Theses and Dissertations (All)

12-2017

# Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place-Building in Higher Education

Jeffrey S. Raykes

Follow this and additional works at: https://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd

Part of the Higher Education Commons

PLACE MATTERS: A MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY OF INSTITUTIONAL

PLACE-BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Jeffrey Stuart Raykes

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2017

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Professional Studies in Education


We hereby approve the dissertation of


Jeffrey Stuart Raykes


Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education


_____  _____

Kelli R. Paquette, Ed.D.
Professor of Professional Studies in Education,
Chair


_____  _____

Richard J. Hoch, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Geography and Regional
Planning


_____  _____

Joseph Marcoline, D.Ed.
Professor of Professional Studies in Education


ACCEPTED


_____  _____

Randy L. Martin, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title:    Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place-Building in Higher Education

Author:   Jeffery Stuart Raykes

Dissertation Chair:    Dr. Kelli R. Paquette

Dissertation Committee Members:    Dr. Richard J. Hoch
                                   Dr. Joseph Marcoline

Colleges and universities are being increasingly recognized as key contributors to the well-being of the places in which they are located. However, in spite of the promise and potential of place-based engagement, there is little agreement about what place and place-building means or how these concepts can be operationalized in within the context of institutional community engagement (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015). The central purpose of this study was to explore these topics inside the institution with the aim of better understanding how place is being considered and built through institutional community engagement activities and partnerships.

To accomplish this purpose, the study employed a unique explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study design that examined place and place-building at a single, highly-engaged, institution of higher learning located in northwestern Pennsylvania. The design used Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT) which is designed to explain the degree to which institutions value and invest in their social and geographic locations (Kimball & Thomas, 2012). In other words, how they create place from space (Tuan, 1977). Using OPBT as a theoretical lens, the following three research questions guided the study: 1) how has the institution conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement? 2) according to OPBT, what are the institution's place-building profiles? and 3) how, and to what degree, are the institution's place-

building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships? To answer these questions the study focused on the collection and analysis of three types of qualitative and quantitative data: institutional documents, survey results, and focus group interview transcripts. The purposeful sample for this research consisted of institutional administrators and faculty members who were directly involved in community engagement programing at the college.

Findings from the study indicated that the institution is a highly-engaged place builder. The College conceptualizes place as being local and sees itself as mutually responsible for the well-being of the place in which it exists. The concentration of the institution's community engagement programming is in the local community and focused on the social, natural, and man-made aspects of place. The institution has adopted a relationship building role in the larger community that is focused on creating relationships that reflect reciprocity, structure, sustained commitment, and inclusion. The review of institutional documents, survey results, and focus group interview transcripts were analyzed The College was found to exhibit a highly contributive place-building profile through which the institution cultivates and promotes its role as a key player and contributor in the well-being of place. These findings provided a better understanding of how place and place-building are being considered and operationalized by one institution. This limitation presents opportunities for further study that employs the OPBT framework and the methods used here at other institutions interested in better understanding the place-based orientation of their community engagement activities and partnerships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Colleges and universities, physically tied to the locations in which they exist, are being increasingly recognized as key contributors to the social and economic well-being of communities (Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016). This growing recognition is reframing the relationship between institutions of higher learning and their larger communities. Within this frame, institutions represent dynamic concentrations of human, economic, and intellectual resources, with enormous knowledge producing and problem solving abilities that can be applied in a variety of forms to improve the quality of life for people in these places (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; Anchor Institutions Task Force, 2009). Conversely, the communities offer great learning laboratories "that enhance classroom-based instruction, research, and creative activity" (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002, p. 11). Brought together, university-community collaborations represent powerful frameworks of positive social change that can be applied at local, regional, national, and global scales.

Interactions between institutions and their larger communities are principally articulated within the frame of "community engagement." There are many definitions of engagement across the literature but the most well-known, developed by the Carnegie Foundation, describes community engagement as the "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (CFAT, 2015; Driscoll, 2008, p. 39). Engagement by this definition can take many forms, including: volunteer community service projects, service

learning activities, facilities sharing, internship programs, engaged research, joint planning efforts and community development initiatives (Netshandama, 2010; Stout, 2008; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008).

Regardless its form, community engagement has become one of the biggest trends in higher education in the last twenty years (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). This movement can be traced back to the passage of the Morrill Acts at the end of the 1800s which prioritized connections between higher education and society at large with the aim of building a stronger democratic ideals (Bonnen, 1998). Later, in the years after World War II, higher education slowly drifted from the public mission established by the Morrill Acts (Harkavy, 1998). During this period, commonly referred to as the "Ivory Tower Era" institutions became inwardly focused, viewing their larger communities as more of an obligation and not as key partners in social betterment (Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016).

By the 1980s, amid growing calls for colleges and universities to do more, community engagement again became a priority. Leading the charge were scholars such as Derik Bok (1982), Ernest Boyer (1996), Nancy Cantor (2009), Ernest Lynton and Sandra Elman (1988), and John Gardner (1998) who argued that not only should institutions "be developing civic-minded students, but institutional leaders should also more intentionally serve the common good by mobilizing the fiscal, human, and knowledge resources of the institution to address social issues" (Moore, 2014, p. 3). During this time, new definitions of community engagement emerged that included notions of reciprocity, mutual benefit, and community well-being (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007).

In the 1990s the community engagement movement, as we know it today, had taken shape (Harkavy & Axelroth Hodges, 2012). The federal government developed several university-community partnership initiatives and programs and a network of higher education focused foundations, associations, and professional organizations were established to support the advancement community engagement (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Today, millions of faculty, staff, students, and community partners, across thousands of college and university campuses, are actively engaged in the affairs of the communities around them. Students are learning, communities are being revitalized, and institutions are reconnecting with their public mission.

As the community engagement movement has gained momentum over the last several decades, a notable "place-based" discussion has emerged. Place-based community engagement is rooted in an understanding of place as a social construct (Nilsen, 2005). In other words, place is not simply an inert geographic location: it is, instead, a dynamic representation of the meanings and values "negotiated" through the interaction of people in those settings (Moore, 2014, p. 12). In this way, place is agentic, something that can be created, nurtured, or reshaped through individual or collective effort (Gieryn, 2000; MacLellan, 2006). Working within this understanding of place, place-based approaches "inform an institutional paradigm or orientation in which community engagement efforts are informed by a sense of place; they honor that engagements are *emplaced* and as a result reflect the context, setting, meaning made of that setting by those who live, work, and seek to influence that location" (Dostilio, 2017, p. 30).

The growing recognition of place as an important consideration in conceptualizing community engagement is evident in four identifiable strands of the literature. The first was the 2002 publication of a report titled *Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place* by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). This publication challenged higher education to assume some "responsibility for place" within the framework of their community engagement efforts (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002; Saltmarsh et al., 2015). Building on some of the place-related concepts presented in the 2002 AASCU document, and its supplemental reports, the term "anchor institution" was introduced to describe the embedded setting of many colleges and universities (Moore, 2014, p. 18). Anchor institutions, connected to particular places by mission and investment, were reframed in the anchor institution literature as powerful prime-movers "in the social and economic well-being" of local communities (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; Fulbright-Anderson, Auspos, and Anderson, 2001; Moore, 2014, p. 18). Since then, "place" could be found as a reoccurring theme in the literature contributing to the underpinnings of the "metropolitan university" movement organized by Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (Allen, Prange, Smith-Howell, Woods, & Reed, 2016; CUMU, 2004; Kramer & Kania, 2011) and the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification framework (Brukardt, Holland, Percy, & Zimpher, 2004; Driscoll, 2009; Noel & Earwicker, 2015; Weerts & Hudson, 2009).

The expanding literature around institutional place-building is actively redefining how some institutions are approaching their community engagement activities and partnerships. Traditional engagement models, defining institutions as "occupant and part-time contributor" are being replaced by models that position institutions as "partners in

the co-construction of place" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 19). Old views of engagement are now being recognized as "remarkably "a-place" or "place-neutral"—uninformed by the particulars of the place and people, the land and history" (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015, p. 101). This significant shift in thinking is captured in a recent publication regarding to role of anchor institutions in community development authored by Birch, Perry, and Taylor (2013) who state: "the concept of higher education has certainly morphed from the old and rather "unengaged" ivory tower notion to a new, highly-engaged, place-based or community-based concept" (p. 13).

## Statement of the Problem

It's evident that community engagement is alive and well in higher education. It is also clear that within the community engagement movement there is increasing interest, among scholars and practitioners alike, in place-based approaches (Allen, Prange, Smith-Howell, Woods, & Reed, 2016; Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; CUMU, 2017; Driscoll, 2009; Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002; Fulbright-Anderson, Auspos, and Anderson, 2001; Noel & Earwicker, 2015). Place-based community engagement differs from other engagement strategies in its focus on activities designed to create "shared meanings" for particular place qualities that can be used to "help focus and coordinate the activities of different stakeholders on initiatives of social betterment" (Nilsen, 2005, p. 27).

However, as the interest and application of place-based approaches has grown, there is little agreement about what place means, or how it should be articulated through community engagement programing, activities, and partnerships (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015). As a result, place-building through institutional community engagement is poorly understood, fragmented, and compartmentalized across higher

education which has crippled the place-building potential of colleges and universities (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Moore, 2014).

Given the increased interest in place-based community engagement, it is important better understand how the "highly-engaged" institutions of higher learning have conceptualized place and place-building, and how these conceptualizations are being operationalized within the frame of their community engagement activities and partnerships. These understandings will both inform this growing movement and afford opportunities for scholars and practitioners alike, to assess, clarify, and debate the place-building role of colleges and universities.

## Purpose Statement

The central purpose of this study was to explore place and place-building within the context of community engagement in higher education. The more specific purposes of this investigation were threefold: 1) to explore, and attempt to explain, how place and place-building have been conceptualized by "highly-engaged" institutions, 2) to determine to what extent these concepts have been reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships, and 3) to introduce an objective analysis framework that can be employed by institutions interested in assessing the place-based orientation of their ongoing community engagement programing.

## Research Questions

The following three research questions were used to guide this investigation:

1. How has the institution conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement?

2. According to Organizational Place-Building, what are the institution's place-building profiles?

3. How, and to what degree, are the institution's place-building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships?

**Research Paradigm**

The researcher's philosophical worldview, sometimes referred to as a research paradigm (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011), plays an important role in how information is studied and interpreted (Le, 2013). Simply put, a worldview is a general, or broad set of beliefs that shape the assumptions researchers have regarding knowledge and how it can be obtained (Creswell, 2008). There are four dominant research paradigms widely discussed in the literature.  These include postpositivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism. According to Creswell (2014) these assumptions are formed by discipline orientations, academic mentors, and past research experiences but often go unnoticed or unexamined. These views, when introduced intentionally or unintentionally, not only influence the selection of methods, literature, and research design within a given research project, but also "…sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for research." (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, p.194). With this in mind, it is the obligation and requirement of good research to acknowledge these often unintended individual biases as part of the introductory phases of a project (Pansiri, 2009).

This study will work from a pragmatic research paradigm. Pragmatic researchers focus on the 'what' and 'how' of the research problem and emphasize the use of all approaches available to understand the problem presented (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Creswell, 2014). Pragmatism is particularly well suited to mixed methods studies through

its focus on using multiple approaches to discover the true nature of the problem (Creswell, 2008; Le, 2013). Because pragmatists are not bound or committed to any one system of philosophy or reality, researchers are free to "…draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research" (Creswell, 2014, p.39). Mixed methods underpinned by pragmatism is appealing, according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), because it empowers researchers to "study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system." (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.30)

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in this study was Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT). According to the theory's authors, David Thomas and Jennifer Cross (2007), OPBT explains the degree to which organizations value and invest in their social and geographic locations. In other words, how they create place from space (Tuan, 1977). In their publication outlining the theory, titled *Organizations as Place Builders*, Thomas and Cross advanced a typology designed to quantify how organizations contribute to the social construction of place. The typology represents "a prescriptive approach that frames and investigates place-building relationships between organizations and their associated communities and environments" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). This important new perspective, built around the social aspects of place and place-building, has been overlooked in the management, organizational behavior, and community engagement literature.

For this research, OPBT offers an objective framework that can be used to assess the level or extent, of an institution's social responsibility, intentions, and more importantly its contributions to the places within which they do business (Thomas & Cross, 2007). Originally, OPBT was developed to advance place-based corporate social responsibility. However, the as the community engagement movement in higher education has gained momentum it has become clear that most institutions value and invest in the places in which they are located but beyond economic measures, there has been no way to systematically identify, assess, and report these commitments. Despite its roots in the world of business, OPBT offers an appropriate, transferable analytic framework that can be used to investigate place-building in higher education. This point has been argued by the theory's authors who, in the Future Research section of a recent publication titled *Place-Building Theory: A Framework for Assessing and Advancing Community Engagement in Higher Education* (2012), state "participating in place-building research offers the potential for any placekeeper to gain insight into their role in institutional, organizational, and individual place-building, which reflects on the institution's perceived level of community engagement" (Thomas & Kimball, 2012, p. 25).

Based on this direction, OPBT was adapted and applied to explore, and attempt to explain, how an institution recognizes, values, and integrates the meanings individuals and groups give to a place in terms of its geographic and social contexts. Using the theory, determinations will be made regarding 1) how the institution values place along the five dimensions (ethical, social, natural, built environment, and economic), 2) how the institution conceptualizes itself in relation to place (*in*dependent or *inter*dependent),

and 3) how these the institution's place-based conceptions translate into particular OPBT place-building identities (transformative, contributive, contingent, and exploitive).

It is important to note that sixth dimension, geography, was added to the existing OPBT framework. Based on the purposes of this investigation, the geography dimension was developed and included here with the aim of better understanding how the institution was conceptualizing place, as evidenced through the geography of the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. This geography was determined through the careful analysis of institutional engagement data with the goal of attaching a specific geography to each activity and partnership. This geographic information, coupled with the rich detail provided by institutional community engagement actors evidenced, for the first time, the "geography of engagement" for a particular institution. The addition of this dimension to OPBT represents a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge and a usable analytic framework that can be used to assess the place-based orientation of any college or university.

## Significance of Study

The emerging place-based discussion among community engagement practitioners and scholars has highlighted a unique gap in the literature. Although place and place-building are not a new concepts, it continues to be uniformly misunderstood, treated in reductionist ways, or simply ignored within the frame of community engagement (Thomas & Cross, 2007). This collective lack of attention has reinforced perceptions of colleges and universities as being detached from the lived experiences of surrounding communities (Gupton, Sullivan, & Johnston-Goodstar, 2014). With this in mind, reconnecting institutions of higher learning to their communities can be viewed as

critically important to the future of higher education in the United States. Forging these connections has become even more timely in the face of dwindling state and federal funding, increased demands for public accountability, declining enrollment, and mounting calls for increased accountability (Bridger & Alter, 2006; Chatterton, 2000; Moore, 2014).

The recent publication of OPBT (Thomas & Cross, 2007) presents an exciting opportunity to explore how place is being conceptualized and enacted within the academy. The origins of OPBT are from the field of organizational behavior and management (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). However, a review of recent trends in higher education reveals that many institutions are increasingly adopting business models of operation (Lapovsky, 2013). This trend being driven by the combination of increasing costs and declining sources of revenue available to institutions of higher learning (Dew, 2012; Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008; Lapovsky, 2013). As a result, a growing number of institutions have begun to experiment with business models of management and operations all designed streamline operations, decrease costs, attract and retain students, faculty and staff (Lapovsky, 2013). OPBT offers a particularly relevant and applicable framework to explore how organizations, including institutions of higher learning, balance success with community well-being.

Finding the ingredients within this balance represents a new application of OPBT. Findings here will add to the emerging body of knowledge regarding how institutions contribute to, or detract from, the social construction of place within the context of community engagement.

Better understanding place and the university's role within it, is valuable to practitioners and scholars inside the academy and community leaders outside its boundaries. The importance of place and the university is argued strongly by Nancy Cantor, prolific post-secondary leader and community engagement champion. In her keynote address at the 2012 *University of Wisconsin-Madison Teaching & Learning Symposium, Advancing the Year of the Wisconsin Idea* she said, "I would argue that we as universities have a special role to play in the places we inhabit…our nation is living in a 'crucible moment,' and we are called to educate all citizens in meaningful ways, and to imagine our world differently by making those tangible connections to community" (p. 3).

## Research Design

To accomplish the purposes of this research, an explanatory mixed methods approach was employed within the framework of descriptive case study. The site of the study was a private, liberal arts college located in northwestern Pennsylvania. To ensure confidentiality, the institution was provided the pseudonym, "The College," which is used here and throughout this document to refer to the study site. The College was deemed an ideal site for the study based on its status as a "highly-engaged" institution and its proximity to the researcher's location. The purposeful selection of a highly-engaged institution was important to this study's interest in exploring the place-based orientation of community engagement activities and partnerships among institutions that have demonstrated a high level of commitment to community engagement. Highly-engaged institutions were identified based on the institution's receipt of the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification. The College received Community Engagement Classification in both 2008 and 2015.

The research design organized the investigation around two distinct phases. The first phase (Phase I) included both qualitative and quantitative components. The qualitative component of Phase I consisted of the analysis of three types of institutional documents at The College: 1) institutional framing documents (i.e. mission and vision statements), 2) community engagement framing documents (i.e. strategic plan), and 3) 2015 Community Engagement Classification (CEC) application materials. This archival institutional data were analyzed using the framework method of qualitative content analysis to identify themes and draw descriptive conclusions regarding how the institution had conceptualized place within the context of community engagement (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013).

The quantitative component of Phase I involved the distribution and analysis of a survey instrument titled the Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI). The survey, developed by OPBT researchers, was designed to assess an organization's values and strategies along five dimensions or latent constructs of place-building (Thomas & Cross, 2007). At the site level, the survey was distributed to two groups of institutional administrators and faculty members who were directly involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. The purposeful selection of individuals within these two groups of these community engagement actors was important to exploring the perceptions of individuals, within the institution, who were involved in the strategic (administrators) and operational (faculty) aspects of the institution's community engagement efforts. The analysis of data gathered in Phase I was brought into the qualitative component of the second phase (Phase II) of the design.

Phase II consisted of a series of focus groups conducted with the same two groups of institutional administrators and faculty members that had completed the survey in Phase I of the study. The aim of these focus group sessions was to create a safe, comfortable environment in which the researcher could work with participants to "unpack" how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building through the eyes of the participants. Similar to the analysis method used in the qualitative component of the previous phase, the analysis of focus groups transcripts followed the framework method of qualitative content analysis. Further details regarding the research design used in this study are explained in chapter three.

## Limitations

Limitations, according to Creswell (2012), are the "potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher" (p. 199). The primary limitations of this study were fourfold.

1. First, this research only included one, small, private highly-engaged institution embedded in a small town. Other types of institutions (i.e. large public research institutions), located in urban environments may conceptualize place in significantly different ways. As a result, the findings presented here are not indicative of other institutions of higher learning or even the diverse population of highly-engaged institutions.

2. Second, the data collected and used were only was only representative of six years of community engagement programing. Other years may have included a different mix of community engagement activities that may or may not have been place-based.

3. Third, there is no established language for community engagement and place-building. Often the terms used to describe university-community interactions and the nature of the institutions place-based relationships are clearly defined and often institutionally specific. While some measures were used during the study to create a shared understanding of key concepts, there were still significant gaps related to the language of engagement and place-building evident during the data collection process.

4. Finally, the study did not include the perspectives of external community engagement stakeholders (i.e. community partners). This limitation was due to focus of this study on the institutional conceptions of place and place-building. However, the exclusion of outside viewpoints constrained a more thorough understanding of institutional place-building.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions were used for the purpose of this study:

Anchor Institution**:** The anchor institution is an engagement framework, advanced by the Anchors Task Force convened by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Anchor Institutions Task Force, 2009), that is primarily focused on research universities and involves a "complementary orientation toward place-related engagement" which is "sometimes expressed as an anchor institution mission" (Dostilio, 2017, p. 29). The anchor institution mission "describes engagements through place-based partnerships and economic development" typically focused in urban environments (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; Dostilio, 2017, p. 29). This framework differs from the broad frame of community engagement which includes service and problem-solving activities

targeted at multiple spatial scales (i.e. local, regional, national, and global) (Dostilio, 2017).

Community Engagement: The "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (CFAT, 2015; Driscoll, 2008, p. 39).

Community Engagement Actor: Individuals directly involved in the strategic and operational aspects of an institution's community engagement efforts.

Community Engagement Classification: The community engagement classification is a voluntary, elective classification for public and private two and four-year colleges and universities established in 2006 (CFAT, 2015). The classification is organized and advanced by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for the purpose of recognizing highly-engaged institutions of higher learning that could demonstrate collaborations "between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 39).

Highly-Engaged Institution of Higher Learning: Colleges and universities that have demonstrated a high levels of commitment to community engagement based on their receipt of the prestigious Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification.

Metropolitan University: The metropolitan university is an engagement framework, advanced by the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, that

presents an applied way of engaging locally but is primarily focused on addressing the

diverse needs of large, dispersed urban areas (Brownell, 1993; Dostilio, 2017).

Place-Building: "The process by which all human beings transform the places in

which we find ourselves into the places in which we live" (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995,

p. 1). Place-building is both an art and practice, and is not solely about "strengthening

relationships of people to their places", but also about "fostering relationships among the

people in places" (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, p. 1). In this way, place-building is

essentially a social endeavor, built around the mobilization of people, organizations, and

institutions to address issues of community well-being (MacLellan, 2006).

Place:  Place is defined as "both geographic and social, and is organized around

the meanings individuals and groups give to a place in its setting" (Thomas & Cross,

2007, p. 37). Places take on meaning through the events that occur within that construct

and their and its description is fused with human goals, values, and intentions (Kimball &

Thomas, 2012, p. 20).

Place-Building Profile: The place-building profiles, developed as part of

Organizational Place-Building Theory (Thomas & Cross, 2007), are designed to represent

the different strategies organizations/institutions use to, and ways they invest in, place

along the five place-building dimensions (Social Relations, Economic Relations, Nature,

Built Environment, and Ethics). Together, these profiles make up a place-building

continuum on which an organization/institutions can be located (Thomas & Cross, 2007).

Social Capital: Social capital can be found "in the trust and networks that exist in

communities" (Houghton, Foth, & Miller, 2015, p. 5). Social networks are, who people

know and the inclinations to do things for each other (Saguaro Seminar, 2010). Thought

of together, social capital is the process of the community's "coming together" for shared benefits (Farr, 2004).

Stewards of Place: Stewards of place is an engagement framework, advanced by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, that prioritizes the place-building role of accredited, public, state colleges, universities and systems in local communities. The framework describes engagement as 1) place-related—"inextricably linked with communities and regions," 2) interactive—the intertwining of the institution and community, 3) mutually beneficial—building community capacity and teaching and learning opportunities, and 4) integrated—integrated into the policies, incentives and priorities of the institution (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002, p. 9)

## Summary

Over the last several decades, community engagement has become a significant and notable movement in higher education (Moore, 2014). The dramatic growth of engagement within the academy is identifiable in the increasing number of organizations where engagement is a core organizing principle. In just 25 years, organizations like Campus Compact, a national coalition of colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education, have grown from a membership of four colleges to nearly 1,200. This membership represents more than a quarter of all institutions of higher learning in the nation (Reardon, 2006). Similarly, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has seen applications for the newly created Community Engagement Classification grow from 86 in 2006 to 311 in 2010 (NERCHE, 2016). The widespread growth of these organizations, and others like them, hearalds an emerging

community engagement movement inside the academy (Gupton, Sullivan, & Johnston-Goodstar, 2014).

Within the community engagement movement, there is a growing interest in place-based approaches (Moore, 2014). Place-based community engagement is still being defined in the literature generally speaking "labeling an interaction as place-based is another way of saying the history, culture, and socio-economics of a physical location, as well as the interactions of people in that place, should be noted as very important details when examining interactions between university actors and the communities they serve" (Moore, 2014, p. 12). Over the last decade, as the place-based discussion has gained traction in the community engagement literature, the notion of place and place-building has given shape to a number of emerging community engagement frameworks including: Stewards of Place (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002), Anchor Institutions (Fulbright-Anderson, Auspos, and Anderson, 2001), Metropolitan Universities (Allen, Prange, Smith-Howell, Woods, & Reed, 2016), and the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification (Brukardt, Holland, Percy, & Zimpher, 2004; Driscoll, 2009).

In spite of this growing body of literature, there is little agreement about what place means or how it should be articulated through community engagement programing, activities, and partnerships (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015). However, given the promise and potential of this type of engagement in reinvigorating student learning, reconnecting institutions to their public mission, and revitalizing struggling local communities it is important to find these agreements. This study explored and attempted to explain how one, purposely selected, highly-engaged institution has

conceptualized place and place-building and operationalized these conceptions within the context of its community engagement activities and partnerships. Using the framework of an explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study, this research will explore these topics using the lens of Organizational Place-Building Theory (Thomas & Cross, 2007). The findings presented will add to the existing knowledge, better inform institutions interested in adopting place-based approaches, and introduce objective analysis framework that can be employed by institutions interested in assessing the place-based orientation of their ongoing community engagement programing.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of the literature framing community engagement in higher education, the related concepts of place and place-building, and the emerging place-based focus of institutional community engagement. The main purpose of this review of the literature is to situate this research within the context of current understanding. To accomplish this purpose, the review has been organized around three main subject areas: community engagement in higher education, place and place-building, and place-based community engagement.

The first section, Community Engagement in Higher Education, provides an overview of the community engagement movement in higher education, the evolution of its definition, and how it has been organized within the academy. The second section, An Emerging Place-Based Discussion, introduces of the concepts of place and place-building. The third section, Place-Based Community Engagement, details the emerging place-based discussion among community engagement practitioners and scholars. The fourth section, Organizational Place-Building Theory, presents an explanation of Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT) as a theoretical lens through which the community engagement activities and partnerships undertaken by institutions of higher learning can be analyzed. Finally, the fifth section provides a summary of key concepts presented in the literature and how these ideas will ground this study's investigation. Together, the literature presented in these sections will establish the theoretical framework necessary to anchor this investigation.

It should be noted that community engagement in higher education is a relatively new and developing body of knowledge. This review reveals that the focus of most of the available literature has been the social, political, organizational, and educational aspects of institutional community engagement. The "deeper dive" presented here highlights the stark absence of research connecting the concept of place-building to institutional engagement activities. The large amount of research on the topic of institutional engagement, so far, has been primarily from educational and organizational theoretic positions. This study, through the research presented here, represents an exciting opportunity to add a new and relevant perspective to this growing discourse.

