?
    a. Are you happy with that level of strength to your voice?
19. Have you ever worked with your neighbors to achieve something for the neighborhood community?
    a. Tell me about it.

20. Are there any problems that are unique to your neighborhood?
    a. How do these problems get addressed?
    b. How confident are you in being able to solve these problems?
        i. How well does it work?

21. How important is it to you to be a part of this community?
    a. Why? How so?
22. How do people who care about this community show that they care?
    a. How can you tell if some people don't care?

23. In the last ten years, has your connection to this community gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?
24. What is the future of this community?
    a. And, what does the future hold for you in this community?

Town-Gown Sense of Community in Campus-Adjacent Neighborhoods: A Mixed Methods Study

<u>INTERVIEW PROTOCOL --- B2B</u>

1. How long have you lived in this house?
2. How would you describe the last 10 years in this neighborhood?
3. Do you work in this community?
   a. If so, how do you engage with different members of the community through your work?
      i. Do you engage with Rowan students through your work?
4. Are you involved in any community groups or organizations?
   a. If so, how do you engage with different members of the community through your involvement with these groups or organizations?
      i. Do you engage with Rowan students through your involvement in these groups or organizations?
5. Do you volunteer in this community?
   a. If so, how do you engage with different members of the community through your volunteerism?
      i. Do you engage with Rowan students through your volunteerism?

6. Do you participate in any community events or activities?
   a. Why do you participate in these particular events/activities?
   b. Why are these events/activities an important part of this community?
7. What is unique about this community?
8. Do you get anything from living here that you couldn't get anywhere else?
   a. Are there any shared values in this community?
9. How do you feel about being a member of this community?
   a. What are the biggest contributors to that feeling for you?

10. Do you know your neighbors, and do they know you?
    a. How and why does everyone come to know one another?
    b. How important is it to you that members of your community know each other?
11. What are the different groups that make up this community?
12. What are the most common interactions that you have with these other groups?
13. What do you talk to your neighbors about?
14. How and where do most of your interactions with neighbors occur?

15. Tell me about your relationship and experiences with Rowan students.
    a. Has this changed as the university grows and more properties in your neighborhood are converted to student rental properties?
       i. Can you give me examples? Tell me some stories?
       ii. How would you describe your most frequent interactions with Rowan students?

16. What do you do in situations where you need help/assistance (getting mail, holding a spare key, watching the house while you're away, shoveling snow, yard work, heavy lifting, cup of sugar, help in an emergency…)?
    a. Do you ever trust Rowan student neighbors with any of these types of things?

17. Talk to me about your experience with the Back To The Boro program.
    a. How do your experiences with Rowan students through Back To The Boro coincide with your overall experience with Rowan students in Glassboro?

18. Who has the most influence over what this community is like?
    a. How do they exert that influence?
    b. What does it look like when they are influencing the community?
19. How strong is your voice in guiding the community?
    a. Are you happy with that level of strength to your voice?
20. Have you ever worked with your neighbors to achieve something for the neighborhood community?
    a. Tell me about it.

21. Are there any problems that are unique to your neighborhood?
    a. How do these problems get addressed?
    b. How confident are you in being able to solve these problems?
        i. How well does it work?

22. How important is it to you to be a part of this community?
    a. Why? How so?
23. How do people who care about this community show that they care?
    a. How can you tell if some people don't care?

24. In the last ten years, has your connection to this community gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?
25. How has your involvement in Back To The Boro influenced your connection & perceptions of this community?

26. What is the future of this community?
    a. And, what does the future hold for you in this community?