## Community Engagement in Higher Education

In higher education, community engagement has become a movement, one of the biggest in the last several decades (Moore, 2014). This movement is easily recognizable in the dramatic growth of organizations where engagement is a core organizing principle. The unifying purpose of these organizations is to recognize and support colleges and universities that have integrated community engagement on their campuses. In just 25 years, these organizations have grown exponentially, indicating the widespread acceptance of engagement as a core function and priority of higher education. For example, organizations such as Campus Compact has grown from a membership of only four colleges in 1985 to more than 1,100 in today (Campus Compact, 2015). Together, member schools represent more than a quarter of all institutions of higher learning in the nation (Reardon, 2006). Similarly, the recently created, highly regarded, Community Engagement Classification (CEC) announced by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) in 2006, saw applications for the classification grow from 14 the first year to 295 in 2015 (NERCHE, 2016; Noel & Earwicker, 2015).

Currently, a total of 361 campuses have been awarded this highly-distinctive classification by the CFAT. There are roughly 28 other national organizations like these each reporting similar increases in participation and membership. The widespread growth of these organizations, and others like them, heralds an emerging community engagement movement within the academy (Gupton, Sullivan, & Johnston-Goodstar, 2014).

But, why has community engagement become a movement in higher education? The literature cites a number of factors behind this institutional shift toward engagement (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; Moore, 2014). In some cases, urban crime and public safety issues in and around university campuses have spurred engagement efforts (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2008).

For example, at the University of Pennsylvania community, development initiatives were triggered by the murder of a graduate student just outside the Penn campus. Other, broader factors include a growing intellectual movement among educators that recognizes "engaged scholarship" as essential to the institutions core educational and research missions (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010, p. 2). Coupled with this growing intellectual movement and institutional concerns about crime and public safety is the implied social responsibility that institutions bear in helping students develop as active citizens, community leaders, and mature, self-aware human beings (Hollander & Saltmarsh, 2000). In addition to these factors, another more tangible factor cited in the literature is a collective understanding among practitioners and scholars that vibrant host communities are essential in attracting and retaining students, faculty, and staff. This understanding has encouraged community development partnerships and initiatives as more and more college communities have been forced to do more with less, due in part to

23

declining community development revenue bases at the state and local levels (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; Moore, 2014). In these environments, engagement is often seen as essential because the success of one, is inescapably tied to the success of the other.

Other research has highlighted the acceleration of interest of engagement to growing calls for higher education to return to its "public mission." This disconnection between institutions and the "public good" have called into question institutional commitments to the original civic purpose of higher education and have led many institutions to reevaluate their contribution to democratic society (Brukardt, Holland, Percy, & Zimpher, 2004). And finally, other studies have argued that the growth of engagement is directly tied to university advancement in the form of increased alumni contributions and state appropriations (Weerts & Ronca, 2006). Simply put, institutional community engagement offers a means through which institutions can reconnect with their historical civic missions, increase learning and research relevancy, in ways that cultivate diverse revenue streams from private and public sources interested in "…opportunities that will make an impact on society" (Blanton, 2007; Weerts & Hudson, 2009, p. 66).

Regardless of the reason or motivating factor, it is clear that higher education has prioritized community engagement. But what exactly is "community engagement" and how did the community engagement movement take shape within the academy? The following sections will present the definition of engagement used by this research and provide some historical context for the evolution of the community engagement movement in higher education. The purpose of this review is to provide a summary of how community engagement has become a significant part of higher education.

**Establishing a Definition**

Before discussing the evolution of community engagement in higher education, it is necessary to establish a definition. However, establishing a definition is difficult because community engagement scholars and practitioners think, deliver, and communicate community engagement in a myriad of different ways (Moore, 2014). Institutional researcher Barbara Jacoby (2009) summarizes this confusion in her book *Civic Engagement in Higher Education* "There are probably as many definitions of civic engagement as there are scholars and practitioners who are concerned with it" (p. 5).

A review of the community engagement literature reveals that, generally speaking, community engagement is the mobilization of fiscal, human, and knowledge resources of the institution to address social issues (Bok, 1982; Boyer, 1996; Cantor, 2009). However, this general definitional construct has been recrafted many times, especially over the last several decades (Jacoby, 2009). Older definitions focused on one-way university-community relationships in which the institution was the purveyor of knowledge and expertise and the "community" was simply the recipient of this information or something to be acted upon (Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016). More recent understandings have redefined engagement as a two-way relationship that prioritizes the contributions of both the institutions and the communities with whom they are engaged. This two-way understanding of engagement has been articulated in newer definitional constructs through terms like mutuality and reciprocity (Moore, 2014).

Building on this evolving understanding of engagement, this research defines community engagement as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and

reciprocity" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 39). This definition, developed and advanced by the

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2005, has become the widely-

recognized national standard among scholars and practitioners alike (Driscoll, 2008). The

rationale for its selection in this research was based on the frequency of its use within the

literature and the universal recognition of the Foundation as a respected authority in

higher education.

**Engagement Past and Present**

Community engagement, as a discernible movement in higher education, can be

traced back to the late 1800s (see Figure 1). During this time, the role of higher education

in addressing societal needs was articulated in three acts of congress: the Morrill Act of

1862, the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. The Morrill Act was

grounded in the notion that an educated public was essential for sustaining a viable

democracy (Bonnen, 1998). The Act challenged higher education to address the growing

agricultural and manufacturing needs of an expanding nation (Bruns, Sonka, Furco,

Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016). The Hatch Act expanded the role of institutions in society

by emphasizing the importance of research in meeting the needs of a growing population.

Building on this expanding public role of higher education, the Smith-Lever Act

prioritized the sharing knowledge-sharing between universities and the public. Together

these acts established a clear connection between universities and citizens designed to

"build a stronger democratic society" (Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald,

2016, p. 225).

By the 1950s, higher education was in the middle of a significant growth period.

Much of this growth was directly connected to the large numbers of returning war

veterans who were leveraging the GI Bill to pay for college (Fisher, Fabricant, &

Simmons, 2004). However, in spite of growing enrollments, higher education slowly

drifted from the public mission established by the Morrill, Hatch, and Smith-Lever Acts

(Harkavy, 1998). This era, commonly referred to as the "Ivory Tower Period," saw

institutions become more inwardly focused, viewing their larger communities as more of

an obligation and not as key partners in social betterment (Bruns, Sonka, Furco,

Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016). The character of most university-community interactions

was not mutually beneficial, rather they were client focused built around fulfilling

contractual responsibilities connected to federal educational dollars (Bruning, Mcgrew, &

Cooper, 2006). Even in the years following World War II, many colleges and universities

viewed the "larger community" as an obligation and not as key partners in social

betterment (Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016).
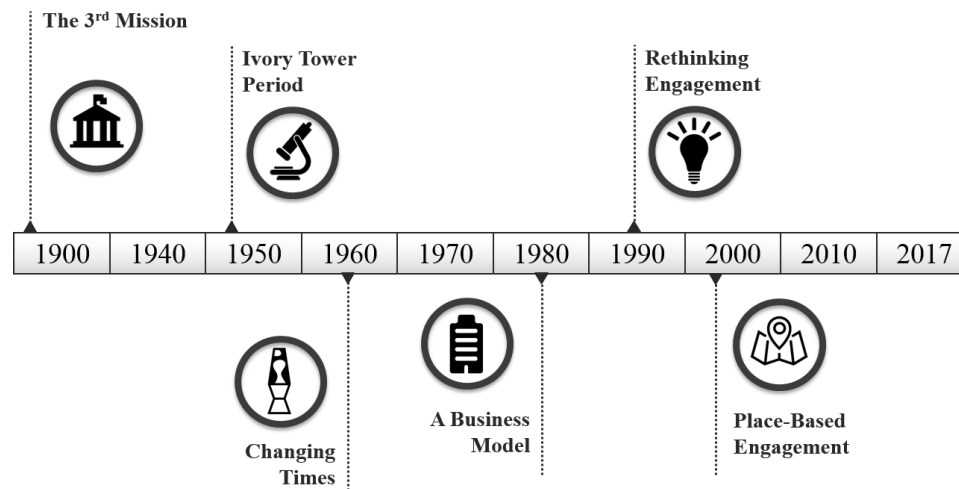


*Figure 1.* The community engagement movement in higher education. (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007; Bonnen, 1998; Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008)

Another important development during the ivory tower period included the

emergence of university-military partnerships. These partnerships were products of Cold

War, launch of the Sputnik, and other developments related to aftereffects of the atomic

27

bombs of World War II (Roper & Hirth, 2005). Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald (2016) describe these connections between universities and the postwar military-industrial complex by stating "Following World War II, the relationship among universities, their science faculties, and the federal government changed, partly in response to the establishment of the National Science Foundation, the expansion of the National Institutes of Health, and the need for new technologies to support an emergent world power" (p. 226).

By the 1960s, higher education began to reconsider engagement. Some of this renewed movement was due to growing sense within the academy that it had drifted too far from its public mission. In response, some activist academics began to insert community work into university curriculums (Boyer, 1996). These early curriculum-based forays into community affairs were precursors to modern day service-learning (Deeley, 2010). The term service-learning, coined in 1967, was first used to describe the work of university faculty and students on a Tennessee Valley Authority project in East Tennessee (Checkoway, 1997). Since then, service-learning has steadily grown as an institutional community engagement method (Deeley, 2010).

Institutional community engagement also developed federal support during this time period. In 1969, President Richard Nixon established the National Student Volunteer Program (Boyer, 1996). Through this program, federal funds helped fuel community engagement work in service-learning type projects. Building on this momentum, service learning gained increasing favor among academics and community leaders. Later, in 1979, President Nixon established the National Center for Service-Learning to coordinate and support engagement efforts. As enthusiasm for activism decreased in the 1980s, the

lack of public program dollars led to federal disinvestment in service-learning initiatives

(Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). However, after this setback, service-learning rebounded as

advocates shifted the focus to academic benefits for college students and not activism.

This shift in focus led to a renewed support for service-learning in the form of federal

funding authorized by presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton (Hollander & Saltmarsh,

2000).

By the 1980s, amid growing calls for colleges and universities to do more,

community engagement again became a priority inside and outside the academy. Leading

the charge were scholars such as Derik Bok (1982), Ernest Boyer (1996), Nancy Cantor

(2009), Ernest Lynton and Sandra Elman (1988), and John Gardner (1998) who argued

that not only should institutions "be developing civic-minded students, but institutional

leaders should also more intentionally serve the common good by mobilizing the fiscal,

human, and knowledge resources of the institution to address social issues" (Moore,

2014, p. 3). Their work moved away from traditional definitions of engagement by

highlighting the importance of reciprocity, mutual benefit, and community well-being

within the of community engagement (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007).

Along with this departure from traditional understandings of engagement was the

introduction of complex university-private sector partnerships designed to help address

declining economic conditions across the U.S. (Slaughter & Leslie, 1999). The passage of

the Dayh-Dole Act in 1980 enabled colleges and universities to develop research and

development partnerships with private-sector businesses to bring new products to market

(Roper & Hirth, 2005). This emerging economic development role or "business model"

for higher education was a notable milestone within the movement that improved the

fiscal health of many institutions through these university-business arrangements (Roper & Hirth, 2005).

During the next decade, the 1990s, higher education continued its rethinking of community engagement. This "rethinking" was animated by a national wave of urban crime and deterioration. In response, a growing number of universities were forced to take on community engagement or risk driving away students, faculty, and staff. In these areas, college and universities began to apply resources in the community through creative partnerships to address public safety issues and general neighborhood deterioration (Gruenewald, 2003). "In the aftermath of the cold war, accelerating external and internal pressures forced research universities to recognize (very reluctantly) that they must, and could, function as moral/intellectual institutions simultaneously engaged in advancing universal knowledge, learning and improving the well-being of their local geographic communities (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007, p. 79)." This collective rethinking of engagement was a signature component of this decade and those that followed (see Figure 1).

University-community partnerships received another considerable boost from the federal government. In 1994, the Office of University Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was established to spur and enable university engagement initiatives (O'Connor, 2006). Learn and Serve America program was also established funneling over 10 million dollars a year into service learning programs across the nation (Driscoll, 2008). Additionally, the Department of Commerce implemented a University Center program that helped fund university-community initiatives.  Meanwhile, other private organizations began to support institutions and

communities that were actively engaged. Among these the most widely recognized are the Campus Compact and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Campus Compact, 2012). The 1995 annual conference of the American Association of Higher Education was dedicated to the idea of the "engaged campus" signaling a comprehensive shift out of the ivory tower (Holland, 1997).

The high-profile successes of community engagement strategies in urban areas saw a dramatic increase in engagement initiatives. By the mid-1990s, "community partnership" centers were being constructed on campuses across the country. These centers, along with their staff, were designed and directed to help coordinate engagement activities and marshal support for vast amounts of resources and programs being directed at the community (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). Later, contemporary concern turned to civic engagement and higher education's role in creating "good citizens." This concern has been fueled by books like the publication of Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) and scores of related journal articles.

By the 2000s, this new kind of community engagement was beginning to take root in the academy. This thinking was centered around a renewed emphasis on the quality of the student experience, more robust understandings of experiential teaching and learning, and university-community partnerships based on reciprocity and mutual benefit (Romaley, 2000). This new model required institutions to "rethink their structure, epistemology, and pedagogy; integration of teaching, research, and service missions; and reward systems (Bruns, Sonka, Furco, Swanson, & Fitzgerald, 2016). This thinking was catalyzed in a series of reports issued by the Kellogg Commission (2000; 2001) that called on institutions to focus on the construction of collaborative, two-way partnerships

instead of one-way, top-down models that positioned those within the academy as all-knowing experts.

The institutionalization of this new kind of engagement introduced yet another important idea, place, into the community engagement movement. In 2002, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) published a seminal report titled *Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place*. This report presented the challenges and importance of "public engagement," and outlined a set of recommendations for public policy makers and institutional leaders designed to redefine the role of colleges and universities in their larger communities (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002). However, the most remarkable aspect of the report was the introduction of a new role for engaged institutions. This new role repositioned institutions of higher learning as having a responsibility for quality, viability, and sustainability of the places in which they are located (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002). The authors frame this place-based orientation in this way: "Local higher education institutions have a unique role to play as catalyst, convenor, and provider of information and expertise. Institutions that assume some 'responsibility for place' will fulfill these roles" (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002, p. 20). Since the publication of the 2002 report, the place-based discussion has continued to evolve among community engagement scholars and practitioners ushering in a new way of thinking about engagement that revolved around place and the institution's role within it.

### An Emerging Place-Based Discussion

Within the community engagement movement, there is an emerging discussion regarding place and the university's role within these places. As defined earlier, community engagement is representative of a broad range of partnerships and

collaborative interactions between institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources. In this way, university-community engagement is inherently a kind of place-building practice in that they happen in a particular locale and are representative of the institution's place-based values and beliefs (Moore, 2014; Kimball & Thomas, 2012).

However, what is unique to place-based engagement is that these activities and partnerships are not easily "transferable." They are, instead, grounded to a particular place and its people. This place-based distinction is explained by Simmers, Harrison, Clayton, and Stanley (2015) in this way "foundational to this orientation is understanding place as partner – with a particular local voice, history, culture, politics, and ecology that, in an asset-based way, co-creates the sense of possible alternative futures toward which this work aims" (p. 101). For example, picking up trash on Main Street could be considered engagement but it is not necessarily connected to "the complexities, identities, and values of local lived experiences" (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015, p. 101). Conversely, engagement activities such as the oral history project undertaken by Syracuse University during which residents of Syracuse's Near West Side "orally and visually narrated their lives and communities to faculty, students, and staff" which, in turn, generated mutual feelings of trust, empathy, and common cause between and among the university population and Near West Side residents (Cantor, 2011; Dostilio, 2017, p. 30).

As the place-based discussion has gained momentum, more and more institutions have begun to recognize that existing engagement frameworks have become "remarkably 'a-place' or 'place-neutral' — uninformed by the particulars of the place and people, the

land and history" (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015, p. 101). This growing recognition is actively redefining how some institutions are approaching their community engagement activities and partnerships. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of some of the key aspects of the emerging place-based discussion with the aim of creating a "jumping off point" for this place-based investigation of institutional engagement.

**What is a Place?**

In order to discuss place-based community engagement, it is necessary to start by defining place. Place has a variety of definitions and meanings that can shift substantially depending on the context in which it is used. In this way, attempting to define place is somewhat of a slippery slope to descend, however it is important based on the place-based orientation of this research. Given the difficulty in establishing a definition for this concept, the review presented here will seek to move beyond our commonsense notion of place to consider the concept in a more holistic fashion.

The study of space and place are germane to geography as are the stars to astronomy. However, many of the early discussions of place were, according to some geographers, philosophically shallow and incomplete (Buttimer, 1976; Relph, 1976, 1981, 1993; Sack, 1988; Tuan, 1974; Zelinsky, 1973). The fundamental frustrations of these geographers revolved around, what they perceived as, a collective oversight of the dynamic, temporal connections between place and human experience. This frustration was argued by Edward Relph (1976) in his influential publication *Place and Placelessness.* In the book, Relph (1976) focused on the human identity of and with place and defined place as having three components: 1) a physical setting; 2) activities, situations, and events; and 3) individual and group meanings "created through people's

experiences and intentions in regard to that place" (Hubbard, Kitchin, & Valentine, 2008,

p. 46). Another geographer, Wilbur Zelinsky (1973), from the field of human geography,

supported this threefold definition of place. In his book, *The Cultural Geography of the*

*United States*, Zelinsky presented a systematic approach for categorizing the components

of human culture that consisted of 1) artifacts, or man-made objects, 2) sociofacts-

interpersonal relationships, and 3) mentifacts-psychological and attitudinal notions.

While there is limited direct discussion of place within the text, these familiar distinctions

were analogous to the components identified by Relph (1976). Later, in 1988, geographer

Robert Sack built on the work of Zelinsky (1973), Relph (1976) and others by advancing

a three part theoretical model for how places are forged by society. The model identified

three "realms" of place that included 1) the realm of nature-elemental forces, 2) the realm

of social relations-ethnicity, kinship, etc., and 3) the realm of meaning, or the mind and

how reality is conceived. This parallel, three-part analysis of place provided, according to

Sack (1988), "a picture of how an important modern experience of place is constructed"

(p. 644).

This three-part understanding of place was supported and expanded by sociologist

and respected place scholar Thomas Gieryn (2000) in his article, *A Space for Place in*

*Sociology*. In the article, Gieryn (2000) argues that there are three "necessary and

sufficient features" of place: 1) geographic location, 2) material form, and 3) investment

with meaning and value (p. 464). The geographic notion of place is its "unique spot in the

universe" (p. 464). Places, in other words, have a particular geography which allows

people to discriminate between "here and there" or "appreciate near and far" (Gieryn,

2000, p. 464). This geographic quality is representative of the most understandings of

place, as mirrored in the Google® definitional construct presented in the previous paragraph. Thought of this way, a place could be one's living room, neighborhood, or even a forest glade or mountain top. These analytical boundaries are both fixed but elastic based on the perceptions of those describing particular places. The challenge, according to Gieryn (2000), is to examine "what these places of varying scale have in common and how they differ" (Gieryn, 2000, p. 464). Second, places consist of tangible things. In other words, "whether built or just come upon, artificial or natural, streets and doors, or rocks and trees, place is stuff" (Gieryn, 2000, p. 465). Combining the first and second features of place, Gieryn (2000) suggests that place is a "compilation of things or objects at some particular spot in the universe" (p. 465). This recognition of material form as an important constituent of place also lends some understanding to how these forms take the shape of social processes (power, inequality, collective action) that influence its construction (Gieryn, 2000; Habraken, 1998; Rodman, 1992). Finally, a place is only a place when it has been imbued with meaning. Gieryn (2000) argues the importance of assigned meaning by stating, "A spot in the universe, with a gathering of physical stuff there, becomes a place only when it ensconces history or utopia, danger or security, identify or memory" (p. 465).

Another way of considering place was neatly outlined by educator and place-based researcher David Gruenewald (2003). Gruenewald (2003), in advancing "a theoretical rationale for place-conscious education," presented an analysis of place within five dimensions (p. 619). These five "pedagogical" dimensions of place include: 1) the perceptual, 2) the sociological, 3) the ideological, 4) the political, and 5) the ecological. The *perceptual* dimension of place is based on the work Abram (1996) Merleau-Ponty

(1962) and Bowers (1993) who argued that places are not inert, mechanical, and pre-determined, rather they are complex living ecosystems that can be learned about through experience. Using the work of these researchers as a foundation, Gruenewald (2003) posits that institutions can stunt the awareness, connection, and appreciation of places by divorcing the work of the institution from the "lived experience" of place. In framing this dimension, Grunewald recognizes both the social nature of place and the connection between place and organizations. Next, Gruenewald presents the *sociological* dimension of place. Within this dimension he cites the work of Casey (1996), Basso (1996), and others who argue that places are not "precultural or presocial" constructions but are rather the products of human choices and decisions (p. 626). In this way, these authors position people as place makers, and places as the "primary artifact of human culture" (p. 627). This unique assignment of human agency in the creation of places is fundamental to the idea of place as a social construct.

This assertion is supported by geographers Entrikin (1991) and Sack (1988) who, as cited by Thomas & Cross (2007) "sees our ability to "socially construct" places as the result of our freedom to create meaning (Entrikin, p. 6) (p. 37). Thomas & Cross (2007) tie this conclusion to those of Sack (1988) by stating "Finding meaning in space is both an individual and group process where humans act towards a place based on the meanings they have associated with that place; place requires human agency (p.37). The *ideological* dimension presents a detailed argument around how places often are expressive of ideologies and power relationships (Gruenewald, 2003). Building from the work of a number of critical geographers, including Keith & Pile (1993); Massey (1994); Soja (1989, 1996); Foucault (1977) and Lefebvre (1974), he highlights place and space as

reflections, and reproductions, of social relationships of power and domination. Following the presentation of ideological dimensions of place, Gruenewald (2003) goes on to argue the related *political* dimension of place.

In presenting this argument he cites the work of some of the same critical geographers to highlight the often unnoticed and unchallenged role of political influence in the construction of places. Finally, Gruenewald (2003) presents the *ecological* dimension of place. Here he argues that place is local, and not global (Berg, 1978; Berry, 1987, 1992), and understanding place means being aware of "where things come from, how they are made, where they end up," and the impact of production, consumption, and waste on local human and natural systems (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 364).

Given these descriptions of place, it is reasonable to determine what place is not. First, "place is not space," it is, on the other hand, the fusion of people, practices, objects, and representation (Gieryn, 2000, p. 465). Space, according to well-known geographer and author Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), is abstract and thought of as open, undifferentiated, and unbounded. "Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other" explains Tuan (1977, p. 3). Tuan (1977) elaborates on the difference between space and place by stating "space becomes place when it is endowed with meaning. And in so doing, a commitment to that place is made on both an emotional and physical level" (p. 6). This unique delineation of space and place is what shifts thinking away from commonly held views of place bound up in purely geographic and geometric descriptions such as boundaries, territories, distance, direction, size, shape, and volume (Hillier & Hanson, 1984; Gieryn, 2000). Second, "place is not a setting, backdrop, stage, or context for something else." This intentional separation of place as a setting, and place as an

agent, is often unobserved across the social science literature. These studies often abstract socio-demographic, municipal, and behavioral data in ways that create artificial and/or contrived definitions of place. Gieryn (2000) supports this assertion by citing a strong form of his argument by summarizing the work of geographers Benno Werlen (1993). "Place is not merely a setting or backdrop, but an *agentic* player in the game—a force with detectable and independent effects on social life" (as cited by Gieryn, 2000, p. 466).

### The Construction of Place

Working within the view of place as a social construct through which particular locations are given meaning, it follows that place can be nurtured, shaped, and reshaped through individual or collective effort (MacLellan, 2006). Nilsen (2005), citing the work of Massey (1994), Hillier (2001), and Healey (1999), supports the notion that can be shaped or built to create a focus for social betterment by stating:

> Viewed as process, place is something that can be nurtured and reshaped through individual or collective effort. This implies that place is not finite, nor is it necessarily structured. Place, at root, is an interpretation. It is this essential characteristic of place that strategic placemaking seeks to exploit. The practice aims to create shared meanings on place qualities - meanings that can be used to help focus and coordinate the activities of different stakeholders on initiatives of social betterment (p. 27).

The degree to which individuals or organizations build place or, to say this a different way, how individuals or groups of individuals create place from space (Tuan, 1971), has been the focus of a growing body of literature. This literature comes from a mix of disciplines including sociology, geography, urban design and planning, and variety of other fields of social science. Common terminology referencing the active

39

creation of place include "place shaping," "place making," "place management," and "place-building." Regardless of the terminology used to describe it, the construction of place, according to landscape architect Lynda Schneekloth and architect and planner Robert Shibley (1995) is "the process by which all human beings transform the places in which we find ourselves into the places in which we live" (p. 1). Another relevant definition has been presented by sociologist and author Wanda Rushing (2009) who defines place-building as the promotion or bolstering of specific features of place, "while diminishing or extinguishing other features, to promote development and the production of a locality" (p. 65). At the core of these, and other definitions, is the notion that the art and practice of place-building is not solely about "strengthening relationships of people *to* their places," it is also about "fostering relationships *among* the people in places" (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, p. 1).

In this way, place-building is essentially a social endeavor, built around the mobilization of people, organizations, and institutions to address issues of community well-being. These definitional constructs are examples of an array that can be found in the place-building literature. Some of these existing constructs were identified by place-building researchers Thomas & Kimball (2012) who cite the work of Schnider, Brief, & Guzzo (1996), Hudson (2001), Jacobs (1984), Sagoff (1986), Schoenburger (1997), Wright (1994), Delheim (1986), and Hatch (1993). Other constructs were more recently introduced in the environmental sustainability literature including those advanced by Kennelly & Shaivastava (2013) and Guthey, Whiteman & Elmes (2014).

However, based on the purposes of this research, much of the most relevant place-building literature can be found in the planning and urban design literature. The

concentration of place-building and placemaking literature within these disciplines is based on the physical focus of these professions (i.e. architecture, urban designer). These professions, regardless of the geographic orientation, are frequently tasked with working with large, diverse groups of stakeholders to make decisions about how built environments are organized, shaped, and/or transformed, based on the interests of the people involved (Hoch, 1994). The evolution of place-based thinking, as reflected in this literature, demonstrates an increasing recognition of place-building as an "organizing concept" within the practice (Roberts, 2009, p. 441).

The beginnings of place-based movements in planning began to take a recognizable form in the 1960s. Reacting to this series of programs and policies that leveled much of the core of American cities, urban thinkers like Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, and William Whyte began to question how place was being balanced against a seemingly new efficient, sterile ideal of the modern American city (Silberberg, Lorah, Disbrow, & Muessig, 2013). In 1960, Kevin Lynch published *The Image of the City* in which he argued the value of human-centered design by presenting empirical research on how cities were perceived by people. His connection between places and their meanings to the people that inhabit them is captured in the following language:

> …we need an environment which is not simply well organized, but poetic and symbolic as well. It should speak of the individuals and their complex society, of their aspirations and their historical tradition, of the natural setting, and of the complicated functions and movements of the city world. But clarity of structure and vividness of identity are first steps to the development of strong symbols. By appearing as a remarkable and well-knit place, the city could provide a ground for

the clustering and organization of these meanings and associations. Such a sense

of place in itself enhances every human activity that occurs there, and encourages

the deposit of a memory trace (p. 119).

Later, journalist and author Jane Jacobs (1961) in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* delivered a scathing critique of what she perceived as the "ravaging simplifications of urban renewal" and a brilliant account of the "intricate ecology of good neighborhoods" (Sorkin, 2006, p. 71). Later, urbanist and organizational analyst William Whyte (1980), in his book and companion film titled *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, took a more analytical approach using time-lapse photography to evidence human connections or lack of connection to the built environment. His contribution to the notion and value of place-building was bound up in his cataloging of elements and factors separating good spaces from poor or ineffective spaces (Silberberg, Lorah, Disbrow, & Muessig, 2013). Like Lynch and Jacobs, fundamental to his argument was the connection between good design and the needs and desires of people, reinforcing the notion of place as a social construct.

## A Working Definition

Leaning on the literature presented in the previous paragraphs, this research defines place as being "both geographic and social, and is organized around the meanings individuals and groups give to a place in its setting" (p. 37). In other words, places gather meaning through the events that occur within that construct and this meaning is fused with human goals, values, and intentions (Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 20). This definitional construct was developed by researchers David Thomas and Jenifer Cross (2007), authors of Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT), the theoretical framework used in this research.

Thomas and Cross's (2007) assertion that place is a "social construction" is based on two key underlying premises. The first premise is that individuals are free to make meaning of their environments in ways that will contribute to the construction of place. This premise is supporting by the work of geographer Robert Sack (1988) who argues the importance of human agency in stating that each of us "have an acute freedom and an acute burden to create meaning" and that finding meaning in place can be an individual and/or group process (p. 651). The second premise is that the meanings assigned to place are products of bundles of interactions among and between individuals and groups, in that place (Thomas & Cross, 2007; Tuan, 1977). This connection between place and social interaction suggests, according to Thomas and Cross (2007), that there "is more to consider when identifying how place creates meaning" among and between the individuals and groups interacting with each other in relation to that place (p. 37; Blumer, 1969). At the core of this premise is a point well summarized in the following example:

> Place could be defined as a tourist attraction, a sacred religious site, a natural wonder, or a wilderness site and each of these definitions of place suggest different interactions between people and the place as well as between individuals and groups within that place. The actions of individuals in a place simultaneously shape place and are guided by the meanings they form through interaction with individuals, groups, and organizations in that place (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 37).

## Place-Based Community Engagement

Generally speaking, place-based engagement revolves around 1) changing a physical place, 2) strengthening the relationship people have with place, and 3) enhancing

interpersonal relationships around, and within, a place (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995).

This model, according to public policy researcher Neil Bradford (2005), involves: a) the

tapping of local knowledge, b) mobilizing community organizations, c) engaging local

government, and d) forging "multilevel" collaborations. While this definition and model

are one of many across the literature, they have come to represent what many scholars

and practitioners regard as fundamental aspects of place-based approaches to community

engagement.

However, for institutions of higher learning, the notion of place-based

engagement is *not* bound up in a particular definition or form of activity. Rather, as

argued by Dostilio (2017), place-based approaches to community engagement "inform an

institutional paradigm or orientation in which community engagement efforts are

informed by a sense of place; they honor that engagements are *emplaced* and as a result

reflect the context, setting, meaning made of that setting by those who live, work, and

seek to influence that location" (p. 3). This "holistic" approach involves, according to

Hertz (2013), the integration of "natural, built, and sociocultural environments through

interorganizational collaboration and citizen participation" (p. 99). Central to these

definitions is the development of social capacity. While there is some ongoing debates

about what social capital is and is not, the argument has established that social capital can

be found "in the trust and networks that exist in communities" (Houghton, Foth, &

Miller, 2015, p. 5). According to Saguaro (2010), social networks are, who people know

each other and do things to support each other. Thought of together, social capital is the

process of the community's "coming together" for shared benefits (Farr, 2004).

Unlike other resources that are temporal, social capital is anchored in specific places and difficult to duplicate and can be harnessed to improve quality of life (Guthey, Whiteman, & Elmes, 2014). Building on place-based nature of social capital, researchers agree that social capital can be developed, cultivated, and grown by individuals, groups, and organizations through community engagement (Putnam, 2000). The goal of this work is the development of shared understanding and trust that allows communities to create integrated solutions to social problems (Putnam, 2000).

Evidence of the development of social capital within place-based approaches to engagement can be found in projects like the Crossroads Charlotte initiative in Charlotte, North Carolina, where community organizers and leaders organized activities focused on building social capital to animate community development initiatives (Foreman, 2010). The connection between social capital and place-building, placemaking, and place shaping is made clear by Houghton, Foth, and Miller (2015) who cite the work of Middleton, Murie, and Groves (2005) and Jacobs (1961) in stating "Social capital is essential for the effective functioning and development of meaningful places."

**Characteristics and Form**

Given the relative immaturity of place-based community engagement in higher education, it is understandable that the exact definitional construct has yet to be articulated in the literature. However, a review of existing scholarly work brings to light nine key organizing concepts around which a conceptual understanding of place-based community engagement can be built. With this in mind, what follows is an inventory of these concepts. The inventory was developed through a careful review of place-based literature and related place-based initiatives in higher education. However, the inventory is not exhaustive of the many features unique to, but common among, place-based

45

approaches. Further, what has been included in this inventory should not be thought of as a rigid set of requirements or criteria necessary to any place-based collaboration. Instead, what is offered is simply an analytical, organizing framework that can be used to help conceptualize the intellectually fuzzy notion of place-based engagement and help distinguish place-based approaches from "a-place" or "place-neutral" approaches.

**1) The notion of place.** As outlined in previous sections, place-based community engagement recognizes "place" as a social construct. This statement means that place, by itself, has no singular, inherent meaning or value other than representing a specific geographic location (Moore, 2014). However, place as a social construct suggests that the meaning or value assigned to a place has been "negotiated" through the interaction of people in that setting. The recognition of place as a social construct reframes place as "agentic." An agentic view of place, according to Gieryn (2000), is the notion that place is not simply a setting or backdrop, rather place has agency and is therefore an "player in the game" or as Gieryn states citing Warlen (1993): "a force with detectible and independent effects on social life" (p. 466). Operating within this frame, place-based approaches recognize that the institution is affected and influenced by place and reflects its histories and realities (Dostilio, 2017). Place, as an agentic player, is ever-changing and therefore place-based strategies must be dynamic, flexible, and continually re-contextualized (Dostilio, 2017; Hynie, et al., 2016).

**2) The notion of geography.** Place-based engagement is geographically focused. For example, an institution may identify a town, city, or neighborhood in which to focus its community engagement efforts. Once identified, community engagement activities are organized by the particulars of that specific place, its people, land, and history (Siemers,

Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015, p. 101). "Communities are not homogeneous entities; they are made up of diverse groups with different histories, social structures, value systems, and cultural understandings of the world" (ATSDR, 2013, p. 10). Unlike "a-place" or "place-neutral" approaches, these projects, programs, and partnerships are unique to the lived experience within particular locations and cannot be simply picked up and exported (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015).

     **3) The notion of community**. Place-based approaches acknowledge social interaction as the most pervasive, and persistent feature in defining community. Bridger and Alter (2006), citing the work of Wilkinson (1991), describe community as:

> Social interaction delineates a territory as the community locale; it provides the associations that comprise the local society; it gives structure and direction to processes of collective action; and it is the source of community identity . . . the substance of community is social interaction (p. 167).

     This definition of community is different from conventional definitions that highlight community as being 1) a physical place, 2) a local society, and 3) collective actions (Bridger & Alter, 2006). The shortcoming of these definitions is that community boundaries remain unclear and the "extra-local" forces impacting communities, whatever its boundaries, are complex and confusing. With this in mind, place-based engagement does not define communities in terms of "well-defined networks of systems of social and economic relations" but instead views community, and engagement within these communities, as working "in partnership with local people to facilitate the broad range of community interaction that fosters individual and social well-being" (Bridger & Alter, 2006, p. 170).

**4) The notion of social capital.** As mentioned earlier, place-based engagement is about the development of social capital within, and around, particular places. According to Putnam, (2000) social capital is the "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (p. 19). Unlike other more mobile or temporal resources (i.e. financial capital), social capital is anchored in specific places and can be developed, cultivated, and grown among individuals, groups, and organizations through purposeful community engagement (Guthey, Whiteman, & Elmes, 2014). These capacity building interactions, according to Holland (2001), involve "direct interaction with external constituencies and communities through mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, expertise and information. These interactions enrich and expand the learning and discovery functions of the academic institution while also enhancing community capacity" (p. 10). Positive outcomes connected to the development of social capital have been empirically demonstrated in reduced crime rates (Putnam, 2000), improved health (Wilkinson, 1996), educational achievement (Coleman, 1988), and many other place-based initiatives.

**5) The notion of citizenship.** Place-based approaches revolve around the idea of citizenship. Or, more specifically, the notion of "citizen of place." According to Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, and Stanley (2015), being a citizen of place is about approaching place "as a framework, a site of civic involvement and civic innovation, and a lens through which we, seeing from and through a place, can critically interpret and re-imagine the world" (p. 103). Citizenship, in this context, is not a legal definition but one that is about being attentive to the common good or doing one's part. Operating within this frame, institutions can become valuable co-creators of place by asking deep questions, taking the

long view, and helping others learn and work together to address community-defined issues (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, and Stanley, 2015). Universities have the intellectual resources and capabilities to engage in this work but to do so, the university must "embrace its role as citizen and expert simultaneously" (Bridger & Alter, 2006, p. 172).

**6) The notion of hyperlocal.** Place-based community engagement is "hyperlocal." This term (hyperlocal), has gained significant popularity in media and news literature over the last decade in describing "hyperlocal" news stories and investigations that are intensely focused on the immediate community. However, hyperlocal has recently made its way into the place-based community engagement discussion as an adjective to describe a particular type of locally focused engagement activities and partnerships. Generally defined, hyperlocal is a reference to a narrow geographic area, such as a small town or neighborhood (Thurman, Pascal, & Bradshaw, 2012). Its use within the context of engagement describes the prioritization or focusing of engagement activities in the areas in which the university has a physical presence (Dostilio, 2017). According to Britton and Aires (2014), this type of engagement differs from other regional, national, or global engagement strategies that do not leverage the university's physical location. These more protracted engagement strategies make difficult the establishment of a shared concern for place that are common among individuals, organizations, and institutions that share a particular geography. In other words, for universities the "shared concern about a place is bound up in their physical tie to it, which elongates and grounds their commitments to the place" (Dostilio, 2017, p. 31).

Hyperlocal approaches represent a specific, locally focused strategy through which institutions "reach out to their geographic communities, working with local

neighborhood organizations to find ways to meet local needs" (Barajas & Martin, 2016, p. 49). Place-based approaches prioritize the inclusion of hyperlocal perspectives regarding things like community assets, needs, and capacities. Uncovering this information requires a close familiarity with local circumstances, listening to people, and understanding their interactions with the places they live, work, and play (Bradford, 2005). According to Dostilio (2017), this hyperlocal orientation is "a subtle differentiator" between place-based efforts and place-neutral approaches (p. 32).

**7) The notion of process.** The value of place-based engagement is found in its process, and not in its outcome or product. The rationale for this process driven approach is built around an understanding that place is a social construct and is given meaning through the social interactions among, and between, the people in that setting. As such, place-based approaches prioritize the process of building and maintaining strong relationships with people, organizations, and institutions within particular places (Moore, 2014). This process driven approach to university-community interactions is much different than traditional outcome or product driven engagement which revolves around technocratic, transactional, or linear engagement models through which success is measured by what is produced. Place-based approaches move away from engagement for the sake of being engaged and "adopt engagement as a process for interacting with other members of the community" (Moore, 2014, p. 37).

**8) The notion of activity.** A place-based approach "is an active, willed processes, not a passive one" (Fettes & Judson, 2011, p. 124). Researchers have agreed that that there is a clear relationship between the meaning that places have, and the effort spent intentionally relating to it. In this way, place-based approaches to community

50

engagement are active processes that involve intentional actions that build an understanding of the possibilities of place, its past, and its future. This active gathering of information is different from passive approaches through which information is gathered from others in a second-hand manner through descriptions and explanations of place (Fettes & Judson, 2011). The active nature of place-based engagement is captured by the challenge issued by Rutgers University-Newark chancellor Nancy Cantor (2015) in which she states that colleges and universities must be "citizens of a place, not on the side-lines studying it" (Cantor & Englot, 2015, p. 75).

**9) The notion of being** "**of.**" Place-based approaches recognize the institution as being "of" the community and not merely "in" the community (Bond & Paterson, 2005). While this may seem like a simple, logical assumption from which to initiate engagement, it is a relatively new way of thinking within the academy. Traditional engagement models position the institution as a detached, scholarly entity that is divorced from the civic, social, and political life of its larger community (Chatterton, 2000). This detached view of the university has been somewhat encouraged by global and national research agendas that prioritized work in exotic locations and avoided tackling problems in the collective "backyard" of the academy (Silka, Teisl, & Settele, 2015). Place-based approaches challenge a detached view by acknowledging the "social embeddedness" of institutions in their larger communities (Furco, 2010).

This acknowledgement enables these institutions to become equal and participating members of the community, "working collaboratively to address communal and institutional issues" (Gupton, Sullivan, & Johnston-Goodstar, 2014, p. 186). Nancy Cantor (2013) advances this understanding of institutions as of their respective

communities by stating: "When we work in communities, we must also work with communities, acknowledging that we are indeed part of the community, and that all involved share in the production of problems and in their solutions" (p. 19). Paul Pibbenow (2015), president of Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, builds on Cantor's description of the connection between universities and the places they occupy by stating that colleges and universities are "indigenous communities" that are "native to a particular place" (p. 5).

## Organizational Place-Building Theory

The theoretical framework underpinning this study's investigation of place-building within the context of institutional community engagement activities and partnerships was Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT). OPBT was first developed and published in 2007 by organizational behavior researcher David Thomas at University of Northern Colorado and sociologist Jennifer Cross at Colorado State University while researching the expanding social roles organizations are expected to play throughout the industrialized world (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Much of their work was theoretically based on the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, Thomas and Cross (2007) extended the concepts of CSR through their development of OPBT which is designed to explain the degree to which organizations value and invest in their social and geographic locations (Thomas & Cross, 2007). The relatively recent development of OPBT has provided, for the first time, an objective framework for organizations to reevaluate "the level or extent of its social responsibility, its intentions, and more importantly its contributions" to the places within which they do business (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 35).

The rationale for the use of OPBT in this research was twofold. First, despite its roots in the world of business, OPBT offers an appropriate conceptual framework that can be applied to institutions of higher learning. This point is argued by the theory's authors who, in their future research section, state "participating in place-building research offers the potential for any placekeeper to gain insight into their role in institutional, organizational, and individual place-building, which reflects on the institution's perceived level of community engagement" (Thomas & Kimball, 2012, p. 25).

OPBT is particularly relevant given the increasing number of business models being applied across higher education. Throughout the last decade, the combined challenges of declining funding and rising costs has led many institutions to abandon long-established, traditional management models for ones frequently used in the private-sector (Dew, 2012; Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008; Lapovsky, 2013). These new models emphasize efficiency and the quality of its product, i.e. student learning outcomes (Lapovsky, 2013). OPBT is particularly well suited to explore the place-based relationships between institutions and their communities due to its genesis within the field of business and organizational behavior.

Second, the development of OPBT neatly coincides with emerging "placemaking" trends in fields of both community planning and college and university community engagement (Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002; Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; Saltmarsh et al., 2014; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009; Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015). This research's application of a place-based analysis framework will not only

grow the empirical research base within the field, it will also expand and inform a

growing place-based discussion among scholars and practitioners across the literature.

**Three Key Concepts**

Three key concepts underpin OPBT. These are: 1) the five dimensions of place

and place-building, 2) organizational agent perspectives, and 3) organizational place-

building profiles. The *dimensions* of place and place-building are concerned with how the

organization values and invests in place along five "latent constructs" of place identified

in the theory. *Agent perspective* is about how the organization views place, the meaning

it's given, and how this influences their goals and contributions to place. Finally, *place-

building profiles* are focused on how the defining how the organization conceptualizes

itself as a "social actor" in relation to place using a continuum of organizational place-

building types ranging from exploitive to transformational (Thomas & Kimball, 2012).

Figure 2 presents these concepts and their relationships.

**Agent Perspective**
The broad viewpoint held by the institution that influences how place is conceptualized, the meaning it
is given, and the place based goals and contributions of the institution. *(interdependent, independent)*

| Place Building Dimensions | Place Building Profiles |
|---|---|
| How the institution values and invests in place along five dimensions *(social, economic nature, ethics, and built environment)* | How the institution conceptualizes itself as a social actor in relation to place *(exploitive, contingent, contributive, transformational)* |

*Figure 2.* Three key concepts of OPBT.

To fully operationalize OPBT in this study, it is necessary to build a shared understanding of each of these three concepts that underpin the theory. The following sections detail each if these concepts.

**The Five Dimensions of Place and Place-Building**

OPBT defines place as being both geographic and social, organized around the meanings people, or groups of people, give to a particular spaces (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Thought of this way, place is not one dimensional, discrete, or simple. Rather, it is a "social construct" through which meaning is developed through the interactions of, and between, people. Working within this definitional construct, OPBT posits that organizations, including institutions of higher learning (Thomas & Kimball, 2012), can play significant roles in the co-construction of place. Typically, organizations do this through a wide variety of organizational functions such as philanthropy, tax contributions, community volunteerism, cause-related marketing, and many other activities (Thomas & Cross, 2007).

To explain how organizations contribute to or detract from the social construction of places, OPBT focuses five "realms" of place. Based on a diverse collection of past research, the five realms, dimensions, or latent constructs identified by OPBT include social, economic, nature, ethics, and built environment aspects of place. The social dimension includes the full spectrum of interactions between an organization's population and local constituencies. According to place-building researchers, this construct "is concerned with how certain space is treated in such a way that reflects the culture, strategies, and values of the organization" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21). The economic dimension is focused on the economic relationship between the organization and fiscal well-being of places. The nature dimension, identified in OPBT,

"includes natural as opposed to man-made. Such as the landscape, earth, geography and natural resources" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). The ethics dimension is the relationship between the organization "and its implicit and explicit contract with the community that seeks to establish itself as legitimate" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). Finally, the built environment dimension is concerned with the relationship between organizations and the man-made aspects of place such as architecture, landscaping, and other physical infrastructure (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Figure 3 illustrates the OPBT dimensions and their relationship to a multidimensional understanding of place.
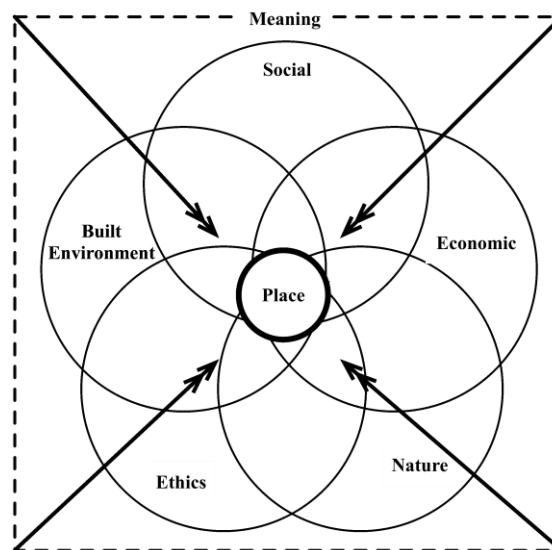


*Figure 3*. OPBT and the five dimensions of place.

**Organizational Agent Perspectives**

In examining the relationships between organizations and place, OPBT has identified two different organizational agent perspectives. These two distinct viewpoints "encompass not only how organizations conceptualize themselves in relationship to place, but also the meaning they give to place, which then influences their goals,

contributions to place and all variety of their behavior" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21). The two agent perspectives identified in OPBT include interdependent and independent. "Organizations with the interdependent perspective view themselves as members of a community and recognize that organizations and places are mutually dependent on each other" (Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 20; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 22). These organizations position themselves as responsible for the well-being of places and view their success as intimately connected to the success, viability, or "greater well-being of places" (Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 20). As a result of this philosophic underpinning, these organizations actively seek opportunities to invest and contribute to the multiple dimensions of place (see Figure 2). On the other hand, organizations that adopt an independent agent perspective view themselves as disconnected, unimportant occupants of place. These organizations focus their activities on "satisfying internal goals" while viewing the dimensions of place as resources to satisfy the needs of the organization (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 22). Thomas, Kimball, and Suhr (2016) describe these organizations as holding their shareholder interests above any responsibility to the places in which they do business and are therefore, uncommitted to place and will only maintain any place-based relationship as long as it benefits them in some way.

**Place-Building Profiles**

OPBT has identified four different types of organizational profiles that are based on how the organization values and invests in place. These place-building profiles have been designed to encapsulate the place-building characteristics and traits characteristic of particular organizations. These profiles make up a continuum on which the organization

can be located based on its place-building values and investments in place. This continuum, with the four benchmarks representing particular types of place builders, has been subjected to both quantitative modeling and continuous empirical testing (Kimball & Thomas, 2012). However, Thomas, Kimball, and Suhr (2016) emphasize that the OPBT profiles are not monotypes or fixed analytical constructs, but rather polythetic sets of organizational characteristics, values, strategies, perspectives, and so on. Seen as "flexible" constructs, the profiles contain a high content of information that is useful for many purposes, both inside and outside of the organization (Needham, 1975). While this flexibility could be framed as a weakness, the authors of OPBT argue that it is, in fact, one of the fundamental strengths of the theory that affirms its "focus on the complex, multidimensional place-building process within organizations (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

The four profiles developed include transformational, contributive, contingent, and exploitive organizations. These profiles differ in terms of how they express their agent perspectives, the value the assigned to the dimensions of place identified in OPBT, their related corporate culture, and the organizational strategies and behaviors directed at place (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). These profiles are summarized by Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr (2016, p. 23) and Thomas & Banning (2014, p. 55).

> Transformational organizations conceptualize or identify themselves as change agents acting to improve the lives of individuals and groups in a place. Contributive organizations conceptualize themselves as investors and contributors to the well-being of places in which they operate. Contingent organizations view themselves simply as participants in places and exploitive organizations view

themselves as independent agents with little to no obligations to the places in which they operate.

Figure 4 illustrates the relationships between place well-being and fiscal success specific to each profile, along with the associated organizational agent perspectives.
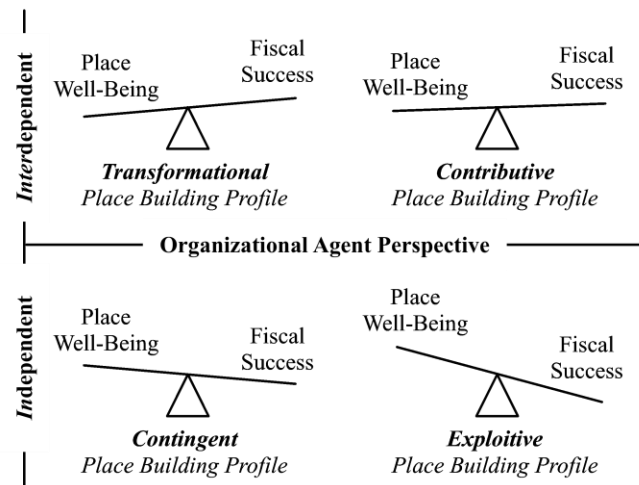


*Figure 4.* Four types of place builders and their organizational agent perspectives. (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 44)

OPBT has recognized that there is a clear connection between agent perspective and certain place-building profiles (Thomas & Cross, 2007). For example, organizations that exhibit an exploitive or contingent profile view themselves as independent of place while organizations that exhibit a contributive or transformational profile view themselves as having an interdependent relationship with place. These linkages between specific agent perspectives and profiles are illustrated in Figure 2. Working within this framework, place-building research has revealed that there are only minor differences between the place-building profiles of organizations that share the same agent perspective, but significant differences between organizations that have differing place-building profiles (Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Cross, 2007). These differences are also well evidenced in Figure 5.

**Interdependent Agent Perspective**

Organization and community are mutually dependent on each other

Organization considers itself responsible for the well-being of the community

Seeks opportunities to invest and contribute

**Transformational**
- Committed to creating opportunities that build community and protect the environment
- Facilitates change that improves community economic and social well-being
- Advocates for all community values, especially its cultural and ethical heritage

**Contributive**
- Contributions are broad based and serve the firm and community
- Supports activities that help them fit into the community
- Values the community on a number of levels but primarily for its social network

**Independent Agent Perspective**

Organization views itself as merely occupants of place

View a community's resources as only a means to satisfy organizational needs

Jobs and tax revenues are the organization's primary place based contribution

**Contingent**
- Contributions are conditional and measured
- Engaged in community activities that create financial gain
- Values the community primarily for its geographic, political and economic assets

**Exploitive**
- Contributions are limited to legal requirements or to protect brand/image
- Removed from the community
- Values the community solely for its favorable economic and political policies toward business

*Figure 5.* Organizational Place-Building agent perspectives and profiles. (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 41)

## Summary

Community engagement in higher education represents a significant movement over the last several decades. As the movement has evolved, so has the definition and language associated with university-community interactions. With the evolution of the definitions of engagement there has also been significant changes in the form, content,

60

focus, and structure of community engagement within the academy. The most current and notable trend within the movement is place-based community engagement. Unlike traditional engagement, place-based approaches are focused on particular locations and the meanings made of those locations by those who live, work, and seek to influence, change, or improve these places. As the interest in this type of engagement has increased, four discernable place-based frameworks have emerged in recent literature. These include stewards of place, anchor institutions, metropolitan universities, and the Carnegie Foundation's community engagement classification. Each of the frameworks, in different ways, include place and place-building to varying degrees within each frame. The growing body of literature around place-based engagement provides numerous examples of place-based engagement and the characteristics common among, but unique to these strategies.

The growing interest in place-based community engagement presents an exciting research opportunity for two main reasons. First, place as a social construct, and potential driver for engagement, has received little attention in the community engagement literature. Second, little is known regarding how colleges and universities conceptualize place or place-building, or how these conceptualizations could be "tangibly" incorporated into its community engagement programing. Given this gap in the research, this study will use the recently developed Organizational Place-Building Theory (Thomas & Cross, 2007) to investigate the place-based orientation of institutions of higher learning. The theory explains "the degree to which an organization values, and invests in its social and geographic location, its local community" (Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 19) and it will be used here as an analysis framework to measure how an institution perceives itself as a

place-builder and how these perceptions of agency (independent or interdependent) influence the place-based orientation of the organization. Findings from this study will provide important empirical data that can be used by community engagement practitioners and scholars to better understand place-based engagement.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research, the questions that will be addressed, and the methodological framework used to find the answers posed by the study. Based on these purposes, the following chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section, Purpose of the Research, will reintroduce the purposes and questions guiding the study with the goal of defining the overall focus, scope, and direction of the project. The second section, Research Design, provides an overview of the unique mixed methods and case study designs used in this research, along with some detail regarding the research site (The College) and the studies participants inside the institution. The third section, Data Collection and Analysis, provides a detailed outline of the specific research methods used in Phase I and Phase II of the research. Finally, the fourth section titled Summary, provides a re-cap of the study's research design methodology presented in the previous sections.

**Purpose of the Research**

Community engagement is a large and growing movement in higher education. Within the movement, there is an increasing interest among scholars and practitioners alike in place-based approaches to engagement. Place-based approaches differ from other engagement strategies by focusing on activities designed to create "shared meanings" for particular place qualities that can be used to "help focus and coordinate the activities of different stakeholders on initiatives of social betterment" (Nilsen, 2005, p. 27). However, as the interest and application of place-based approaches has grown, there is little agreement about what this means or how it should be articulated through institutional community engagement. As a result, place-building through engagement is often poorly

63

understood, fragmented, and compartmentalized in higher education, which is crippling the place-building potential of colleges and universities (Moore, 2014).

The central purpose of this explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study was to describe, and attempt to explain, how place and place-building have been conceptualized and reflected in the community engagement activities and partnerships of a small, private, highly-engaged institution of higher learning located in northwestern Pennsylvania. Data for the study was gathered through an analysis of institutional documents, an Organizational Place-Building Inventory, and focus group interviews with institutional administrators and faculty members. The findings presented will reveal, for the first time, how highly-engaged institutions have conceptualized place and place-building, and how these conceptual underpinnings have been woven into the institutions community engagement activities and partnerships.

This study is a significant departure from past administrative, organizational, and policy-based investigations of engagement. While these studies have made notable contributions to the existing body of knowledge, they have overlooked the important role colleges and universities can play in the co-construction of place (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). This study expands the conversation around what it means to be engaged in, and with, particular places and provides a much-needed place-based point of departure for future research (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015).

The following three research questions were used to guide this investigation:

1. How has the institution conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement?

2. According to Organizational Place-Building Theory, what are the institution's place-building profiles?

3. How, and to what degree, are the institution's place-building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships?

## Research Design

To address these research questions, this dissertation employed a mixed methods descriptive case study research approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). According to Creswell (2014), research approaches are "plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation." (p. 31). Approaches available to researchers are threefold: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Decisions regarding the selection of an approach are informed by three factors: 1) the philosophical assumptions the researcher brings to the project, 2) the procedures or design needed to address the research questions, and 3) the specific methods necessary to collect, analyze, and interpret the data (Creswell, 2014). Together, these make up the framework that guides the project, the research design that maps the investigation, and research methods that shape how the data are gathered and interpreted.

Mixed methods approaches are a unique and growing research framework, frequently employed in educational research to examine new and emerging trends and innovations (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2015). What is unique to mixed methods

approaches is that they employ both quantitative and qualitative methods during the course of a single study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The central rationale for employing mixed methods in this research was that neither of the other two (quantitative and qualitative), by themselves, were sufficient to capture the level of detail necessary to reveal the nature of place-building within any institution of higher learning. Past research confirmed that the complex, interrelated institutional aspects of community engagement in higher education are often beyond the methodological choices provided by a singular quantitative or qualitative approaches (ATSDR, 2013). However, when combined within the frame of a single study, the approaches can complement each other to reveal a more complete picture of the research problem (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The following sections present the rationale underpinning the selection of both the explanatory mixed methods case study design employed in this study.

**Mixed Methods Design**

The selection of a suitable mixed methods design is important in the integration of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of these approaches. There are four mixed methods designs commonly referred to in the literature. These include triangulation, embedded, explanatory, and exploratory designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Each of these designs differ in terms of the sequence data are collected and analyzed (sequential or concurrent), the priority or emphasis given to quantitative and qualitative data (equal or unequal), when and how the data is integrated during the study (separated, transformed, or connected), and natural alignments with particular research paradigms or theoretical perspectives (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). After carefully considering these differences, an

explanatory mixed methods design was selected. However, the design was slightly

modified based on the unique purposes of this investigation.

Most explanatory designs (also known as explanatory sequential designs),

according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), sequentially use qualitative data to

explain, interpret, or "build upon" quantitative data and findings. These designs consist of

two phases (see Figure 6), the initial collection and analysis of quantitative data followed

by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The first, quantitative phase, is

connected to the second in that that the second qualitative data and analysis helps explain

or define the results of the first (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Because the qualitative

phase flows from the initial quantitative phase, priority or emphasis is typically placed

the quantitative aspect of this framework. Priority or primacy is noted in research design

notations by the use of upper and lowercase (Morse, 1991). In the figures used here,

uppercase indicates priority and lowercase indicates less priority.  In the final part of an

explanatory design, results of both phases are brought together or integrated to provide a

rich description of the research problem. This design is the most "straightforward" of the

mixed methods designs, according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), because it is both

intuitive, logical, and separated into clear methodological phases. This

straightforwardness, or clarity, is one of the primary strengths of this design (Tashakkori

& Teddlie, 2003).
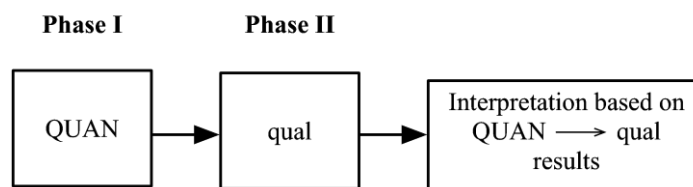


*Figure 6.* A typical explanatory design. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p.73)

However, some research problems do not fit a typical explanatory design. In these cases, mixed methods researchers may adapt or modify the methodological timing, weighting, and timing of traditional designs to better fit specific research aims and questions (Cameron, 2009; Niglas, 2009). Modified or adapted mixed methods research designs are not rare. Researchers frequently modify or adapt mixed methods designs based on the unique purposes of specific investigations, the pragmatic nature of these typologies, and the inherent flexibility of mixed methods designs (Campbell, Patterson, & Bybee, 2011). In fact, research design modifications that complement and confirm each other have been supported, if not encouraged, by Creswell and his colleagues (Cameron, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007; Onwuegbuzie, Slate, Leech, & Collins, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). This support was best articulated by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) who suggest that mixed methods researchers have "…the flexibility to choose and innovate within the types (designs) to fit a particular research situation" (p. 223).

For the purposes of this study, two notable modifications were made to the traditional exploratory design. The first modification involved the addition of a qualitative component in the first phase of the study. The addition of this component was important to the overall design because the separate collection and analysis of qualitative institutional data were necessary to determine how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement. This determination directly addressed research question one, and provided the background necessary to facilitate and inform the qualitative sequence in Phase II of the design. The timing of this additional qualitative phase was designed to be concurrent with the

quantitative component (questionnaire) in Phase I because it was not designed to inform that work.  However, the qualitative data and findings from the initial phase were used to inform the qualitative component (focus groups) in Phase II of the design. This information provided the rich conceptual backdrop necessary to facilitate focus groups discussions organized in that phase.

The second design modification was related to the priority and mix of quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed during of the investigation. Traditionally, in explanatory designs, the quantitative phase is followed by a qualitative phase completing a cycle that feeds the integration of both types of data in the final phase. In this design, primacy is typically given to quantitative data. However, this study will combine and prioritize both types of data throughout the course of the project to enable both quantitative and qualitative methods to "reflexively" complement and confirm each phase of the study (Campbell, Patterson, & Bybee, 2011). Primacy modifications are supported by Creswell and colleagues (2003); note that both methods may be treated as equal components as opposed to prioritizing quantitative methods as in the original design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The rationale for this modification is based on the complexity of this study's holistic investigation of institutional place-building through engagement as measured by themes established within institutional documents, the place-building values of multiple institutional and community stakeholders, and how both were reflected in institutional community engagement activities and partnerships meant that all this information would be best understood by *equally* weighted quantitative and qualitative findings. The modified explanatory mixed methods research approach used in this study is displayed in Figure 7.
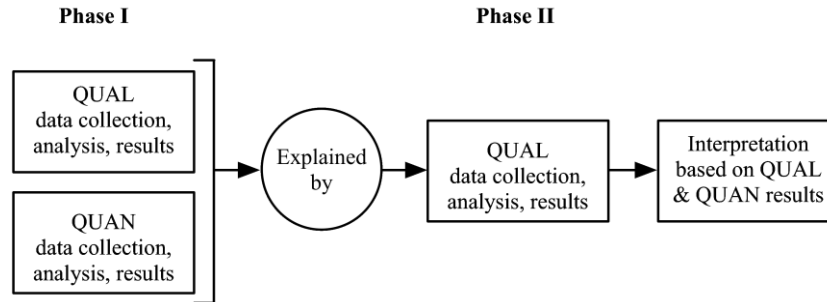
*Figure 7.* The modified explanatory mixed methods design used in this study.

**Case Study Design**

Generally speaking, case studies are in-depth explorations of specific "bounded" systems that employ extensive data collection methods to explain particular programs, events, activities, or processes (Creswell, 2007; 2014). There are many types of case study designs, but according to Yin (2009), case study research can be carried out using one of three case study typologies, depending on its purpose. After carefully considering these designs, a descriptive case study design was selected as most suitable to the purposes of this study.

This decision was based on three primary rationale. First, little is known about how place-building happens within the community engagement function of colleges and universities. According to Yin (2003), descriptive case studies are frequently used when little is known about a particular phenomenon which can be identified, defined, and measured using the data selected for the study. Given the relative absence of place-based discussions within the field of institutional community engagement, there is a need, among scholars and practitioners alike, for insight, discovery, and interpretation around this topic. Descriptive case study designs provide an established, pragmatic framework around which this study can make a meaningful contribution through the development

70

and presentation of a highly detailed description of place-building that is characteristic of these types of studies

Second, descriptive case studies are not constrained by strict methodological constructs that could limit this study's ability to explore the complex nature of institutional place-building and its expression through engagement programing. Descriptive case study research designs, as Yin (2009) points out, frequently employ a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data and methods to address how and why research questions within particular bounded systems. The design of this study included multiple quantitative and qualitative data and methods, from both inside and outside the institution, to develop a comprehensive understanding of place-building through engagement. The methodological flexibility of case study designs not only made this possible, it also strengthened the triangulation aspects of the design or the inclusion of multiple types and sources of data to create what Yin (2009) refers to as a credible understanding of the research problem.

Third, descriptive case studies have been recognized as particularly useful in the study of educational innovations, such as place-building in higher education, and are being frequently employed in studies like the one presented here (Merriam, 1998). In fact, a review of recent community engagement literature reveals that descriptive case study designs are the predominate method used to research the topic of community engagement in higher education. Three recent examples illustrate the prevalence of case study designs within the field: *University-Community Partnerships: Universities in Civic Engagement* (Soska & Johnson Butterfield, 2004), *Making Place Matter: Tools and Insights for Universities Called to Regional Stewardship* (AASCU, 2006), and *Becoming*

*and Engaged Campus: A Practical Guide for Institutionalizing Public Engagement*

(Beere, Votruba, & Wells, 2011). In each of these texts, the authors used case study

designs to present a detailed analysis of community engagement on different campuses

and the complex issues bound up in the nature of these efforts.

Figure 8 illustrates the broad explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study

design used in this research. The design graphic includes all the important components of

the design and the methodological connections between each of the study's two phases

which will be outlined in the following section. Information shown includes the approach

used, data sources, research procedures, products, and the associated research questions.
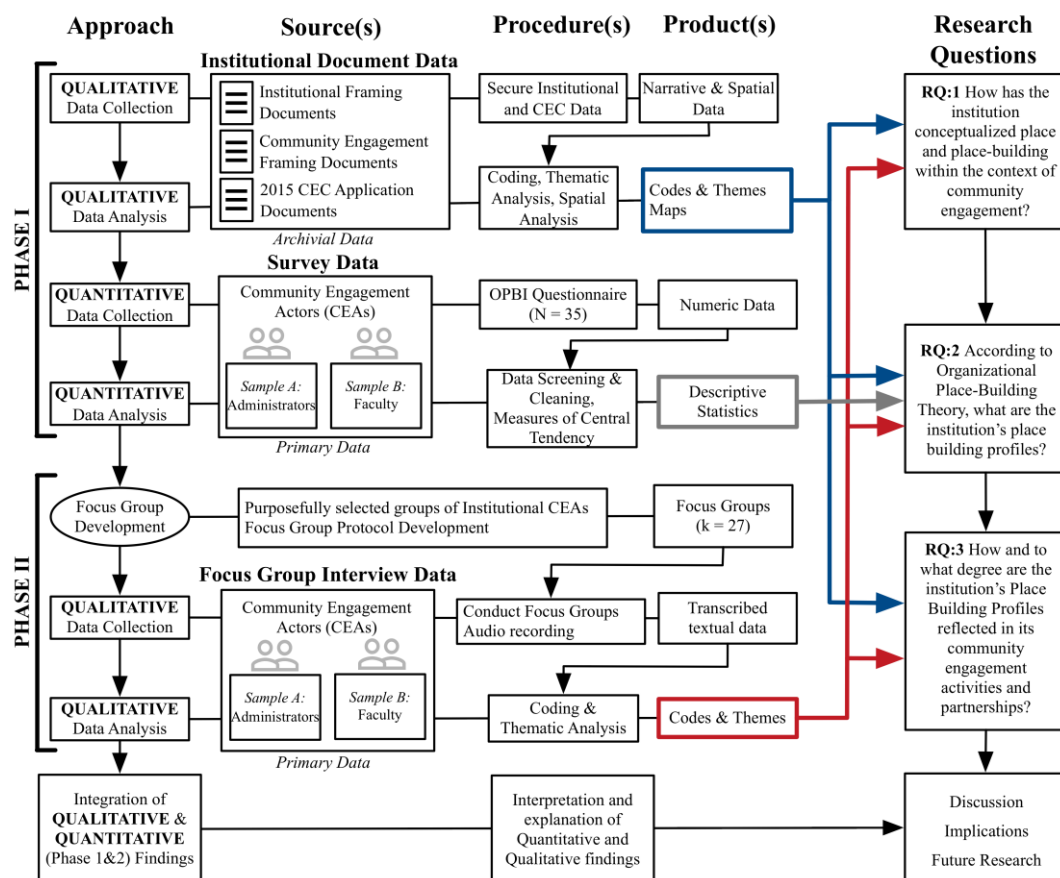


*Figure 8.* The explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study design used for the study.

**Bounding the Case**

The defining aspect of any case study is that they are "bound" in some way (Merriam, 1998). The boundaries established for this study were twofold. First, to fully explore the nature of place-building through community engagement and to establish the rich detail characteristic of case study designs, the study was limited in scope to a single, highly-engaged institution of higher learning located in northwestern Pennsylvania. Second, a time boundary was introduced to narrow the focus of the study to community engagement activities and partnerships, undertaken by the institution, between 2011 and 2017. The rationale for this six year timeframe was based on the dates of the activities and partnerships included in the CEC application along with an attempt to gather current community engagement activities and partnerships. Together, these boundaries defined how this study was "fenced in" to capture a holistic description of the nature of place-building as it is occurring within a particular system (Creswell, 2009).

**Research Site**

The general population for study sites were accredited, four-year public or private colleges or universities. This population was identified using the *Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges* (Oram, 2007). To further refine this group of schools, three case selection criteria were used. First, based on the community engagement focus of both the research purpose and questions, only highly-engaged institutions of higher learning were included. Highly-engaged institutions were defined by this study as those that received the Community Engagement Classification (CEC) from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) in 2015. A list of campuses that had received the 2015 CEC was secured via the New England Resource Center for Higher Education

(NERCHE) website (NERCHE, 2016). NERCHE serves as the Carnegie Foundation's

administrative partner, and is responsible for managing and administering the CEC

process nationwide. Second, based on the researcher's location in southwestern

Pennsylvania, only institutions in the state were included. This information was in the

information secured from the NERCHE website (2016). The purpose of this criteria was

to ensure the most feasible logistics for the researcher to visit the site and collect data for

the study. Third, based on the comprehensive approach of this investigation, it was

necessary to work only with institutions interested in better understanding the place-

based orientation of its community engagement activities and partnerships. Figure 9

presents the case selection process based on the three criteria presented above.
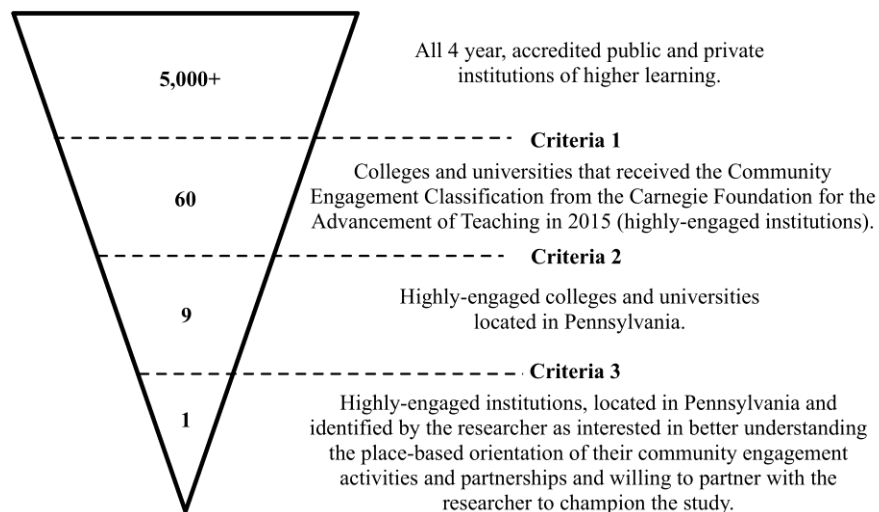


*Figure 9.* Case selection criteria.

  The case selection process used in this research represented a purposeful sampling

procedure. The primary rationale behind the use of purposeful sampling in this study was

the study's interest in the place-based nature of community engagement and the need for

an institutional champion at the case study site. Creswell (2007) states that this type of

sampling is appropriate to qualitative research because it aligns and informs an understanding of phenomena associated with a specific population.

After applying criteria one and two, a list of nine potential case study sites in Pennsylvania was developed. The application of the third criteria, interest, was established by contacting the community engagement offices of the nine schools starting with the ones closest to the researcher's location. Contact was made with The College, located in northwestern Pennsylvania, and a partnership quickly emerged. Initial conversations with institutional representatives revealed an interest in better understanding the place-based orientation of their community engagement programming and a willingness among institutional leaders to champion the study. Based on these interactions, The College was selected as the research site for the study.

**The College.** The site of the research was a private, co-educational liberal arts college located in northwestern Pennsylvania, roughly 90 miles north of the city of Pittsburgh. The school was founded in the early 1800s and is historically affiliated with the United Methodist Church. However, the institution is currently non-sectarian.

Total undergraduate enrollment at The College in 2017 was just under 2000 students, all of which are housed on the institution's campus. The College offers over 50 academic programs and tracks, and all students are required to complete a senior capstone project before graduation (U.S News and World Report, 2017). The College operates on a semester based academic calendar and has been ranked in the top 25 most academically rigorous colleges in the nation (The Daily Beast, 2012). The 2016-17 tuition and fees at The College exceed $40,000, room and board add another approximately $10,000 to these costs, making The College one of the more expensive private institutions in the

Commonwealth (Peterson's Guide to Colleges and Universities, 2017). The main campus

area is approximately 80 acres and is made up of more than 30 major buildings, all of

which are located within the municipality. This municipality is referred to in this study as

"Pleasantville." Pleasantville is recognized by the Commonwealth as a city and is home

to county government. The City is one of the largest municipalities in the predominantly

rural county, boasting a 2010 population of more than 13,000 residents (U.S. Census

Bureau, 2016). Permission to site the research at The College was requested and secured

in April 2017 following IRB approval to proceed with the study (see Appendix A).

**Participants**

At the site level, two populations were identified as important to the study:

institutional administrators and faculty members. Administrators were defined in this

research as full-time or part-time employees that held professional, managerial, and/or

staff positions within the institution. Faculty members were defined as institutional

employees who held full-time or part-time teaching positions. These institutional

populations were identified as having important perspectives regarding the place-based

nature of the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. In addition,

Creswell (2007) cites the need to sample at multiple levels within the case study site to

obtain the differing perspectives of the same phenomenon. To collect this information,

participants were asked to complete the OPBI questionnaire in Phase I and participate in

a focus group interview during Phase II.

To further narrow both target populations, two criteria were applied. First, to be

eligible for participation, administrators or faculty members had to be at least 18 years

old with at least one year of experience in their respective administrative or teaching

positions. These criteria was important to establish a level of expertise and experience among potential participants. Second, participants must be *directly* involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. This research refers to these administrators and faculty members as "community engagement actors" and defines this group as individuals directly involved in the design, coordination, and/or the implementation of the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. The purposeful selection individuals that met these criteria was based on this study's interest in exploring the perceptions of individuals, within the institution, who were of age, had experience in their positions, and were directly involved in the strategic (administrators) and operational (faculty) aspects of community engagement efforts. This target population had the added benefit of not only being associated with the site of the study, but also directly connected to its community engagement programing (Lee, 2012).

After reviewing available institutional data and aligning it with criteria one, a total of 86 full-time administrators, 160 full-time faculty members, and 28 part-time faculty members were identified as eligible for participation (NCES, 2016). Next, this list of 274 administrators and faculty members was further refined by applying the second criteria to identify the institution's community engagement actors. This highly specific population was identified working directly with the Civic Engagement Office at The College. This office was an ideal partner based on its operational involvement in all of the institution's community engagement programing. Working with representatives from this office, a list that contained a total of 56 community engagement actors that met both criteria was provided. This list was used to solicit participation in the study. Figure 10 provides an

illustration of how these populations were identified and narrowed based on the purposes

of the study.
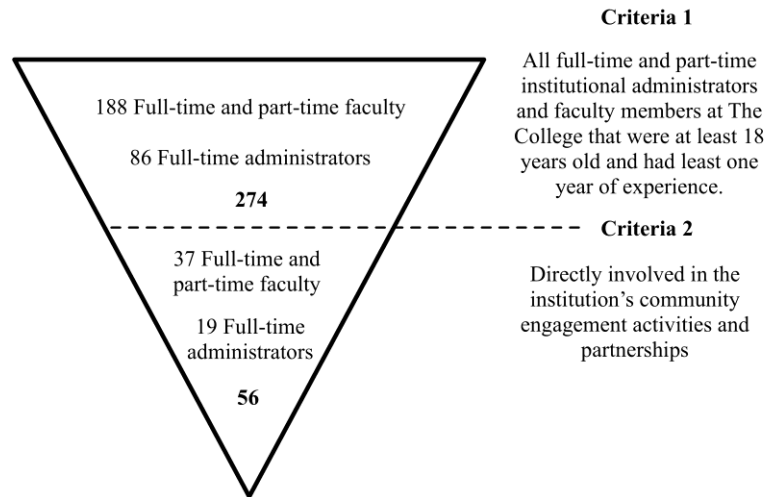


Figure 10. Study population and sample.

At the end of the solicitation protocol, a total of 35 individuals had completed the

OPBI questionnaire in Phase I of the study. Of these, 27 participated in the focus groups

conducted in Phase II. No part-time employees participated in either phase of the study.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of participation within each target population.

Table 1

*Phase I and Phase II Participation*

| Phase | Administrators | Faculty | Total Participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phase I (OPBI) | 17 | 18 | 35 |
| Phase II (Focus Groups) | 15 | 12 | 27 |

## Data Collection and Analysis

As discussed in the previous sections, mixed methods studies require the

collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources.

Methods employed should be combined "in a way that has complementary strengths and

non-overlapping weaknesses" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 299). With this in mind,

this study's research design called for the collection and analysis of data to be completed in two sequential phases.

During the first phase (Phase I), qualitative data were collected from The College in the form of institutional documents. Later, during the quantitative component of Phase I, a 29-item questionnaire was distributed to institutional administrators and faculty members designed to assess the place-building values and strategies informing community engagement at The College. Descriptive statistics were then created from completed surveys and coupled with qualitative findings from the document analysis to "seed" a series of three focus group interviews with survey respondents in Phase II. Focus group interview data collected in Phase II was coded using a Framework Method (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013) and then combined with the data collected and analyzed in Phase I.

To maintain the methodological integrity during the course of the study, special attention was paid to the quantitative and qualitative methods employed. This attention to detail provided clarity during analysis and strength to the findings that emerged. Methodological integrity or "congruence" (Morse, 2003, p. 191) was achieved by separating collection and analysis of data into its individual phases. Document data and survey results in Phase I informed Phase II by creating a fundamental understanding of how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building that was used to drive discussions around these topics during the focus group interviews.  In this way, mixing of the data within and among both phases was intentionally iterative to provide supportive information throughout the course of the study (Creswell, 2009).

**Data Management Software**

Three primary software packages were employed during the Phase I and Phase II of this research: Excel®, NVivo®, and ArcMAP®. Excel® was used extensively during the qualitative component (document analysis) of Phase I, to organize codes, themes, and related text. Later, during the quantitative component of Phase I Excel® was used to manage survey data, generate descriptive statistics, and create related charts and graphs. NVivo® was used during both Phase I and II to support the qualitative analysis of institutional documents and focus group transcripts. For example, institutional documents and transcript data were imported and "parent and child nodes" were created by the researcher using NVivo®. Using these nodes as a coding and categorizing structure, the data were examined line by line to identify and move related text into the nodes created in NVivo®. Once complete, this coded and categorized data could be studied to determine the place-based orientation of the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. ArcMAP® was used to create maps community engagement activities and partnerships identified by the institution during both phases of the project. This software was also used to analyze and illustrate spatial relationships among the geography of these community interactions.

The value of using these software packages during the analysis process was threefold. First, it enabled the efficient management of the large document data set assembled for analysis which reduced the amount of time spent "digging through" the data to find key aspects within the documents. Second, it increased the speed of coding by making it a click-and-drag operation. Further, NVivo® is specifically designed to enable continuous resorting and reorganizing of the text based on emerging themes defined by the researcher. Using these features and others designed to illustrate linkages

80

and relationships enabled the researcher to follow promising analytic connections. Third, understanding geography and spatial relationships is about seeing where things are happening. ArcMAP® provided a highly effective platform to not only generate maps but also explore emerging spatial connections among community engagement activities and partnerships.

It is important to note that while there are many benefits to using these tools, no software can independently preform an analysis process (Weitzman, 2000). With this in mind, the software employed during this research was solely in a support capacity. In this way, the findings that emerged were independently developed by the researcher.

**Phase I: Qualitative**

For the first phase of the study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. This section outlines the data collection and analysis methods used in the qualitative component of Phase I. This component consisted of the collection and analysis of archival institutional documents. The data and analysis in this component was directly related to research question one and three which ask: 1) How has the institution conceptualized place and place-building (Thomas & Cross, 2007) within the context of community engagement? and 3) How, and to what degree, are the institution's place-building profiles (Thomas & Cross, 2007) reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships?

The quantitative component of Phase I consisted of the distribution and analysis of the OPBI questionnaire. The data collection and analysis methods for this component is outlined in one of the later sections titled Phase I: Quantitative. The timing of both were concurrent within Phase I, however the completion of both were necessary to the

start of Phase II of the research. In Phase II, the results of the both qualitative and quantitative components of Phase I were integrated in the findings of the entire study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova & Stick, 2006). As can be seen in Figure 8, there were no connections between the individual qualitative and quantitative components of Phase I due to the content and contextual independence of both (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

**Data collection procedures.** The qualitative component of Phase I involved the collection and analysis of three types of archival data 1) institutional framing documents, 2) community engagement framing documents, and 3) the institution's Community Engagement Classification (CEC) application submitted to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) in 2015. All of these documents revolved around the formal strategic framework of The College and its community engagement programming. The following sections detail the qualitative data collection procedures followed for each of these archival data sources.

*Institutional framing documents.* For the purposes of this study, institutional framing documents were generally defined as those that formally articulated where the institutions should be and how it planned to get there (Keller, 2010). These foundational documents can take many forms (i.e. reports, studies, etc.) but the specific framing document on which this research focused was the institution's "strategic plan." Generally defined, a strategic plan is a collection of purpose, vision, value, goal, plan, and priority statements for the institution that have been built through a collaborative, internal strategic planning process. These plans are widely recognized as the blueprints or road maps that shape direction of the institution and serve as a decision-making framework for

82

those inside the organization (Bryson, 2010). As such, these documents were a logical source of information related to how the institution was conceptualizing place and its role within it. Further, place-building researchers identified framing documents, specifically mission statements, as the location where organizations articulate how they "seek to balance place well-being and corporate fiscal success" (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 44).

The College's current strategic plan document was identified and secured via the researcher's partnership with the institution. The eight-page document, referred to here as "The Strategic Plan," was developed in 2010 and adopted by The College in 2011. The document was designed as the institution's long-range plan from 2010-2020 and included the input from wide variety of institutional stakeholders including administrators, faculty members, and students. The document is publicly available on The College's website but was supplied via email following a document request submitted to the Office of Civic Engagement.

***Community engagement framing documents.*** Community engagement framing documents are defined in the same way institutional framing documents were defined above. However, the focus of this document is at a micro level. Again, the documents of interest here were any strategic planning documents used to help frame the purpose and activities of the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. The framing documents secured following an email request submitted to the Office of Civic Engagement included the following:

1. *Community Service and Service Learning Vision statement*. This eight page document was developed in 2008 by faculty, staff, and students involved in the institution's community engagement programming. The purpose of the

document was to provide an overview of community engagement, along with a vision for the future.

2. *Report of the Civic Engagement Task Force*. This 34-page document was developed in late 2011 and early 2012. The document was assembled by an institutionally appointed Task Force made up of administrators and faculty who were actively involved in the institution's community engagement programing. The purpose of the Task Force, and corresponding document, was to connect to a directive in institution's strategic plan which instructed The College to "Consolidate and focus our community outreach programs and activities" (Strategic Plan, 2011, p. 3).

3. *Civic Engagement Working Group report.* This report, developed in 2013 and made available institution-wide in early 2014, was the product of the collective efforts students, faculty, administrators, and community members actively engaged in the institution's community engagement programing. The purpose of the document was to create a common language for engagement, encourage its institutionalization, and connection to the curriculum. What was produced was an eight-page report, organized around 12 core principles and associated recommendations designed to guide civic engagement at The College.

4. *Community Engagement Mission and Vision statements*. These documents were developed by the Office of Civic Engagement at The College to provide direction for the newly created organizational structure designed to realign community engagement within The College. This recently created structure,

referred to here as "The Center," was the product of the institutional strategic

plan and the reports of the Task Force and Working Group. The one-page

statements, adopted in 2015, are twofold. The first is for The Center and the

second for Civic Engagement. Each is organized around mission statements

and descriptions of work associated with each.

*2015 CFAT CEC application documents.* The Community Engagement

Classification (CEC) is a voluntary classification developed by the Carnegie Foundation

for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) in 2005 to recognized highly-engaged

institutions. Unlike traditional Carnegie classifications that rely on national data

(Driscoll, 2014), the CEC requires the submission of an application that "affirms that a

university or college has institutionalized engagement with community in its identity,

culture, and commitments." (Driscoll, 2009, p. 5).

The Carnegie Foundation is well known in higher education for its systems of

classification of college and universities and its support of research and policy analysis

(Driscoll, 2009; Simpson, 2011). There are multiple classifications institutions can seek,

but the CEC is unique. Its rigorous application framework was designed to "respect the

diversity of institutions and their approaches to community engagement; engage

institutions in a process of inquiry, reflection, and self-assessment; and honor institutions'

achievements while promoting the ongoing development of their programs" (Driscoll,

2009, p. 6).

As of this writing, only 361 campuses, of the over 5,000 college campuses in the

United States, have received the community engagement classification, which speaks to

the rigor of the application requirements (NERCHE, 2016). A total of 240 campuses were

selected to receive the classification in 2015 and of these, 83 were first-time classifications and 157 were re-classifications (NERCHE, 2016).

The CEC documentation framework (application) consists of two components. The first component, referred to within the application as "Foundational Indicators," are demonstrations of the institutionalization of community engagement as measured by documentation of institution's identity, culture and commitment (Driscoll, 2009). The second component, referred to within the application as "Categories of Community Engagement," is documentation of the focus of their community engagement through curricular engagement, outreach and partnerships, or both (Driscoll, 2009). Completed applications consist of responses and documentation for a total of 43 questions, divided into multiple sections based on content, and are typically 40-60 pages in length.

The CEC application was used in this research for three reasons. First, CEC applications are focused on uncovering the institution's community engagement "identity" (Driscoll, 2009). This statement means that how the institution conceptualizes place and its relationship with it should be part of these philosophic underpinnings. Second, the CEC is part of a nationally recognized classification model. In this way, it has retained credibility and authority (Simpson, 2011). Third, the CEC was developed and implemented by collection of acclaimed community engagement leaders, experts, and scholars representing multiple associations focused on higher education (Driscoll, 2014; Simpson, 2011).

CEC application data were provided to the researcher via an email request submitted to the Civic Engagement Office at The College. Representatives from this

office provided application data to the researcher following IUP IRB approval secured in April 2017.

**Data analysis procedures.** The method of analysis used to examine institutional documents was the Framework Method (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This method "sits within a broad family of analysis methods often termed thematic analysis or qualitative content analysis" and is often used by qualitative researchers to "draw descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions clustered around themes" that emerge from the data (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013, p. 2). Content analysis is, according to Weber (1985) "a research methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (p. 9). There have been a variety of typologies, terms, and definitions developed around this type of methodology but essentially the point of content analysis is to combine text data that has been gathered for the study and reduce it to a group of variables and/or patterns that can be measured (Bernard, 1994; Hatch, 2002; Weber, 1985). Content analysis of organizational documents has become increasing popular among case study and mixed methods researcher due to the valuable triangulation opportunities involved in integrating different materials and evidence within one method (Kohlbacher, 2005). For institutional research, like the study presented here, content analysis methods are particularly well-suited to "reveal the focus of individual, group, institutional, or societal attention" (Weber, 1995, p. 9).

The value of the Framework Method is that it provides a highly structured process through which documents can be systematically reduced, and analyzed on either a case by case basis, by theme, and/or by individual codes (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, &

Redwood, 2013). The rationale for its use in this study was based on the researcher's

need for: a) a replicable method of analysis across multiple sets of data (institutional

documents, focus group transcripts), b) a systematic and efficient analysis processes that

effectively summarized or reduced data to a logical table or matrix based this study's

theoretical framework, and c) a method that enabled the researcher to compare and

contrast data across, and within, multiple data sets and cases.

The Framework Method consists of seven stages: 1) transcription, 2)

familiarization with textual data, 3) coding, 4) developing and analytical framework, 5)

applying the analytical framework, 6) charting data into the framework matrix, and 7)

interpreting the data (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Pope, Ziebland,

& Mays, 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). A slight modification was made to the original

framework during Phase I of this study. In the original framework presented in the

literature, transcription was included as the first stage. However, for analysis of

institutional documents transcription was not necessary and therefore simply omitted

from the process of analyzing institutional documents. Figure 11 presents the stages of

the Framework Method used during Phase I of this research.
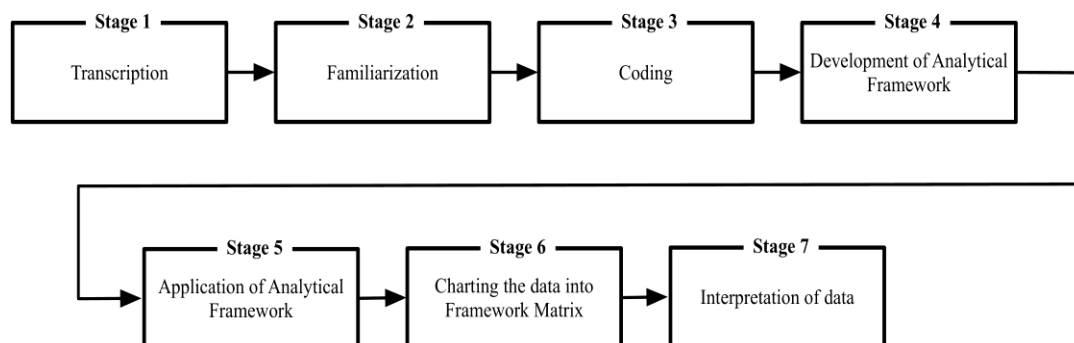


*Figure 11.* Stages of the framework method used in analyzing institutional documents.
(Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013)

Coding was done using a deductive approach. Deductive approaches use themes and codes that are pre-selected based on "previous literature, previous theories, or the specifics of the research question" (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013, p. 3). In this research, five themes were identified using Organizational Place-Building Theory: nature, social relationships, built environment, ethics, and economic relationships (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas & Cross, 2007; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). A sixth theme was added by the researcher, geography, to explore the geographic focus of the institution's community engagement programing.

To guide the coding process within the framework of these six themes, a set of criteria was developed to guide the selection of relevant text and its thematic association. Guiding the design of these criteria were the thematic descriptions presented in the OPBT literature.

1. Nature

    a. Text referencing the natural environment (i.e. landscape, earth).

    b. Text referencing how the institution generally or specifically relates and contributes to nature and the environment.

2. Social Relationships

    a. Text referencing the full spectrum of interactions between the institution's population and communities, stakeholders, and organizations outside the institution.

    b. Text referencing how certain spaces are treated in such a way that reflects the culture, strategies, and values of the institution.

3. Built Environment

    a. Text referencing man-made buildings, roads, and infrastructure (i.e. academic buildings).

    b. Text referencing how these spaces are treated and value is placed on built environment through architecture, landscaping, and historical significance.

4. Ethics

    a. Text referring to the institution's "practices and its implicit and explicit contract with the community that seeks to establish itself as legitimate" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55).

    b. Text referring to how the institution's practices are modeled within higher education, its institutional culture, and stakeholders.

5. Economic Relationships

    a. Text referring to how the institution has defined its level of investment in the fiscal well-being of the community (i.e. workforce development)

    b. Text referring to specific practices related to the economic vitality, growth, and development.

6. Geography

    a. Text referencing specific geographic locations by name (i.e. Boston).

    b. Text referencing specific geographic areas (i.e. downtown).

      c.  Text referencing a general geographic scale (i.e. local, regional, national, and global).

**Phase I: Quantitative**

Yin (2009) suggests that weaving together data collection through different methods and procedures can help researchers gather the rich thick descriptions characteristic of case study designs. Bernard (1994) supports this assertion by stating that questionnaires are important in building comprehensive descriptions that explain complex human behavior patterns and how variables interact to generate those patterns. Following this guidance, the quantitative component in the first phase of this study involved the distribution and analysis of a survey instrument titled the Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI). The OPBI is a measurement instrument designed to assess an organization's values and strategies along five dimensions or latent constructs of place-building. These dimensions include: nature, social relationships, built environment, ethics, and economic relationships. Together, these constructs make up what researchers refer to as a "multi-dimensional" concept of place, and can be used as an assessment framework to determine the extent to which an organization values and invests in each of these characteristics.

The aim of the quantitative component of this phase was directly connected to research question two of the study. This question asks: According to Organizational Place-Building Theory (Thomas & Cross, 2007), what are the institution's place-building profiles? Each of the 29 questions were directly connected to this research question. The goal of this quantitative work, and the qualitative work in Phase II (focus groups), was to

firmly establish the institution's place-building profile for each of the five dimensions of OPBT.

**Target population.** The site of this research was The College located in northwestern Pennsylvania. The sample surveyed to determine The College's place-building profiles included two groups of community engagement actors inside the institution. Community engagement actors have been defined in this research as individuals directly involved in institutional community engagement efforts. The population of internal actors was limited to institutional administrators and faculty members. This limitation was made to focus the research on the perceptions of individuals within the institution who were meaningfully connected to strategic and operational aspects of the institution's community engagement efforts. Samples from these populations were developed through the active partnership with the Office of Civic Engagement at The College. Working with representatives from this office, a complete list of 56 community engagement actors was developed and used to solicit participation.

**Instrumentation and materials.** The OPBI, as developed by Cross (2007), Kimball (2012), Thomas (2007, 2012, 2016), and Suhr (2016), is designed to assess an organization's values and strategies along five dimensions or latent constructs of place-building. Prior to the development of the OPBI, researchers were challenged in finding assessment tools that compared an organization's practices relative to some set of place-building principles, guidelines, or rubrics (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). The OPBI, first used by place-building researchers in 2011, was designed as an objective instrument that could be employed to quantify an organization's investments in particular places and its socially responsible activities from a place-based perspective using the five latent

constructs established in OPBT (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Since its development,

it has been used by researchers from multiple fields and disciplines to explore differences

in organizational place-building characteristics between various organizations and their

internal and external stakeholders (Kimball & Thomas, 2012). Permission to use the

OPBI in this study was requested and obtained from the authors of the questionnaire in

March 2017 (see Appendix B).

The OPBI (see Appendix C) is composed of 29 Likert-type items organized

around each of the five place-building dimensions: nature, social relationships, built

environment, ethics, and economic relationships. These dimensions reflect the five

variables of place-building as identified by OPBT. Each question in the survey uses a

seven-point response scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" (Kimball &

Thomas, 2012). Questions 1-6 of the OPBI measure the social relations variable which

"includes the full spectrum of interactions between an organization's employees and

stakeholders and among and between other organizations" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr,

2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). According to place-building researchers,

this construct "is concerned with how certain space is treated in such a way that reflects

the culture, strategies, and values of the organization" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016,

p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). Questions 7-12 measure economic relations or

the organization's level of investment in the fiscal well-being of the community.

Questions 13-18 measure nature dimension of place-building. The nature dimension

"includes natural as opposed to man-made. Such as the landscape, earth, geography and

natural resources" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p.

55). Questions 19-24 measure ethics or the "practices and implicit and explicit contract

with the community that seeks to establish itself as legitimate" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). Finally, questions 25-29 are concerned with the built environment, which includes man-made buildings, roads, and other material infrastructure associated with the organization and seeks to measure how these spaces are treated. Questions here were also designed to reflect the value placed on architecture, landscaping, and historical preservation among the organizations physical structures (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Table 2 provides the OPBI questions and their connection to the five themes or dimensions of place and place-building as discussed in OPBT (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

Table 2

*OPBI Questions and OPBT Themes/Dimensions (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 27)*

| Questions | Theme / Dimension |
|---|---|
| 1. My institution invests its resources to create positive change for the community. <br> 2. My institution collaborates with other organizations to improve the community's education programs. <br> 3. My institution is accountable for the impacts its operations have in the community. <br> 4. My institution invests its assets and resources to help sustain the community's culture. <br> 5. My institution's population is expected to contribute their time or money to local philanthropic activities. <br> 6. My institution invests its resources to increase opportunities for civic participation and investment. | Social |
| 7. My institution places a high priority on its economic influence in the community. <br> 8. My institution commits resources to the economic development of the community. <br> 9. My institution helps its area businesses improve their business practices. <br> 10. My institution's success is designed to contribute to the economic success of the community. <br> 11. My institution is recognized for its contributions to the local economy. <br> 12. My institution's sole contribution is to the community's economy, i.e. creating jobs, etc. | Economic |
| 13. My institution mission includes improving the well-being of the natural environment. <br> 14. My institution utilizes best practices that protect local resources, such as the natural environment, water, geography, etc. <br> 15. My institution s a leader in actions that protect the natural environment. <br> 16. My institution is respected for its improvements to the natural environment. | Nature |

94

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 17. | My institution contributes financially to activities that build an environmentally sustainable community. | |
| 18. | My institution considers the extent of its impact on the environment in all its activities. | |
| 19. | My institution's mission includes a financial commitment to the social well-being of the community. | |
| 20. | My institution holds itself accountable for the impact its operation has on the community. | |
| 21. | My institution works to enhance its legitimacy as a leader in the community. | Ethics |
| 22. | Building my institution's influence in the community is a key institutional strategy. | |
| 23. | My institution invests its resources for the common good even when there is a cost to the institution. | |
| 24. | My institution initiates policy and practices that help build a more ethical environment. | |
| 25. | My institution invests in projects that support community renewal (such as historic neighborhoods and tourism, entertainment facilities). | |
| 26. | My institution's campus helps to create a sense of place. | |
| 27. | My institution contributes to community redevelopment projects that advance economic development. | Built Environment |
| 28. | My institution's campus is valued as a place where its population can create meaningful relationships. | |
| 29. | My institution's mission considers the economic wellbeing of the entire community. | |

**Pilot studies.** A pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the OPBI questionnaire (Phase I), focus group interview questions (Phase II), and the effectiveness of multiple contact strategy designed to solicit participation among community engagement actors at The College. The pilot study was necessary to confirm a working understanding of the OPBI questions that had been subject to minor modifications made to reorient the OPBI to community engagement actors in an institution of higher learning. By design, this group was also asked to provide feedback regarding the viability of the focus group protocol, handout materials, and the PowerPoint designed to orient participants during the focus group sessions. Finally, given the importance of encouraging participation among community engagement actors at The College, the pilot study provided an excellent opportunity to test the effectiveness of email communication designed to solicit participation.

Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval secured from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), a purposeful sample of four community engagement actors at another university were identified and asked to be complete the OPBI and participate in one focus group interview. Within this sample were two institutional administrators and two faculty members, mirroring the target population of the study. Each participant had extensive community engagement experience in their professional roles at the institution. At the outset, the group was advised via email and via phone conversations that their participation in the pilot study was voluntary. Further, participants were asked to review and agree to the Phase I Informed Consent Form included as part of the online survey and review and agree to the Phase II Informed Consent Form presented in printed format at the start of the pilot focus group session. Both of these forms have been included in Appendix D.

At the start of the pilot, participants received a series of emails designed to introduce the study and encourage participation. A total of five individual emails were distributed. After reviewing these emails, pilot group participants completed the survey and a focus group interview day and time was selected. At the start of the focus group interaction participants were asked to share their feedback regarding the emails designed to recruit participants. Next, the researcher adopted the role of focus group facilitator using the protocol created to guide the interaction. At the conclusion of the protocol, the pilot group was asked to discuss what worked and what did not with regard to the handouts, presentation materials, and questions. The focus group pilot session was audio recorded and summarized to ensure the accuracy of proposed protocol adjustments. Based on feedback collected, the following modifications were made:

- Email communications were redesigned to decrease redundancy and lengthiness.

- Handout materials were made less technical by eliminating place-building jargon.

- Presentation materials were made more visual by adding photos and graphics intended to illustrate key concepts necessary to the discussion.

- Focus group questions were modified by including common language descriptions of concepts.

- No modifications were made to the OPBI due to the positive feedback from the group. However, slight changes were made to the question designed to identify the best time for respondents to participate in one of the three focus group sessions planned to follow the completion of the OPBI questionnaire.

**Data collection procedures.** The quantitative data collection procedures used in this research were guided by the tailored design method (TMD) developed by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009). The basic tenant of TMD is that the entire survey process is germane to its success. "In particular, TDM emphasizes that the survey process is part of a social interaction between the researcher and the survey respondent and stresses the importance of appropriately communicating the survey to the respondent" (Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliott, 2002, p. 6). TMD was employed in this research with the aim of reducing survey errors by creating trust and the perception of reward while, at the same time, reducing the perception of cost among potential participants. Trust was established through the active partnership with the director of the Office of Civic Engagement. Intrinsic rewards for participation were bound to participant's contribution to the field of

community engagement research within which they are actively involved and extrinsic rewards were the distribution of final research document to participant database.

Communication during the data collection process was done via email. Email was determined as the most appropriate means of communication based on the targeted population's familiarity with digital communication and their use of these methods in day-to-day business (Simpson, 2011). Digital communication reduced barriers to participation by organizing communication efforts in a format that could be understood easily by the participants and tracked by the researcher.

Data were collected using a confidential, self-administered web-based version of the OPBI. The software used to construct the survey and compile results was a Qualtrix ® platform. Once a final draft of the OPBI was constructed using the software, a link was generated that could be included in email communications. A multiple contact strategy (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009) was used to distribute the survey and encourage participation. The contact strategy used in this research consisted of five steps. The first contact was the announcement of the research project. This email was sent by the director of the Office of Civic Engagement Office at The College. In the email the director introduced the principle investigator and provided an overview of the project. The second contact consisted of a short recap of the first email and a link to the survey. The third contact included a general thank you to those who had participated and a continued request for participation by community engagement actors that had not done so already. The fourth contact was another reminder to participate and thank you directed to recipients who had already completed the survey. The fifth and final contact consisted of another thank you, a final request participate to those who hadn't done so, and a listing of

days and times for the follow-up focus group sessions during which they could see and interact with survey results, and researcher. With the exception of the first announcement email, each step of the contact strategy was made using the researcher's email. The use of the researcher's personal email was designed to personalize the communication and expedite responses to questions and concerns (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). The partnership team at The College were carbon copied during each of these steps to validate cooperation between the researcher and the institution to further encourage participation. Appendix E provides the content and dates of each of these email communications.

A total of 35 people completed the OPBI. Within the sample were 17 full-time administrators and 18 full-time faculty members. With 56 surveys distributed, this total (35) represents a response rate of 63 percent. This level of participation was well above what was expected by the researcher. Anticipated barriers influencing the modest participation projections included survey length (29 questions), difficulty understanding the research topic, absentee faculty members, and late semester obligations among the target population. Given these, the researcher and representatives from The College anticipated response rates between 36 and 45 percent.

**Data analysis procedures.** The OPBI came with a predetermined scoring methods that had been tested and validated by place-building researchers (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). This research followed these methods to maintain the validity and reliability constructs developed in previous research. Survey scoring was based on how participants evaluated the importance of certain place-building activities across the dimensions outlined above. The sum of these scores approximated the importance of these activities exhibited by the institution (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

Recognizing that some dimensions may score higher in terms of importance allowed this research to isolate the organization's preferences and provided some indication of how the institution "evaluates, describes and prescribes certain policies towards place" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 27). The results enabled this research to evidence a set of four place-building profiles, developed by Cross (2007), Kimball (2012), Thomas (2007, 2012, 2016), and Suhr (2016) for each of the five dimensions of place. These profiles include: exploitive, contingent, contributive, and transformational.

Each of the profiles identified in OPBT and identified through the analysis of OPBI results "describe and predict certain place-building tendencies" of the institution (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 25). According to OPBT researchers, "transformational organizations conceptualize or identify themselves as change agents acting to improve the lives of individuals and groups in a place" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 23). Contributive organizations view themselves as part of a larger network of business, people, institutions, and community leaders that share the burden of creating valuable places (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). "Contingent organizations view themselves simply as participants in places and exploitive organizations view themselves as independent agents with little to no obligations to the places in which they operate" (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 23; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). Table 3 presents these profiles and scoring matrix used to categorize the results.

Table 3

*OPBI Scoring Matrix (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 27)*

| Dimension | Exploitive | Contingent | Contributive | Transformational |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social | 34-42 | 25-33 | 16-24 | 1-15 |
| Economic | 34-42 | 25-33 | 16-24 | 1-15 |
| Nature | 34-42 | 25-33 | 16-24 | 1-15 |
| Ethics | 34-42 | 25-33 | 16-24 | 1-15 |
| Built environment | 34-42 | 25-33 | 16-24 | 1-15 |

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument. Reliability, when it comes to research instrumentation, "is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring" (Gay, Airasian, & Mills, 2009, p. 158). The internal reliability or consistency of the OPBI was measured using Cronbach's alpha and exploratory factor analysis as part of a case study titled *The Organizational Place-Building Inventory: An Instrument for Assessing and Facilitating Place-Based Corporate Social Responsibility* developed by place-based researchers Thomas, Kimball, and Suhr in 2016. During the study, the five dimensions of place were measured with the survey as well as determining a company place-building profiles. Data were collected from two groups, partners and managers, from a single professional services firm. The analysis of OPBI results for the total and each of the five dimensions included in the survey found Cronbach alpha values ranging from 0.59 to 0.91 (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Internal Reliability Analysis of the OPBI (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 28)*

| Dimension | Description | Items | Reliability Cronbach alpha | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Social | 1-6 | 0.61 | Low correlation of items 1, 2, 5 with total |
| 2 | Economic | 7-12 | 0.59 | Low correlation of item 9 with total<br>Negative correlation item 12 with total |
| 3 | Nature | 13-18 | 0.88 | |
| 4 | Ethics | 19-24 | 0.81 | |
| 5 | Built Environment | 25-29 | 0.75 | |
| Total | Place | 1-29 | 0.91 | |

*Total sample, n = 49*

Validity refers to "the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure and, consequently, permits appropriate interpretation of scores" (Gay, Airasian, & Mills, 2009, p. 154). Typically, validity is measured in three ways (a) content validity, (b) concurrent validity, and (c) construct validity. However, given the relative immaturity of place-based research within the context of institutional community engagement, establishing the validity of the OPBI is somewhat difficult. That said, the OPBI was developed by place-building researchers based on the findings of an expert panel convened in 2013. The panel, made up of a collection of subject matter experts, provided insights into two key areas (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

First, the panel worked carefully to construct understandable language within the survey to recognizing that finding the right language to communicate place-building and its relevance to organizational behavior. Second, the panel paid special attention to identifying questions that were pertinent to place-building and the metrics used in approximating the type of place builder evident in the results. To do this the panel engaged business owners in pilot interviews to identify specific aspects of place-building that could be quantified through aligned survey questions. They also tested the OPBI on group of academics and small business owners to confirm these alignments.

102

OPBI was further tested using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The EFA was used to "identify patterning and explain variation in the data" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 20). Working within the OPBT framework, a scale was developed through a "systematic scale development process" for each of the place-building dimensions (nature, social relationships, built environment, ethics, and economic relationships) (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 25).

As evidenced in Table 5, the EFA explained 78.7% of the variance when extracting a five factor solution (n=46) and reveals that the first factor's Eigen value accounts for approximately 48% of the variance (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Further, "consistent with expectations for unidimensionality, the subsequent factors' Eigen values explain significantly less variance" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 29). Based on these EFA results, some confidence can be gathered that the identified the underlying factor structure of the OPBI has been identified and that each of the OPBI's dimensions are well measured by their respective scales.

Table 5

*Exploratory Factor Analysis Results (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 29)*

| Dimension | Variance explained combined (n = 46) | Variance explained managers (n = 20) | Variance explained partners (n = 26) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social | 0.4787 | 0.4285 | 0.4378 |
| Economic | 0.1003 | 0.0872 | 0.1385 |
| Nature | 0.0777 | 0.0761 | 0.1132 |
| Ethics | 0.0729 | 0.0706 | 0.0948 |
| Built Environment | 0.0577 | 0.0618 | 0.0740 |
| **Place** | **0.7872** | **0.7242** | **0.8583** |

**Phase II: Qualitative**

The second phase of this explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study employed a series of three focus groups to explore the place and place-building among community engagement actors. This phase included a single qualitative component that was designed to follow the qualitative and quantitative components of the previous phase. The purpose of this sequential timing was to allow the collection and analysis of the data in Phase I to inform the focus group discussions in Phase II. The aim of these focus group sessions was to create a safe, comfortable environment in which the researcher could work with participants to "unpack" how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building through the eyes of the participants.

Well-designed focus groups typically consist of 6-12 participants and last between 1-2 hours (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). The sessions are either structured or semi-structured and the questioning protocol developed should revolve around the research question being addressed. Focus groups are frequently used by qualitative researchers in attempting to gather a "shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people" regarding a particular research problem (Gay, Airasian, & Mills, 2009, p. 372). In sequential mixed methods research, similar to the design of this study, focus groups are often used to "help researchers better understand and interpret information and findings resulting from the earlier use of other data collection methods" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 308). The character of these sessions should illicit and encourage the participation of all the participants through responses that build on the responses of others. This "ping-pong" questioning style differs from traditional interviews during which questions are asked, responses recorded,

and then the interviewer moves on the next question (Gay, Airasian, & Mills, 2009, p. 372).

The selection of this method of qualitative data collection was based on all three of this study's research questions. The collective goal of these sessions was to build on the findings emerging from the previous phase (Phase I) through semi-structured interactions with those directly involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships (administration and faculty members). Samples from these groups were purposefully developed in the previous phase and were employed again here to populate the focus group sessions. The only selection criteria used in Phase II was the successful completion of the OPBI. This limitation was important to retain familiarity with the research topic and design.

A series of three focus group interviews were conducted with institutional administrators who were directly involved in community engagement programing at The College. A total of 27 community engagement actors from The College participated in the focus group interviews. Of these, 15 were institutional administrators and 12 were faculty members. Focus group one consisted of 14 participants, focus group two included eight participants, and focus group three included five participants. Table 6 provides a summary of focus group days, times and participation.

Table 6

*Focus Group Participation*

| Focus Group Interview | Date/Time | Administrators | Faculty | Total Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus Group 1 | April 24/12pm | 7 | 7 | 14 |
| Focus Group 2 | April 24/4pm | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Focus Group 3 | April 25/8am | 3 | 2 | 5 |

The products from the qualitative (document analysis) and quantitative (OPBI) components of Phase I used to "seed" the focus group discussions in Phase II. Information included from Phase I included: 1) general descriptions of how the institution had conceptualized place within its framing documents and CEC application, 2) a list of the institution's past and current community engagement activities and partnerships, 3) a map of these community engagement activities and partnerships, and 4) descriptive statistics illustrating OPBI results.

The following section details the development of the focus group protocol and questions used to gather information during this phase of the study.

**Focus group protocol and questions.** The organization and conduct of the focus group interviews followed the protocol developed for this portion of the study. Protocols can be used as part of many data collection methods and are designed to help guide the content of the discussion (Creswell, 2012). Typically, protocols contain an introductory script and list of questions that are designed to focus the group on the research topic and related issues that could provide insight and understanding into the topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). For this research, the protocol was divided into three main parts: 1) welcome and topic introduction, 2) focus group questions, and 3) thank you, summary, and follow-up (Bader & Rossi, 2002). Each of these sections were carefully designed to create a safe friendly environment for the discussion, gather relevant information, and recognize participants' contributions (Creswell, 2012). A copy of this study's focus group protocol is provided in Appendix F and the following paragraphs summarize each step identified in the focus group protocol.

The design, structure, and organization of the focus group questions was guided by principles outlined by Krueger (1998) and Krueger and Casey (2000). According to these authors focus group questions should: 1) be understandable to participants, 2) be clear and simple, 3) use colloquial language, 4) be easily recited, 5) be open ended, 6) be focused on only one thing, 7) carefully use examples in necessary, 8) avoid asking "why," and 9) be designed so that answers are definitive. Applying this guidance, a set of 16 interview questions were developed based on the study's research questions and the six place-building themes identified in Phase I. The identification of distinct topics or themes is recommended by focus group methodologists, and can be used to help guide the construction of pre-planned questions and probes, connected to these topics, to guide focus group interactions (Morgan, 1997).

Following these directions, a set of 13 questions were developed that were centered on the five themes identified in OPBT and the additional geography theme identified in the previous phase. These themes used included: 1) geography, 2) nature, 3) social relationships, 4) built environment, 5) ethics, and 6) economic relationships. The construction of the questions was done in consultation with place-building researchers at University of Northern Colorado. These researchers had developed and used focus group procedures in other place-based research and were willing to assist in the design of the questions used in this study. Working with these experts, questions were drafted, submitted, and edited based on feedback.

Finally, to ensure the quality of the final draft of the questions and protocol, the researcher piloted the focus group with a small group (4) of institutional administrators (2) and faculty members (2) at another institution of higher learning who were actively

involved in community engagement activities and partnerships at the institution. During

the focus group pilot sessions, participants recommended that the researcher include four

handouts to be distributed to participants. The first was a list of definitions for key terms

designed to create a shared understanding of key place-building ideas and concepts.

Handout two would be a map of the community engagement partnerships and activities

established by The College. This map was developed using data collected during the

qualitative component of Phase I. Handout three, recommended by the pilot group, was a

graphic illustration of OPBI results that included measures of central tendency for both

administrators and faculty members. Finally, handout four was the OPBT continuum of

place-building profiles with explanatory text for each profile. This handout was

recommended to enable productive discussions around the results of the OPBI. The

handouts developed and distributed at the focus group interviews are included in

Appendix G and the final focus group protocol has been included in Appendix F. Table 7

provides a list of the focus group questions that were slightly modified based on feedback

from the pilot sessions.

Table 7

*Focus Group Questions and Themes*

| Questions | Theme/ Dimension |
|---|---|
| 1. Please tell us your first name, your institutional role and your connection to community engagement, and your favorite place around the College campus. | Not Applicable |
| 2. Please help me understand how you define place? <br> 3. What is your role in "building place/s"? <br> 4. How do you think this institution has, or has not, intentionally defined place and its role within it? <br> 5. What factors influence your decisions about where to engage? <br> 6. Why is engagement focused in Pleasantville "area"? <br> 7. What "places" are missing and why? | Geography |
| 8. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to nature and the environment? <br> 9. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships? | Nature |
| 10. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to development of social structures in ways that facilitate collective action around community well-being? <br> 11. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships? | Social |
| 12. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to the built environment? <br> 13. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships? | Built environment |
| 14. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to the ethical aspects of place? <br> 15. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships? | Ethics |
| 16. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to fiscal well-being of place? <br> 17. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships? | Economic |
| 18. Please reflect on today's discussion regarding place and place-building at The College. Do you have anything else you would like to discuss or comment on regarding the six place-building themes presented? | Not Applicable |

The six themes used to frame this research were also directly connected to the

study's research questions. Table 8 illustrates the alignments between each of the focus

group questions and the study's three research questions. Ensuring these alignments was

necessary to this research's unique place-based research purposes and in providing a familiar context for participants based on their recent completion of the OPBI. The themes guided the discussion format and the protocol developed for conduct of the focus group interviews.

Table 8

*Research Questions and Alignment With Focus Group Questions*

| Research Questions | Focus Group Interview Questions |
|---|---|
| 1. How has the institution conceptualized place within the context of community engagement? | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 18 |
| 2. According to Organizational Place-Building Theory, what are the institution's place-building profiles? | 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 |
| 3. How, and to what degree, are the institution's place-building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships? | 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18 |

All of the three focus group sessions were held on the campus of The College. Each was approximately one hour in length and held in a quiet, accessible conference room that was secured through the Office of Civic Engagement Office at The College. Each of the sessions were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The researcher served as facilitator for each of the four focus groups with administrators and faculty members. An assistant moderator helped set up the room, distribute materials, take notes, and operate recording equipment.

**Focus group data analysis.** The analysis process for the focus group transcripts followed the Framework Method outlined in the Data Analysis Procedures section of Phase I.

## Summary

This mixed methods case study employed an explanatory mixed methods design within a descriptive case study framework to explore place-building through community

engagement. The study was conducted at a single highly-engaged institution of higher learning located in northwestern Pennsylvania. The research design used included two distinct phases, with both qualitative and quantitative components. Phase I consisted of the collection and analysis of three forms of institutional documents including the institution's strategic plan, community engagement framing documents, and the institution's Community Engagement Classification application submitted to the Carnegie Foundation in 2015. Each of these documents were analyzed using the Framework Method of thematic content analysis (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013). The quantitative component of Phase I, conducted during the same time as the qualitative component of this phase, involved the distribution and analysis of the Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI) questionnaire completed by 35 administrators and faculty members at The College that were directly involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas & Cross, 2007; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). In Phase II, a series of three focus group interviews were conducted with 27 individuals that had completed the OPBI in the previous phase. Once each of these focus groups had been transcribed, they were analyzed using the same thematic content analysis method applied in the qualitative component of Phase I.

The focus of the next chapter, chapter four, will be a detailed summary of data collected during Phase I and Phase II of the study. Key components of this chapter will be the themes identified during the document analysis, survey results among different groups of participants, and the big ideas that emerged from the focus group interactions that helped explain some of the results of the document analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study was to explore place and place-building within the context of community engagement in higher education. To accomplish this purpose, this study focused on one highly-engaged institution of higher learning located in northwestern Pennsylvania. This institution, referred to here as The College, was chosen as the research site because it was one of only a handful of institutions in the Commonwealth that had received the highly prestigious Community Engagement Classification of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and was interested in better understanding the place-based nature of its engagement activities and partnerships.

The research study was specifically tailored to examine place-building through the lens of Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT). OPBT was developed by researchers to explain the degree to which organizations value and invest in their social and geographic locations (Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Cross, 2007; Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). It was used here as an objective framework to assess the level or extent of an institution's social responsibility, intentions, and more importantly, its contributions to the places within which they operate (Thomas & Cross, 2007).

Guiding the study and providing a focus for the findings presented here were the following three research questions: 1) How has the institution conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement? 2) According to OPBT, what are the institution's place-building profiles? and 3) How, and to what degree, are the

institution's place-building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships?

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data collected, how it was analyzed, and the findings that emerged. The goal of this chapter is to immerse the reader in the data and related findings. The contents of the chapter have been organized into four sections. The first provides a brief summary of the study design, data collected, and methods of analysis. The second presents the analysis and findings for research question one. The third the analysis and findings for research question two. The fourth the analysis and findings for research question three. And the final section provides a summary of all major findings and how these will be used to organize chapter five.

**Study Design, Data Collection, and Analysis Methods**

To address these questions, this study employed an explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study research design. To organize the design, it was structured by two distinct phases which included both quantitative and qualitative methods. The first component of Phase I involved the collection and qualitative analysis of archival institutional data. The second component of Phase I was quantitative and consisted of the distribution of a questionnaire titled the Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI). The OPBI consisted of a 29 Likert-type questions that revolved around the institution's place-building characteristics. An online version of the OPBI was distributed to a total of 56 community engagement actors. Community engagement actors were defined as administrators and faculty members who were directly involved in community engagement programming at The College. Within this sample, 35 completed the OPBI, which represented a 63 percent response rate. Participants were evenly balanced between administrators (17) and faculty members (18).

The second phase of the study, Phase II, was qualitative in nature and consisted of a series of three semi-structured focus group interview sessions. Participants were recruited from the 35 community engagement actors that had completed the OPBI. During the interviews, participants were asked a series of 13 open-ended questions that were carefully designed and piloted to uncover how community engagement actors at The College were conceptualizing place and place-building within the context of community engagement programming. Seeding these discussions were preliminary results from the document analysis and OPBI. A total of 27 actors participated in these sessions, of which 15 were administrators, and 12 were faculty members.

In both phases of the study, all data remained confidential. During Phase I, completed questionnaires received electronically assigned numbers to maintain anonymity through the collection and analysis process. These numbers were seen only by the researcher and were used for study purposes only. During Phase II, all focus group interviews were kept confidential. Ground rules for focus group sessions included provisions for the use of only first names during the session and participants were asked to protect confidentiality by not sharing information regarding who participated or the information shared during the sessions. Further, confidentially protections included the use of pseudonyms during transcription. These pseudonyms are used in all the remaining sections of this document. All participants in the study completed an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D) before any data are collected as part of Phase I (OPBI) or Phase II (focus group interviews). Finally, any references to the study site, departments and offices, and the site, and the primary points of contact were made anonymous to ensure that the identity of the institution and those involved in the study were protected.

With OPBT as the conceptual lens, the analysis focused on three types of collected data. These included: 1) institutional document data, 2) survey data, and 3) focus group interview data. Table 9 presents each of the data sources, the type of data and participants, and the abbreviation used in the following sections to identify the data source. The analysis of institutional document and focus group interview data was broadly based on the Framework approach which is a matrix method of organizing and synthesizing data (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Guided by the steps outlined in the method, each document was carefully reviewed multiple times to identify key concepts connected to research questions one and three (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Key concepts identified in each of the documents were highlighted with notes regarding meaning and context were made in the margins. During this familiarization stage, a collection of 32 codes and 12 related categories were identified across institutional document and focus group interview data. Using these codes and categories as a foundation, an analytical framework was iteratively developed through a continual process of grouping and regrouping of similar ideas. Once finalized, the finished framework was used to index (code) the data.

To limit the influence of subjectivity in the analysis process, the final analytical framework was given to a second researcher who used it to independently code each document. Once each document had been coded by both researchers, the team met to discuss the "fit" of initial codes and categories. During this step, several minor modifications were made to the framework. Following this step, all the coded data were moved into individual documents using NVivo®. Next, coded text from these documents was charted into Excel® spreadsheets that were organized by theme. Finally, the charted

115

data were carefully analyzed with the goal of interpreting collected data in ways that addressed the research questions guiding the study (Carey et al., 2007).

Table 9

*Data Sources, Type, and Abbreviation*

| Data Source | Data Type / Participants | Abbreviation |
|---|---|---|
| The Strategic Plan | Institutional Document Data, Institutional Framing Document | SP |
| Community Service and Service Learning Vision Statement | Institutional Document Data, Community Engagement Framing Document | VS |
| Report of the Civic Engagement Task Force. | Institutional Document Data, Community Engagement Framing Document | TFR |
| Civic Engagement Working Group Report. | Institutional Document Data, Community Engagement Framing Document | WGR |
| Community Engagement Mission and Vision Statements | Institutional Document Data, Community Engagement Framing Document | MVS |
| Community Engagement Classification (CEC) Application | Institutional Document Data | CEC Application |
| Organizational Place-Building Inventory | Survey Data, 17 Administrators, 18 Faculty Members | OPBI |
| Focus Group #1 | Focus Group Interview Data, 7 Administrators, 7 Faculty Members | FG1 |
| Focus Group #2 | Focus Group Interview Data, 5 Administrators, 3 Faculty Members | FG2 |
| Focus Group #3 | Focus Group Interview Data, 3 Administrators, 2 Faculty Members | FG3 |

The analysis of survey data employed a predetermined scoring method that was developed by the place-building researchers that created the OPBI (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). OPBI scoring was based on how respondents evaluated the importance of certain place-building activities across the five place-building dimensions using a seven-point Likert type response scale that ranged from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Each Likert Scale item was assigned a value of 1 to 7. For example, "Strongly Agree" had a value of 1 and "Strongly Disagree" had a value of 7. Scores for each question were calculated and then summed for each dimension. Once the summed values

116

were calculated for all the completed surveys, they were combined so that means could be tabulated for each dimension. Following this step, the OPBI Scoring Matrix was used to identify the institution's place-building profile for each of the five dimensions.

The information used to address each of the study's research questions included a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. Based on the study's research design, the data and analysis used in addressing research questions one and three were qualitative institutional document and focus group interview data. Research question three used both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative component was the OPBI survey instrument developed and tested by place-building researchers. The results of this survey were paired with qualitative findings from the analysis of institutional document and focus group interview data. Table 10 illustrates how the research questions were paired with specific data sources during the analysis.

Table 10

*Research Questions, Associated Phases, and Data Sources*

| Research Question | Phase | Data |
|---|---|---|
| RQ1: How has the institution conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement? | Phase I: Qualitative<br>Phase II: Qualitative | Institutional Document Data<br>Focus Group Interview Data |
| RQ2: According to OPBT what are the institution's place-building profiles? | Phase I: Qualitative<br>Phase II: Qualitative | Survey Data<br>Institutional Document Data<br>Focus Group Interview Data |
| RQ3: How, and to what degree, are the institution's place-building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships? | Phase I: Qualitative<br>Phase II: Qualitative | Institutional Document Data<br>Focus Group Interview Data |

**Findings for Research Question One**

Research question one asked "How has the institution conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement?" To answer this question, the analysis focused on two relevant data sources, institutional documents and focus group interviews. The former reflected the official, adopted policy of the institution and the latter were the collective perceptions of the community engagement actors at The College. Each of these documents were systematically analyzed using the Framework Method of qualitative content analysis to better understand how the institution was "thinking" about place and place-building.

To present the findings for research question one, the following section has been organized into four sub-sections. The first three revolve around topics related to research question one and the final section is a summary of key findings for each topic. Topic one examined how The College had identified and discussed places beyond the institution's physical campus within institutional documents and by community engagement actors at The College. This section, titled Places and the Institution, provides a detailed summary of the two major themes, local places and non-local places, both of which emerged during this exploration. Topic two examined the place-based roles identified and discussed by the institution and its community engagement actors. This section, titled Place-Based Roles, details a group of five roles that emerged in the analysis. The third and final topic, titled Geography of Engagement, digs deeper into how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building by examining where the engagement was happening around the institution. Figure 12 illustrates the three topics related to research question one and the related themes and subthemes that emerged during the analysis. It is important to note

118

that the size of the circles for themes and subthemes were illustrated to be proportional to the strength of each.
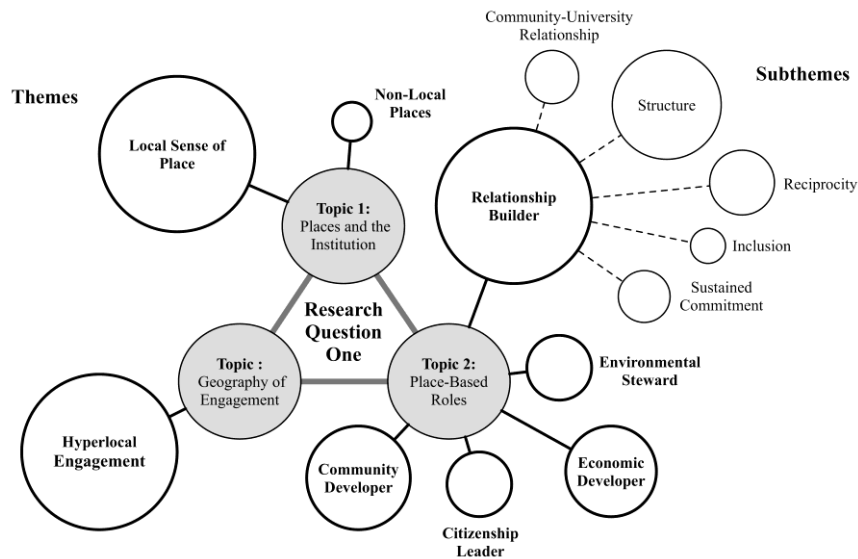


*Figure 12.* Research question one: Topics, themes, and subthemes.

## Topic 1: Places and the Institution

As part of the effort to better understand how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building, it was necessary to examine and attempt to quantify the specific places identified by The College. Making this determination was important to pinpointing the places to which The College is committed. Place, in this context, refers to references to particular bounded geographies beyond the institution's 79-acre physical campus. To make this determination, the analysis focused on two types of data, institutional document and focus group interview data. The analysis revealed a strong local sense of place across institutional documents and focus group transcripts.

Initial reviews of the data revealed that places beyond The College campus were principally identified using a collection of nine terms across the documents. These terms included: "community," "Pleasantville," "local," "the town," "the city," "region,"

"world," "global," and "nation." Using these terms as a basic coding structure, each document was searched, using NVivo® and Word®, for references to place using this language. This review evidenced more than 500 references to place across the documents.

However, a closer review of the context of these occurrences revealed that many lacked a direct connection to an identifiable, bounded geography and/or were not connected to the institution's community engagement programing. For instance, the term "community" was frequently used to reference a general activity (i.e. community service or community engagement) or group of people (i.e. community partners) and not a specific place. This lack of connection to place was evident in the following statement taken from the SP: "We will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the brand among other segments of the College *community*, especially alumni, who must be equipped to serve as ambassadors of the College." In other instances, the place-based terminology used could not be connected with the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. An example of this missing connection is evident in the following statement taken from the CEC Application which states: "The Washington Monthly rankings rate 255 of the top liberal arts colleges in the *nation* based on three broad categories…"

Given these contextual challenges, the analytical framework was adjusted to include only clear references to particular, bounded geographies within the context of the institution's community engagement programing. An example of statements fitting the revised framework included the following taken from the SP: "The College's success has been intertwined with the well-being of our *local community* since the College's inception." Using the framework, each reference to place was carefully reviewed in its

context. This further review revealed that only 334 of the original 500+ references to place could be associated with a particular geography within the frame of the institution's engagement programing. A summary table of the enumerated place codes with corresponding institutional document or focus group transcript is presented in Table 11. The asterisk following each of these place codes indicates that all the derivatives of these terms were considered. For example, for the code region, references to regional and/or regionally were considered in the context that they appeared. Excluded were occurrences of the codes in document or section titles, headers or footers of documents, or term usage by the moderator during focus group interviews.

Table 11

*References to Place Codes in Institutional Document and Focus Group Interview Data*

| Document | community(*) | Pleasantville | local(*) | the town | the city | region(*) | world(*) | global(*) | nation(*) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SP | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| VS | 20 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| TFR | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| WGR | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MVS | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CEC Application | 48 | 15 | 26 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 1 |
| FG1 | 32 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FG2 | 21 | 26 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FG3 | 18 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Totals** | **156** | **79** | **45** | **20** | **7** | **8** | **11** | **6** | **2** |

 *\* includes derivatives of place codes*

At this point, all of the 334 indexed references to place were summarized into a matrix organized by the coding structure. By charting the data in this way, it became clear that these terms could be grouped into two, conceptually related, thematic categories: local and non-local places. The term "local" is a general geographic scalar reference frequently used by geographers to delineate to a relatively small area that has "identifiable social or physical features" (Reardon et al., 2008, p. 489). In this research, local places were defined as those immediately adjacent to The College campus, and non-local were references to place *not* adjacent to The College. This proximal scalar differentiation was admittedly general, but integral to finding important patterns in the data. These categories and their associated codes became the foundation of the final analytical framework used to guide document indexing and ensure coding consistency. Table 12 presents the final analytical framework used in the analysis for this topic.

Table 12

*Topic 1 Analytical Framework*

| Theme | Code | Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Local**: Places immediately adjacent to The College | community | A geographic or place-based notion of community. |
| | Pleasantville | The official name of the municipality in which The College is located. |
| | the city | General reference to the municipality in which The College is located. |
| | the town | General reference to the municipality in which The College is located. |
| | local | Reference to areas near and/or close to The College. |
| **Non-Local**: Places not adjacent to The College | region | Large geographic area, typically larger than the county. |
| | nation | The United States of America. |
| | world | The earth, its countries, peoples, and features. |
| | global | General reference to the whole world. |

**Theme 1: Local sense of place.** The most salient common theme that emerged in reviewing both institutional and focus group interview data was a local sense of place. A "local sense of place" is used here to mean a sense of attachment and connectedness to

places near The College (Kennelly & Shaivastava, 2013). Evidence of this local orientation was easily seen in the frequency of "local" vocabulary in the data. Local terms used included: community, Pleasantville, local, the town, and the city. As can been seen in Table 11 local references to place far outnumbered non-local references in both institutional documents and interview transcripts. In fact, when all local place codes were combined they totaled 307 of the 334 references to place, or 92 percent of the total.

One of the clearest indications of the strength of this local orientation in the documents can be seen in how the term "community" was used. In most cases, the term was used as "the community." A closer examination of the context of these usages revealed that in most cases the community was employed to reference local geographies. For example, the following statement taken from the VS document illustrates an implicit local connection by including a reference to the institution's host community of Pleasantville:

> We can imagine significant projects in *the community* that tackle multi-faceted problems approached from multiple angles using a variety of educational tools. For example, we might address the environmental, housing, economic and cultural challenges of a *particular neighborhood in the Pleasantville area* by utilizing community-based research projects, [student leaders], student fellows from [Office of Civic Engagement] as well as independent studies, and senior comps.

In another instance, community was used in combination with the word "our," as in "our community." Again, the local connection is clear as illustrated in the following text taken from the SP document:

Part of our heritage is a strong commitment to engage in the civic life of *our community*. While this commitment has resulted in numerous excellent individual outreach activities, sometimes those initiatives occur in isolation from one another. We will consolidate and coordinate *our community* efforts, putting them more directly in service to our educational mission.

Another frequent local reference was the use of "our community" in combination with the term "local." This combination was again illustrative of a strong local sense of place, which can be seen in the following example taken from the institution's CEC Application:

These new structures [Office of Civic Engagement] will serve as the "space" for listening to and thinking with *our community* partners as we wrestle together with the most challenging problems that face *our community*. We have committed both human and financial resources to The Center, and we are enthusiastic about its potential to benefit our students in terms of how and what they learn, our faculty in further developing their expertise with the pedagogy of engagement, and *our local community*.

The analysis of focus group interview transcripts revealed an even stronger local orientation. This orientation was evidenced by the frequency of local vocabulary and virtual absence of non-local references. In fact, as can be seen in Table 11, the second most frequent reference to place in these transcripts was the term "Pleasantville" which was used by interviewees a total of 54 times. One institutional administrator, when discussing their role in advancing engagement at The College, stated:

…our office has different programs and each program has a different goal and

different model, but it's all about community engagement, getting to know

*Pleasantville*, and because *Pleasantville* is these students' homes this is their

home for four years and so it's getting them, not just involved in their passions

and their interests in service but also getting them to know *Pleasantville* itself.

The focus on and importance of Pleasantville was also taken up by a faculty member

during FG3. The participant, in attempting to explain how they were thinking about place

within the context of engagement, stated:

…that's how you get people to participate in our community is if they care and

they feel connected, which makes our whole community better when people are

actively engaged. And I think it's more meaningful for the students or for anyone

else participating in *Pleasantville* if, you know, the students that I talk to that feel

connected to *Pleasantville*, they just, I think they have a stronger and richer

experience here than the students that are kind of like floating, surface level, just

going to school, and then they're out. I think they have a deeper experience, even

if they do end up leaving after graduation.

**Theme 2: Non-Local places.** A non-local place is defined in this research as any

location not adjacent to The College. A review of institutional and focus group interview

data revealed some discussion of distant geographies, but much less than discussion of

local places. Terms used to reference distant geographies were typically very general

"scalar" vocabulary such as: "region," "world," "global," and "nation." A review across

all the data revealed a total of 49 occurrences of these terms across institutional

documents and focus group transcripts. However, upon a closer examination of the

125

context of these terms, only 27 were connected to an identifiable geography within the context of the institution's engagement programing. This total represented only 8 percent of the total references to place. Interestingly, all non-local references were found in institutional documents, and not focus group transcripts. As can be seen in Table 11, the term "world" was cited most often (11 times), eight of which were found in the CEC Application. Other frequent references were "region" and "global," both of which occurred six times.

When discussing non-local places, most references were cited in terms of the active roles students should adopt after graduation. For example, the SP states:

And engagement—so critical a part of The College's contribution to this region over the years—must be redefined to encompass a *global* society. Students will need to experience a genuinely diverse campus and become engaged in life beyond the *region's* borders if they are to continue our proud tradition of becoming difference-making alumni in their communities and throughout the *world*.

Statements found in the community engagement framing documents also echoed a post-graduation engagement theme. This focus on student behavior after college was evident in the following taken from the VS document: "In 2003-2004, an AmeriCorps VISTA project was initiated in response to graduates desiring to continue to be engaged in service in this *region* after graduating." However, some institutional documents did reference current students such as the following found in the SP. "Require study away. Experiences that require leaving a familiar cultural context to engage with others in a

domestic or international environment governed by unfamiliar cultural norms are critical to the education of *global* citizens."

Other references to non-local places were more specific to engagement ongoing community engagement programing at The College. The following statement, also taken from the SP document, reflects an interest in engaging local and distant places: "The College is a place of unusual combinations—where teachers are scholars, where students are engaged in Pleasantville and in the *world*, and where our distinguished history meets our limitless future." Similarly, more directive statements were found in community engagement framing documents. The following, taken from the VS document, reflected an awareness and interest in regional engagement through service learning activities. "Over the next five years the continued efforts in the area of community service and service-learning will be one way The College will exercise leadership and institutional citizenship within the *region* and continue to be a model of a College with a conscience."

**Topic 2: Place-Based Roles**

The second important aspect in understanding how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building within its community engagement framework was exploring the "place-based" roles identified by The College and its community engagement actors. This exploration revolved around better understanding of, and how, the institution and its community engagement actors framed its role in places beyond its boundaries. Underpinning this analysis was the recognition that anchor institutions, like The College, represent powerful prime-movers that can be engaged in ways that contribute to, or detract from, the social construction of place (Moore, 2014). This recognition is neatly articulated in the following statement taken from Becoming Stewards of Place (2002): "Local higher education institutions have a unique role to play

as catalyst, convenor, and provider of information and expertise. Institutions that assume some 'responsibility for place' will fulfill these roles" (p. 20).

To investigate the place-building roles established by The College, this part of the analysis again focused on related text found in institutional documents and focus group transcripts. The analytical framework developed for this topic began with multiple reads of the data to identify recurring concepts and ideas. Identified in the data were a set of five roles that included: relationship builder, environmental steward, community developer, citizenship leader, and economic developer (see Figure ?). Also, five subthemes emerged within the relationship builder role, the most referenced in both institutional and focus group data. Subthemes included: relationship, reciprocity, inclusion, and sustained commitment. These topics, themes, and subthemes became the foundation of the final analytical framework used in the analysis. Table 13 illustrates the analytical framework used in determining the place-based role of the institution and presents the working definitions of each which was used throughout the analysis. The following sections detail these themes and subthemes.

Table 13

*Topic 2 Analytical Framework*

| # | Theme | Subtheme | Description |
|---|-------|----------|-------------|
| 1 | **Relationship Builder:** Responsible for creating and cultivating social interactions between The College and local organizations, institutions, and individuals | University-community Relationship | General references to the relationship building between The College and its larger communities. |
| | | Reciprocity | An intentional give-and-take or mutual exchange within the university-community relationship. |
| | | Structure | The broad framework, or elements, that connect and support engagement. |
| | | Inclusion | Intentionally involving multiple individuals, entities, and organizations outside the institution in community engagement activities. |
| | | Sustained Commitment | The notion of a continued, long-term university-community relationship. |
| 2 | **Environmental Steward:** | | Engaging in activities and partnerships designed to address the environmental well-being and sustainability of natural areas and resources beyond the campus boundaries. |
| 3 | **Community Developer:** | | Contributing to the quality of life in local communities and neighborhoods. In this role, focus areas for The College would include education, health, housing, and poverty. |
| 4 | **Citizenship Leader:** | | Working towards the betterment of the community through engagement activities and partnerships designed to encourage civic learning, political participation, and community building. |
| 5 | **Economic Developer:** | | Community engagement activities and partnerships designed to support the economic health or vitality of surrounding communities. |

**Theme 1: Relationship builder.** Of the five roles identified in the data, most evident was the role of relationship builder. In fact, references to this institutional role occurred a total of 24 times in institutional documents and 19 times in the focus group transcripts. A relationship builder, according to this research, involves the creation and cultivation of social interactions between and among The College and local organizations, institutions, and individuals (Bruning, Mcgrew, & Cooper, 2006). During the analysis of these 43 references, it became clear that there were five threads weaving through these discussions based on the explicit emphasis surmised from the coded text. These subthemes included: a) university-community relationship, b) reciprocity, c)

structure, d) sustained commitment, and e) inclusion. The following sections detail each of these subthemes.

**Subtheme 1: University-Community relationship.** General discussions around the importance of relationship building between The College and its larger communities were most evident in the focus group data. Evidence of this subtheme were found in 13 portions of the transcripts reflecting the thoughts and ideas of the institutions community engagement actors. Among these, one of the most direct references to the importance of relationship building was articulated by a faculty member in FG1 in the following comment:

> …once I've made that partnership [placement of psychology majors in local agencies] and because we're in a rural area, to me that *relationship is really, really important*. So, it used to be my focus was on my students' learning and now *my focus is on the relationship that I forged with these folks in the community*, and I don't threaten my students, but for me *my relationships are so important*, and it's even like more important to me because it's a rural area.

Later, in the same focus group session, another faculty member stated:

> Jill and I co-coordinate our Service Day, which is once a month-to-month service opportunity...for college students, and a lot of what we've done this year is to partner with these other organizations to create more of a community home for our college students, but what we also do is *build relationships* so that when it's not Service Day we still have [local agencies] giving us a call and saying, hey, I really need this done, do you have any students that are available this weekend

130

that can go out…? …We have a group of students that made such a profound

connection… now they want to go back there every time.

During FG2, an administrator responding to a question regarding the role of The College

in surrounding communities reflected the importance and priority of relationship building

by stating: "…that's one of our priorities, *building that relationship with Pleasantville.*"

Another aspect of relationship building that came up frequently during the focus

group sessions was the institution's role in creating connections between The College

population and the larger, local community. One college administrator summed up the

importance of facilitating these connections during FG3:

I think giving students opportunities to have multiple engagements… I think to

feel connected to a place, we need to engage with it multiple times… So, those

like sustained connections and visits and yeah, *connecting people, students, to*

*people in the community*, so that they kind of have a sense of the shared history

and future, because… the students are so transient. I think it's really important for

them or anyone new to Pleasantville…to visit folks downtown and… hear things

that you wouldn't otherwise know about when you go through and engage with

people who have lived here for even two years, you know?

The importance of making these connections in building a sense of place among students

was picked up by faculty member during FG1 who stated:

[making connections] changes the campus from when Susan was here when it was

insular to *making Pleasantville place* where they [students] do go off campus, and

they do care if something happens downtown or a business closes… so I think it

changes the nature of the town and gown divide and that's...*to make it a place*, as

Lisa said, where it feels like this is your home, at least away from home…

> ***Subtheme 2: Reciprocity.*** Another thread that ran through institutional document

and focus group data was the importance of developing reciprocal relationships within

the framework of the institution's community engagement programing. Reciprocity, in

this context, was defined as an intentional give-and-take or mutual exchange within the

university-community relationship. The analysis revealed a clear acknowledgement in the

data that initiating and facilitating reciprocal relationships between The College and

outside partners was part of the institution's relationship building role. For example, the

VS contains the following language regarding the structure of the university-community

relationship:

> Community service efforts were viewed as generous acts of charity on behalf of
>
> The College. To rectify this reality, work began to focus on *"partnership" and*
>
> *"reciprocity"* as new paradigms of relationship between The College and the
>
> Community.

The WGR document, when framing a recommendation regarding future university-

community collaborations, stated:

> Form an advisory group made up of representatives from each stakeholder group.
>
> The representative for each stakeholder would gather their constituencies and get
>
> feedback on specific questions and ideas, then the representatives would come
>
> together and discuss - then the drafts would be sent back - *this becomes a*
>
> *reciprocal process.*

In another section of the same document, reciprocity is included as one of the Work Group's specific recommendation which stated: "*Reciprocity* - stress "with" over "in" the community. A shared vision: This [shared vision] should pervade all the training and development efforts, as well as the criteria for all projects."

Another clear reference to reciprocity was also included in the CEC Application. In the opening section of the application included a letter drafted by The College president. In the letter, the president includes not only references to the concept but also an explanation of its importance. In the opening paragraph the President stated:

When I became The College's 21st president in 2008, the college already had earned a national reputation for community engagement. This was one of its most attractive and compelling features when I was considering the move to The College. I am pleased to report that our commitment to engaging with our community partners has become stronger, and *today we work in partnerships based on reciprocity.*

In a later section of the same document he expands on how reciprocity will be enabled and why it is important:

At the center of [Office of Civic Engagement] will be a space called the Collaboratory where faculty, staff, students and community partners will collaborate on projects of mutual concern. Such a Collaboratory is groundbreaking in its *emphasis on reciprocity among partners*. All too often community engagement at the college level has meant addressing a community problem in relative isolation from the community that is to be served. In contrast, the Collaboratory will serve as a hub to connect community-defined needs with

133

College resources and interests. It is intended to be a space where the complex and stubborn problems of our local community are defined by all concerned, where possible solutions are proposed and discussed by appropriate community and college stakeholders, and where those stakeholders then build a joint plan of action to address the issue.

***Subtheme 3: Structure.*** One of the most frequently referenced aspects of relationship building was structure. Structure, in this context, is the broad framework, or elements, that connect and support engagement. In total, engagement structures were referenced 18 times across institutional documents and focus group interview data. Examples of these structures could include formalized and/or institutionalized methods of communication between The College and its larger community, standing committees formed to include community members, or the establishment of protocols for assessment and evaluation of engagement activities.

References to the importance of building formalized relationship structures were included in the VS document. In the "Where are we now" section, the following statements were included to describe methods through which the community could influence engagement initiatives:

> Efforts were undertaken to create *structures* for community partners to give input on the shape of community service and civic engagement initiatives. Community partners were invited on various committees to share their ideas in shaping our programs beginning in the fall of 2003.

Later, in the same document, this theme is continued in discussing the future of engagement at The College. Also included was language establishing the connection between structure and the previous subtheme of reciprocity:

> Over the next five years, we have to *create vehicles to foster authentic partnerships*. Reciprocity requires that we put in place *structures of communication* that make it possible for community partners to give honest input on the shaping of our programs.

References to the importance of structures were also found in the CEC Application. In fact, the college president stated the following as when discussing community engagement programing at The College and the formation of a center to coordinate university-community interactions: "These new structures [The Center and Collaboratory] will serve as the "space" for listening to and thinking with our community partners as we wrestle together with the most challenging problems that face our community."

Other examples continued a focus on structures designed to encourage and enable communication between The College and the larger community. The following was taken from the recommendations section of the WGR document. "Create an ongoing *structure*, committee or advisory board with regular meetings that is comprised of community members that has the agency for not only input, but also decision-making."

References were also present in the focus group transcripts. However, community engagement actors rarely used the term "structure" to describe standing frameworks designed to encourage university-community interaction. For example, the

following related exchange between the moderator and institutional administrator was taken from the FG1 transcript:

> Administrator: Exactly. Or an organization *submits an application* and says we could really use a [student worker from Program 1], we could really use an [student worker from Program 2], we could really use a [student worker from Program 3], because we're trying to get this done and we can't do it on our own.
>
> Moderator: I see, I see. So, but what's interesting here is that you've got a standing *structure* or "door." You've created a door to the institution to which people can go through and say, hey, I need some help.

In other instances, participants discussed structure explicitly, like the following quote from a faculty member in FG2. "We worked very hard to help to put in place structures... like the [engagement program] and the [university-community partnership group]."

*Subtheme 4: Inclusion.* Another important connective idea that emerged in the analysis of the institution's relationship building role was inclusion. Inclusion was defined here as intentionally involving multiple individuals, entities, and organizations outside the institution in community engagement activities. This subtheme was discussed most often as an intentional action that involved bringing in members of the surrounding community to help develop and focus community engagement efforts at The College. Discussions of this subtheme occurred in both institutional document and focus group data.

Examples in institutional documents included the statements like the following found in the TFR which stated: "The impact of our already strong community

engagement programs can be enhanced through implementing *integrative models of collaboration,* around shared learning goals and shared areas of focus for our work in the local community." Another statement found in the WGR in a discussion of recommended criteria for a civic learning addition to the curriculum stated: "…engagement activity(s) and the course content/learning objectives complement each other due to a high-quality placement. The learning experience involves *interactive partnership with community* through students working directly with community members, organizations, and/or issues." Later, when detailing a set of recommendations for the future of community engagement at The College in the same document, the following statement was included: "Partners from the *community as co-leaders* for specific initiatives including the network for local knowledge and research and faculty development programs."

The notion of inclusion was also present in the CEC Application. In describing how The College had affirmed community engagement, the following statement was included taken from a 2013 interview with the college president: "What's common in all of these [community engagement] projects is that the campus *collaborates with the community* to set goals and advance projects that are multifaceted and complex." Later in the application, in a response to a question regarding how The College had encouraged professional development among community engagement actors, the following statement was included:

> The work of the [a team focused on a particular community engagement (CE) program] has advocated a philosophy of democratizing civic engagement at The College. The posture of "every voice, equal voice" has been evident in [another

engagement program] shared book studies that for the past three academic years have *included community members*, students, faculty and administrators.

In the fall of 2012 [another CE committee] convened. This new structure was created on the democratic principle of "Every Voice, Equal Voice." *Students and community partners* were a part of the committee along with faculty and administrators. In the spring of 2013 this committee organized [a working group] to meet over the summer and following semester. The purpose of this working group was to study papers and documents in the field. Again *students and community partners* as well as faculty and staff participated.

Another question response that addressed how The College had undertaken outreach to its larger community discussed an emerging partnership between the local public school science teachers and STEM faculty at The College. In describing the mechanics of this partnership, the response included the following statement regarding inclusion: "*Local teachers are invited* to become involved with College faculty research and field work."

Including populations beyond the college in developing community engagement programming was also a common theme in the focus group discussions. One faculty member during FG2 highlighted the importance of inclusion in this way: "Well, I think there's the ongoing issue of outreach to people in need, *giving them a voice*, having them take initiative and trust in the efforts that are going on." Another participant in FG3, reflecting on how relationships were constructed with the larger community stated:

…I think it's been emphasis on relationships. It's not just these college students come here and see that Pleasantville needs whatever, and then give them

whatever, but *engage with the community and say what do you wish you had, what issues are you having, and what do you think would fix it, you know, more of a collaboration and…listening.*

***Subtheme 5: Sustained commitments.*** The importance of sustained commitments to engagement in surrounding communities was another common theme found in the data. The notion of sustained commitment was defined here as an explicit assurance or promise of a continued, long-term university-community relationship. This idea was present in both institutional and focus group interview data.

For example, the following statement was found in the recommendations section of the TFR: "Enhanced collaboration and coordination of our programs will require better communication. A close examination of existing assets can ensure that we build *sustainable collaborations* in support of the College's mission and the goals of our local community." Another reference, taken from the same document, highlights a shared understanding of the importance of sustained commitments in building effective community engagement programming at The College. "Civic engagement at The College is inclusive and dynamic; it supports our College's mission to advance *sustainable partnerships*, initiatives and solutions to community concerns.

The WGR also discussed the value of long-term commitments in university-community relationship building. The following statement was taken from the recommendations section stated: "Recognize that students' *sustained multi-year commitment* to agencies facilitates the maintenance of partnerships. The CEC Application also highlighted sustained commitments. The following text was found in the institution's response to a question that asked about the future of engagement at The College. "The

future is to secure resources to *sustain* the partnerships and the work with and in the community.

The importance of sustained commitment also emerged as part of focus group discussions with community engagement actors at The College. One faculty member during FG3, responding to questions regarding the role of the institution in the larger community, stated: "Right, but Sally's idea of the *sustained commitment*, you know, or the *sustained being in the community*, I think, is really important, to get away from that sense of laboratory [using the community as the subject of research]. Later, an administrator during the same focus group interview stated: "…I think giving students opportunities to have multiple engagements… I think to feel connected to a place, we need to engage with it multiple times… So, those like *sustained connections* and visits and yeah, connecting people, students, to people in the community…"

**Theme 2: Environmental steward.** The institution's role as steward of the environment also emerged as one of the five roles identified by the institution. The institution's role as environmental steward consisted of engagement activities and partnerships designed to address the environmental well-being and sustainability of natural areas and resources beyond the campus. Multiple references to this role were found in four of the six institutional documents including the SP, the TFR, the MVS, and the CEC Application. Other, glancing references, were found in the focus group transcripts, but what is presented here is focused on the clearest references found in institutional document data.

The clearest identification of this role emerged during the analysis of institutional documents. For example, the SP addressed the institution's environmental stewardship role in this way:

> The College is fortunate to be located in a region with abundant natural resources. As a charter signatory of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, we affirm our commitment to *implementing a climate action plan to strategically reduce our environmental impact* and realize the economic benefits of improved operational efficiencies.

Related discussions were also present in community engagement framing documents. For instance, the TFR states:

> [the Office of Civic Engagement] was formed for the purpose of engaging College faculty, students and community partners in collaborations that support economic and *environmental sustainability*. An important benefit of Office is that it provides a mechanism to bring campus and community partners together to work on shared goals in support of a *sustainable Pleasantville*.

The MVS document also contained references to environmental stewardship. For example, following statement was included in the description of work related to the advancement of the institution's community engagement mission:

> The office [Office of Civic Engagement] supports all meaningful service - including philanthropy, one-time service experiences, virtual service initiatives, ongoing service and social justice initiatives.  The aim is to positively impact individuals, communities, living situations, *the environment* and unsafe or unjust systems and structures.

Later in the same description, the MVS stated: "Civic Engagement initiatives mobilize student, faculty, and administrative resources to collaborate on community efforts including *the environment,* community health, homelessness, hunger, animals, senior citizens, women's empowerment, education, and underserved youth."

The CEC Application also contains references to the role of the college as an environmental steward. In fact, in a section highlighting community engagement tracking mechanisms the application states: "Our strongest areas of engagement are youth, health, and *environmental.*" Also included was an excerpt from a 2013 interview with the president regarding the affirmation of community engagement at The College which stated:

> Pleasantville is not necessarily community of '*environmentalists,*' but we've found many opportunities to collaborate that not only advance *sustainability* but also uphold fiscal efficiency, social justice and community development. If we pushed *sustainability* as a stand-alone goal, we'd be less successful, but by recognizing that *sustainability* is always linked to many other community values in complex ways we've forged strong relationships and realized extraordinary outcomes.

Later, in a response to questions regarding fundraising directed to supporting community engagement, the following language was included:

> The College continues to seek external funding to support a variety of civic and community engagement initiatives. For example, we secured more than $200,000 in external grants to support our water ecology educational outreach program, [program name]. These grants were awarded by private foundations and the

Environmental Protection Agency. We also were awarded a grant from the

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to support an

environmental science educational outreach program focused on aquaponics in

our local schools.

The application also highlighted the environmentally focused community engagement

activities undertaken by the Environmental Science/Studies Department and the Global

Health Studies Program. According to the application, students and faculty from this

department and program "frequently weave community engagement into their core

courses."

**Theme 3: Community developer.** The institution's role as community developer

emerged as a clear theme within institutional document data. This theme identified in

four of the six institutional documents including the SP, VS, TFR, and MVS. The

working definition established in this research identified the institutional role of

community developer as the collection of activities and partnerships designed improve

the quality of life in local communities and neighborhoods. The common focus areas for

the role of community developer would include education, health, housing, and poverty.

The SP document contained one of the most direct references to this institutional

role. In fact, local community development is cited as one of the Plan's 18 key strategic

initiatives. The following statement was included in the History and Future section of the

SP:

Invest in Pleasantville in ways that support our mission and provide a marketing

advantage to the town and the College.

The College's success has been intertwined with the well-being of our local

community since the College's inception. Both must be successful if either is to

thrive. We will join with other community organizations and the local government

to support efforts to *develop and sustain thriving residential neighborhoods,*

invigorate the business sector, expand experiential learning opportunities, and

*increase the city's attractiveness*.

The other references were found in three of the community engagement framing

documents including the VS, TFR, and MVS. The following statement, taken from the

"Where we are going" section of the VS document, details not only the institution's role

as community developer but also what issues are important, how they would be

addressed, and at what geographic scale these activities would be focused (i.e. "a

particular neighborhood in the Pleasantville area"):

We can imagine significant projects in the community that tackle multi-faceted

problems approached from multiple angles using a variety of educational tools.

For example, we might address the *environmental, housing, economic and*

*cultural challenges of a particular neighborhood in the Pleasantville area* by

utilizing community-based research projects, [student leaders], student fellows

from [Office of Civic Engagement] as well as independent studies, and senior

comps.

The TFR, in discussing the history of engagement at The College, identifies community

development as one of the core components of the formal mission developed for the

institution's community engagement programming. Evident in the following statement is

not only the institution's role as community developer, but also how this role would be enacted via "capacity building" in local communities:

> The Civic Engagement Council's mission is "to engage students, faculty and community partners in collaborations that develop responsible citizenship, *improve community conditions and build the capacity of our communities,* while also enhancing learning, scholarship and civic responses across a wide variety of disciplines at the College."

Finally, a total of two references to the institution's role as community developer were included in the MVS document. The following statement, taken from the description of work related to the advancement of the institution's community engagement mission, describes the "aim" of this role and what challenges would focus this role:

> The office [Office of Civic Engagement] supports all meaningful service - including philanthropy, one-time service experiences, virtual service initiatives, ongoing service and social justice initiatives. *The aim is to positively impact individuals, communities, living situations, the environment and unsafe or unjust systems and structures.*

Later, in the same section of the document, the following text was included. This statement reinforced the institution's role as community developer and listed some additional community issues that would focus these efforts:

> Civic Engagement initiatives mobilize student, faculty, and administrative resources to *collaborate on community efforts including* the environment, *community health, homelessness, hunger*, animals, senior citizens, women's empowerment, *education, and underserved youth.*

145

**Theme 4: Citizenship leader.** The institution's role as citizenship leader emerged as a clear theme in both institutional document and focus group interview data. Citizenship is defined here working towards the betterment of the community through engagement activities and partnerships designed to encourage civic learning, political participation, and community building (Winter, Wiseman, & Muirhead, 2005). Discussions of The College's role as a citizenship leader revolved around how this role was framed and enacted within the context of its local community. The theme was identified in three of the six institutional documents including the SP, TFR, and VS. It also emerged during all three focus group interviews with the institution's community engagement actors.

The vision, contained the SP document, referenced the institution's role in preparing future citizens. While this does not necessarily connect to the community adjacent to The College, it does imply that that citizenship is something that will be taught and learned through active involvement in the local community during their time at The College:

> True to its history, The College will continue to prepare its graduates for leadership in the professions, business, and the public sector. Moreover, it will *prepare citizens* who contribute to the cultural and economic lives of their communities and act with insight, passion, ethical awareness and sensitivity on the complex challenges of their world.

In another statement, taken from the TFR document, the institution's role in developing "responsible citizenship" among students is continued. As can be seen below, the

146

document frames citizenship as one of the key components of the institution's community engagement mission:

The Civic Engagement Council's mission is "to engage students, faculty and community partners in collaborations that *develop responsible citizenship*, improve community conditions and build the capacity of our communities, while also enhancing learning, scholarship and civic responses across a wide variety of disciplines at the College."

The VS takes a slightly different cut at the institution's citizenship role in the last paragraph of the "Where are we going…" section of the document. What is clear in the following text is how the institution envisions citizenship and how this ideal will be incorporated within the framework of its future community service and service-learning activities:

Over the next five years the continued efforts in the area of community service and service-learning will be one way The College will exercise leadership and *institutional citizenship* within the region and continue to be a model of a College with a conscience.

During the focus group interviews, citizenship was also a theme. Some of the text from these discussions illustrative of this common thread is presented in the following three excerpts. The first is from FG1. Reflected in this statement is one faculty member's thoughts about the institution's role in modeling good citizenship through active participation in civic affairs:

… our students are not necessarily going back to their hometowns and re-engaging in their own communities. There's a massive dispersal and I think if

we're talking about educating and how to create a community elsewhere, we have

to model it. There's no other way to learn it… they (students) don't know how to

build community, and I think this is really important.

Another comment, made by an administrator during FG2, discussed the duty of the

institution to contribute to the improving the place in which it is located. This obligation

was reflected, by the participant, as part of the institution's role as "citizen" in the local

community:

> You know, we're invested in this community (Pleasantville). We can't just pack
>
> up and move somewhere else. This is home for us, and so, we want to always try
>
> and make it a better place, and you can argue over what better means, and we do
>
> that sometimes, but I think we have an obligation as a *citizen*, the institution as a
>
> *citizen*. All the people at the institution are citizens within that structure… (and
>
> should work) …to make this place better. We have a role. We have an obligation
>
> to do that.

In another exchange, taken from FG3, a participant reflected on the role of the institution

in creating "good citizens" by connecting students to the community in ways that foster

civic learning. This discussion was triggered by a question from the moderator regarding

why creating connections between students and the community was important:

> Moderator: Why is it important?
>
> Administrator: I think to have active *citizens*, like in our community, that's how
>
> you get people to participate in our community is if they care and they feel
>
> connected, which makes our whole community better when people are actively
>
> engaged.

Moderator: So, if I'm going to paraphrase that, would you say…it's like almost like a responsibility to teach the students how to be *citizens*. Is that right, or am I missing it?

Moderator: Yeah. I think, so, from my own experience, it's easy to live somewhere…(and not be connected). Yeah, because I think, in general… it's not obvious that you can participate in like local politics or in creating community. It's very easy to, like I said, kind of skim…stay on the surface and not feel like you're an active creator or actor in the community, you know? So, I guess that is something you have to learn.

**Theme 5: Economic developer**. The participation of institutions of higher learning in the economic aspects of the regions in which they are located have long been a part of community engagement in higher education (Morfessis & Malachuk, 2011). This role also emerged as a common theme during the analysis of institutional document data related to The College. In fact, the role was specifically referenced in three of the six institutional documents reviewed, including the SP, VS, and WGR.

The role of economic developer was defined in this research as community engagement activities and partnerships designed to support the economic health or vitality of surrounding communities. Past research related to higher education's role in contributing to the economic health of a particular communities identifies a collection of economic roles associated with this work. Common among these are purchaser, employer, workforce developer, incubator, and adviser and network builder (Peaslee, Hahn, & Coonerty, 2002).

The clearest reference in the SP was contained in initiative 12, part of 18 included in the document. Text associated with the institution's role as economic developer indicated that The College would "…join with other community organizations and the local government to support efforts to… invigorate the *business sector*, and… increase the city's (Pleasantville) attractiveness. While there was little indication regarding how this would be accomplished, it represented a clear inclusion of the institution's role in the *economic health* of the local community. Later, in the same document, when describing the future envisioned for the institution the authors indicated that The College will continue to prepare graduates who "…contribute to the cultural and economic lives of their communities…"

Among the community engagement framing documents, the VS contained another reference to the institution's economic contributions to the larger community. As cited earlier, the following text was included in the "Where are we going…" section:

We can imagine significant projects in the community that tackle multi-faceted problems approached from multiple angles using a variety of educational tools. For example, we might address the environmental, housing, *economic* and cultural challenges of a particular neighborhood in the Pleasantville area by utilizing community-based research projects, [student leaders], student fellows from [Office of Civic Engagement] as well as independent studies, and senior comps.

Lastly, the following statement was included as one of 10 specific recommendations in the WGR document. "Seek community input in designing initiatives that will facilitate, in both our students and institution, 'going up-stream' to seek root

causes of *economic* and social issues." This recommendation leverages the knowledge resources of The College in defining the economic issues that are framed by the community. A broader review of the context of this recommendation indicated that the community being referenced is the local community of Pleasantville.

**Topic 3: Geography of Engagement**

The third topic explored understanding how the institution had conceptualized place and place-building was the geography of the community engagement activities and partnerships at The College. In other words, where was engagement happening around The College and were there patterns in its spatial distribution? Addressing this question was important to quantifying where the institution chose to focus their engagement, as a reflection of their commitment to specific places around The College.

To establish a geography for the institution's engagement, the analysis focused on institutional document data. Each of these six documents were reviewed to identify references to specific engagement activities and/or partners. In this research, community engagement partners were defined as any public or private community-based organization, agency, or business with whom The College had established a standing relationship through which community engagement could be facilitated. Activities were defined as the diverse collection of university-community interactions that involved the community members, faculty members, administrators, and/or students. Once identified, documents were further reviewed to identify where these activities were happening and/or where the partners were located. In cases where a location was not included in the text, the researcher used the internet to gather related geographic information.

Among the documents, the TFR and CEC Application were most informative. The complete TFR, provided by the Office of Civic Engagement, included a survey of

community engagement "efforts and activities" across the institution. This list included a total of 37 activities. The CEC Application also included a list of activities and community engagement partners. This list, referred to in the application as a "Partnership Grid," was an opportunity for applicant institutions to "describe representative new and long-standing partnerships (both institutional and departmental) that were in place during the most recent academic year" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015). The College listed a total of six partnerships in the Partnership Grid submitted in 2015.

Other activities and partnerships were identified during the focus group interviews. These were ones identified by participating community engagement actors and researched to establish a geography. Finally, 68 activities and partnerships were identified by simply reviewing the institution's website and community engagement marketing materials publicly available via the internet.

In the end, a total of more than 171 community engagement activities and partnerships were identified as being connected to the institution between 2011 and 2017. However, a further analysis of this initial list revealed that only 144 could be connected to a specific, identifiable geography. Of these, 113 were partnerships and 31 were community engagement activities. These lists of community engagement activities and partnerships were confirmed via the Office of Civic Engagement's review of summarized data and mapping and via the focus group interview sessions with the institution's community engagement actors.

**Theme 1: Hyperlocal engagement.** The spatial analysis of community engagement at The College revealed a highly local concentration of community

engagement activities and partnerships. Hyperlocal is used here to reference an intensely local engagement strategy that prioritizes related activities and partnerships in the areas in which the institution has a physical presence (Dostilio, 2017). Table 14 provides an overview of the spatial distribution of community engagement activities and partnerships at The College.

Table 14

*The Geography of Engagement at The College*

| Activities and partnerships located… | Activities | Partnerships | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Within Pleasantville Political Boundary | 24 | 35 | 59 |
| Within 5 miles of the Pleasantville Political Boundary | 5 | 9 | 14 |
| Within 25 miles of the Pleasantville Political Boundary | 2 | 10 | 12 |
| Beyond the 25 mile buffer but in the boundaries of Pennsylvania | 0 | 44 | 44 |
| Beyond the boundaries of Pennsylvania but in adjacent states | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| Within the boundaries of the United States but beyond adjacent states | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Beyond the boundaries of the United States | 0 | 2 | 2 |

The extent of local concentration of the institution's engagement activities and partnerships is reflected in Table 14 and the spatial distribution is illustrated in Map 1 and 2, both of which are part of Figure 13. As shown, 59 of the 144 activities and partners identified were located in the community in which The College was located (Pleasantville). This number represents 24 activities and 35 partnerships, or 41 percent of the total number of identified activities and partnerships. In further analyzing the distribution, an additional 14 were located within five miles of the political or municipal boundary of Pleasantville, and another 12 were located within 25 miles of the boundary (see Map 2). When summed, a total of 85 of the 144 (59 percent) mapped activities and

partnerships were located within 25 miles of Pleasantville. This number included all of the institution's community engagement activities.
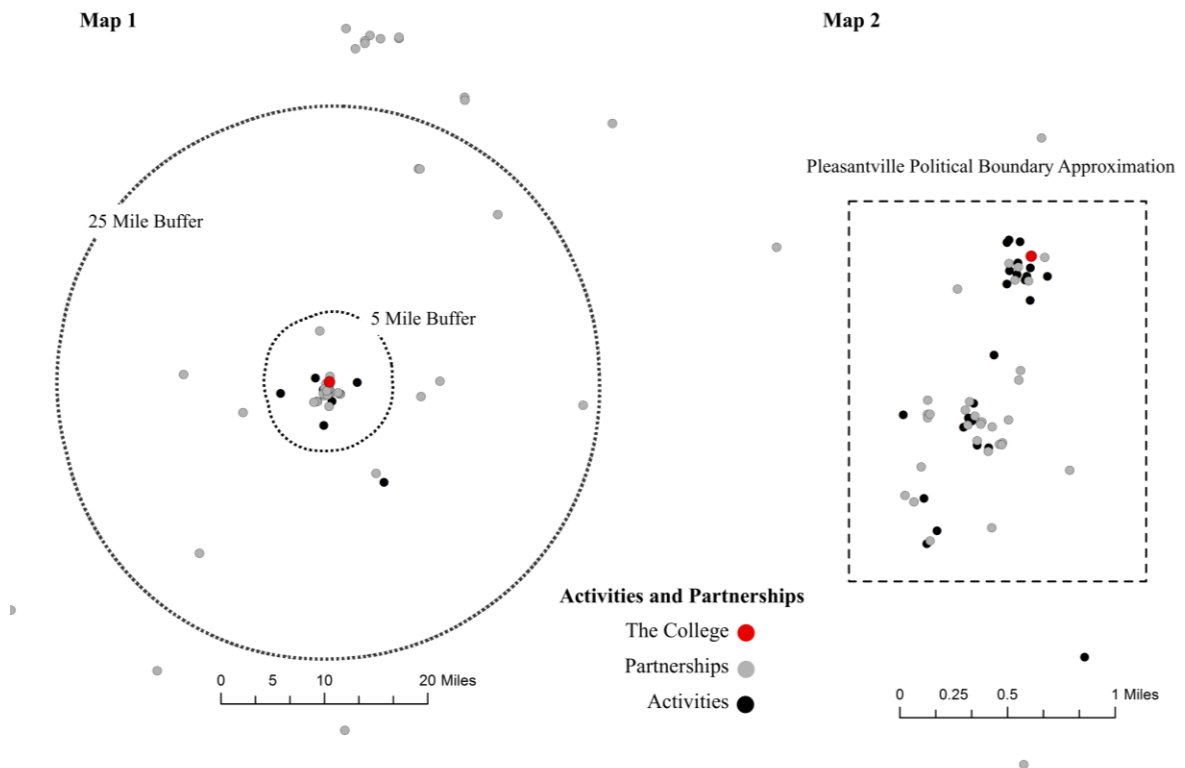


*Figure 13.* The spatial distribution of community engagement activities and partnerships.

The remaining 59 community engagement activities were "extralocal" or beyond the areas in which the institution has a physical presence. Among these extralocal partnerships, 44 were beyond the 25-mile buffer, but within the boundaries of Pennsylvania. Nine partnerships were beyond the Pennsylvania border but located in the adjacent states of Ohio, New York, West Virginia, and Maryland. Only four partnerships were located in geographies beyond adjacent states and only two were beyond the boundaries of the United States. As can be seen in this analysis, extralocal engagement is notable however, when balanced against the larger number of hyperlocal engagement

initiatives and the fact that many of the extralocal partners were connected to one program, a clear local orientation is evident.

It is important to note that many of the extralocal partnerships were associated with one particular program at The College, Creek Connections. In fact, this program alone reported a total of 55 partners located across Pennsylvania and neighboring states. Once mapped, all but two were located beyond the 25 mile boundary. This concentration of extralocal partnerships in a single program may have affected the overall distribution by reflecting a more highly non-local distribution of engagement activities than if this program were similar to others included in the analysis.

### Findings for Research Question Two

Research question two asked "According to Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT), what are the institution's place-building profiles?" To answer this question, the analysis focused on three relevant data sources: 1) survey data (OPBI), 2) institutional document data, and 3) focus group interview data. Survey data were collected using the Organizational Place-Building Inventory questionnaire. The OPBI was completed by a total of 35 community engagement actors at The College. The sample included 18 faculty members and 17 administrators. Institutional document data were a collection of framing documents along with the institution's 2015 CEC Application. And finally, focus group interview data were the collective perceptions of 27 community engagement actors (15 administrators and 12 faculty members) at The College.

Survey data were analyzed using a predetermined scoring method developed by place-building researchers. Results were used to assign place-building profiles for each of

the five place-building dimensions: nature, social relationships, built environment, ethics, and economic relationships. Possible OPBT profiles included: exploitive, contingent, contributive, and transformational. Institutional document and focus group interview data were systematically analyzed using the Framework Method of qualitative content analysis to qualitatively assign the correct OPBT profile for each of the place-building dimensions.

To present the findings for research question two, the following section has been organized into two sub-sections based on the sources of the data and a final summary section designed to synthesize results and findings. The first section, Quantitative Results, presents survey results from completed OPBI questionnaires and describes the assigned place-building profiles for each five place-building dimensions (social, economic, nature, ethics, and built environment). The second section, Qualitative Findings, uses the same OPBT framework to present findings from the qualitative content analysis of institutional document and focus group interview data. This analysis is focused by the results of the OPBI presented in the previous section. The third and final section related to research question two, titled Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings, is a discussion of key quantitative and qualitative findings and how they support the place-building profiles established for The College.

**Quantitative Results**

The sole quantitative aspect of this study, completed in Phase I, was the distribution and analysis of the Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI) questionnaire. The OPBI was an online survey tool that was designed by place-building researchers as an objective instrument to assess an organization's values and strategies along five dimensions or latent constructs of place building: nature, social relationships,

156

built environment, ethics, and economic relationships (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). The purpose of using the OPBI in this research was to use this survey as a tool to frame and investigate the place building relationship between The College and its associated communities and environments.

The OPBI was distributed to a total of 56 community engagement actors at The College. Of these actors, a total of 35 completed the survey. Within this sample, 18 were faculty members and 17 administrators at The College. The survey was distributed via email and completed online using Qualtrix®. Survey results were then downloaded as an Excel® file and descriptive statistics generated using the same software.

The OPBI (see Appendix C) is composed of 29 Likert-type items organized around each of the five place-building dimensions. Questions 1-6 of the OPBI measure the social relations variable which "includes the full spectrum of interactions between an organization's employees and stakeholders and among and between other organizations" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). Questions 7-12 measure economic relations or the organization's level of investment in the fiscal well-being of the community. Questions 13-18 measure nature dimension of place-building. The nature dimension "includes natural as opposed to man-made. Such as the landscape, earth, geography and natural resources" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). Questions 19-24 measure ethics or the "practices and implicit and explicit contract with the community that seeks to establish itself as legitimate" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). Finally, questions 25-29 are concerned with the built environment, which includes man-

made buildings, roads, and other material infrastructure associated with the organization and seeks to measure how these spaces are treated (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

To score the OPBI, this research used a scale previously developed and tested by OPBT researchers. Scoring was based on how respondents evaluated the importance of certain place-building activities across the five place-building dimensions using a seven-point Likert type response scale that ranged from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Each Likert Scale item was assigned a value of one to seven. For example, "Strongly Agree" had a value of one and "Strongly Disagree" had a value of seven. Scores for each question were calculated and then summed for each dimension. Once the summed values were calculated for all the completed surveys they were combined so that means could be tabulated for each dimension. Following this step, the OPBI Scoring Matrix was used to identify the institution's place-building profile for each of the five dimensions (see Table 3).

The four possible place-building profiles for the institution included: transformational, contributive, contingent, and exploitive (Thomas & Cross, 2007). According the OPBT, each profile differs in terms of how the institution expresses its agent perspective, the value the assigned to particular place-building dimensions, the presence of related corporate culture, and the institution's strategies and behaviors directed at place (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). OPBT researchers summarize these profiles in following text taken from Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr (2016, p. 23) and Thomas & Banning (2014, p. 55).

> Transformational organizations conceptualize or identify themselves as change agents acting to improve the lives of individuals and groups in a place.

Contributive organizations conceptualize themselves as investors and contributors to the well-being of places in which they operate. Contingent organizations view themselves simply as participants in places and exploitive organizations view themselves as independent agents with little to no obligations to the places in which they operate.

The analysis of OPBI scores revealed that The College holds a contributive place-building profile. OPBT researchers identify contributive organizations as those that view themselves as a "contributing member of a network of business people and community leaders who share a common ideology" (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 47). These organizations "need a place that needs them" and contributing to the quality of the places in which they exist ensures that both the place and the organization will have increased chances of success (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 47). As such, contributive organizations practice an "integrative strategy that cultivates and promotes its role as a key player/contributor in the community" (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 47).

Contributive organizations typically have an interdependent agent perspective. According to place-building researchers, "Place agent identities reveal how organizations conceptualize themselves as social actors—agents—in relation to the places in which they are located…" (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 47). OPBT identifies two possible types of agent perspectives: interdependent and independent. The former describes organizations that view themselves and their success as fundamentally tied to the well-being of place. The latter describes organizations that conceptualize themselves and their success as wholly detached from any aspect of place or its qualities (Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Cross, 2007; Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

Figure 14 illustrates the relationship between interdependent organizations and the two related place-building profiles: transformational and contributive.



*Figure 14.* Agent perspective of transformational and contributive organizations.

Descriptions of OPBI results for each of the five place-building dimensions are presented in the following paragraphs. Referenced throughout this discussion are Table 15 and Figure 15. Table 15 provides the average scores and associated place building profiles for each of the four place-building dimensions and Figure 15 illustrates OPBI scores and those associated with each group of community engagement actors.

Table 15

*OPBI Average Scores and Place-Building Profiles*

| Dimension | Administrators | Place-Building Profile | Faculty Members | Place-Building Profile | Totals | Place-Building Profile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social | 15.24 | Transformational | 17.28 | Contributive | **16.29** | Contributive |
| Economic | 21.35 | Contributive | 14.00 | Transformational | **22.57** | Contributive |
| Nature | 15.94 | Transformational | 7.00 | Transformational | **14.73** | Transformational |
| Ethics | 19.06 | Contributive | 10.50 | Transformational | **20.23** | Contributive |
| Built Environment | 17.15 | Contributive | 9.00 | Transformational | **18.89** | Contributive |
| **Total Place Score** | **19.50** | **Contributive** | **17.75** | **Contributive** | **18.62** | **Contributive** |

160

The mean score, across all participants (administrators and faculty members), for the *social dimension* was 16.29. This score, according the OPBI Scoring Matrix, is indicative of a contributive place-building profile. As can be seen in Figure 15, the average score among administrators was slightly lower (15.24) than the average score among faculty members (17.28). This roughly two point difference is significant because, according the OPBI Scoring Matrix, administrators indicate a transformational profile while faculty members indicate a contributive profile (see Figure 15). This difference was not uncommon in the results but notable here because it was the only instance in which administrators indicated a transformational profile.

The mean score for the *economic dimension* was 22.57. This mean indicates that the institution holds a contributive place-building profile for this dimension. However, scores here were the highest of the five dimensions which put it solidly within the contributive profile. Means for administrators and faculty were also found to be significantly different in this dimension (see Figure 15). The administrator mean of 21.35 reflected 7.35 difference from the faculty member mean of 14.00. The difference means that faculty members qualified the institution as a transformational place-builder while administrators positioned The College as contributive.

Scores for the *nature dimension* were unique in two ways. First, the average scores of both groups of community engagement actors was the lowest of the five dimensions at 14.73. This score indicated a transformational profile for this dimension, the first and only time this profile was reflective of both administrators and faculty member scores. That said, the second unique aspect of scores in this dimension was the strong discrepancy between the average scores of these two groups. The average score

among faculty members was the lowest of any collected at 7 points (see Table 15).

Conversely, the average of administrators scores were 15.94, representing a nearly 9

(8.94) point difference (see Figure 15).
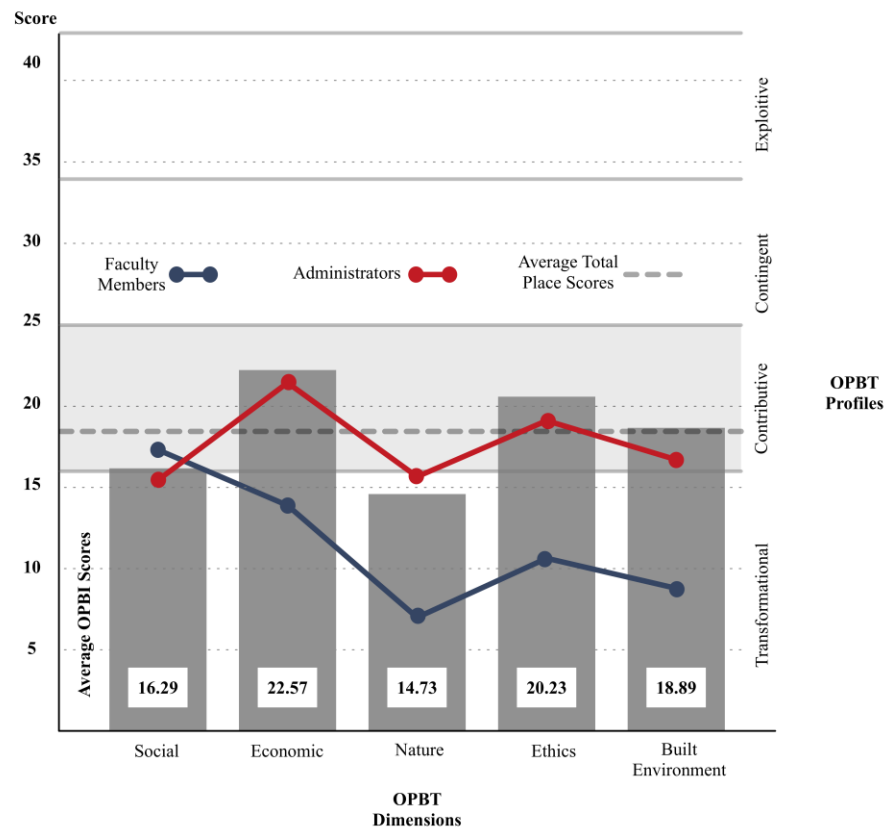


*Figure 15.* Average OPBI scores by dimension and actor group.

The combined mean score for the *ethics dimension* was 20.23, the second highest

of the five dimensions measured (see Table 15). Again, the means of administrators and

faculty members were significantly different. Administrator scores averaged 19.06

reflecting a contributive profile, while the faculty members average score was nearly 9

points lower (10.50), reflecting a transformative profile. However, when these scores

were combined, the strength of administrator scoring within this dimension positioned

The College as a contributive place-building in this dimension.

162

Scoring the final dimension, *built environment*, was somewhat more challenging that the others. To calculate these scores a slight adjustment was required because this dimension had one less question (5) attached than the other four which had six related questions. Once this adjustment was made and scores were tallied, the mean combined score was 18.89 which is indicative of a contributive place-building profile. However, as is evident in Figure 15, there were significant differences between administrator and faculty member scores. The administrator average score was 17.15 reflecting a contributive profile. The faculty member average score was slightly more than eight points lower at nine. This faculty member average was the second lowest among the dimensions (see Table 16)

The average *total place scores* evidenced agreement across the two groups of community engagement actors that participated in the study. Total place scores were calculated by finding the mean scores across all dimensions for each group and the Scoring Matrix was used to identify the related place-building profile. Across both groups the calculated mean was 18.62, neatly within the contributive range. Administrators' scores reflected a mean of 19.50 which was nearly perfectly in the center of the contributive range presented in the Matrix. Faculty member scores were somewhat less at 17.75, but still concurred with the contributive profile indicated by the administrator average (see Table 15).

**Qualitative Findings**

Two forms of qualitative data were collected and analyzed as part of the study. The first was institutional document data collected in Phase I and the second was focus group interview transcripts collected during Phase II of the study. Institutional document and focus group interview data were systematically analyzed using the Framework

163

Method to determine the institution's values and strategies within each of the five dimensions of place-building. In other words, OPBT was used as a theoretic lens to explore how the institution and its community engagement actors discussed the value of place. This qualitative exploration was designed to add depth to the results of the OPBI presented in the previous section. To ensure this depth, a deductive coding approach was used that employed the five dimensions of place-building presented in the OPBT literature. Using OPBT to ground the analysis, an analytical framework was developed to guide the coding and categorization of both types of qualitative data. The final analytical framework used in the analysis is presented in Table 16.

Table 16

*Research Question Two Qualitative Analytical Framework*

| Dimension | Description |
|---|---|
| Social | Text referencing the full spectrum of interactions between the institution's population and communities, stakeholders, and organizations outside the institution. |
| | Text referencing how certain spaces are treated in such a way that reflects the culture, strategies, and values of the institution |
| Economic | Text referring to how the institution has defined its level of investment in the fiscal well-being of the community (i.e. workforce development). |
| | Text referring to specific practices related to the economic vitality, growth, and development. |
| Nature | Text referencing the natural environment (i.e. landscape, earth). |
| | Text referencing how the institution generally or specifically relates and contributes to nature and the environment. |
| Ethics | Text referring to the institution's "practices and its implicit and explicit contract with the community that seeks to establish itself as legitimate" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). |
| | Text referring to how the institution's practices are modeled within higher education, its institutional culture, and stakeholders. |
| Built Environment | Text referencing off-campus, man-made buildings, roads, and infrastructure (i.e. downtown revitalization project). |
| | Text referencing how these spaces are treated and value is placed on built environment through architecture, landscaping, and historical significance. |

The analysis of institutional documents and focus group interview data revealed a concentration of references to the social, nature, and built environment dimensions of place-building. This discovery neatly aligned with OPBI results which indicated that these three dimensions were highly important to respondents (see Table 15 and Figure 15). Based on this pattern in the findings, the following paragraphs detail qualitative findings for the following three dimensions: social, nature, and built environment. It is important to note that references to the other two dimensions (economic and ethics) were found but were much less frequent or clear.

**Social.** The social dimension of place-building has been defined by OPBT researchers as the full spectrum of interactions between the institution's population and, among and between, other populations and organizations (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). It is concerned with how certain spaces are treated in such a way that reflects the culture, strategies, and values of the institution and other populations and organizations. In other words, how does The College encourage the development of social structures (i.e. trust, norms, and social networks), through its values and investments, in ways that facilitate collective action around social well-being (social capital)?

Among the institutional documents, 50 references to the social dimension of place-building were found, most of which were concentrated in the WGR which contained 18 references. Language related to the development of social structures in the institution's larger community were also evidenced in the institution's SP which stated the following in a section discussing the history of The College: "Part of our heritage is a strong commitment to engage in the *civic life* of our community." This statement not only

165

indicated a strong commitment to engage, but also a recognition of the importance of civic and social aspects of community life.

In other documents, the social dimension was discussed as part of the reciprocity theme identified in Place-Based Roles part of the analysis. For example, the VS document included language recommending that The College "create vehicles to foster authentic partnerships." This directive to create social structures that included community members in the creation, implementation and assessment of community engagement efforts was a common thread throughout the VS document.

The TFR document also included references to the social aspect of place-building. For example, when outlining the shared learning goals for engagement at The College the authors stated: "Communicate and collaborate in inclusive, respectful, civil ways." This prioritization of communication and inclusiveness within the framework of civil discourse is another nod to the social aspects of place-building. Later in the same document, in discussing areas in need of improvement at The College, the following text was included: "Improving communications both internally (campus) and externally (Pleasantville and beyond), thereby strengthening our ability to tell our stories, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally."

In the WGR document also had a strong identifiable social theme. In the Specific Recommendations section the following statement was included: "Ask community members to help define 'community' and who speaks for 'the community.' Begin by *conducting listening sessions and workshops* with members from the community beyond campus." Later, in the other recommendations section, the following statements were

included which highlight the importance of building social networks that include community representatives:

> Form an *advisory group made up of representatives from each stakeholder group*. The representative for each stakeholder would gather their constituencies and get feedback on specific questions and ideas, then the representatives would come together and discuss - then the drafts would be sent back - this becomes a reciprocal process.

The CEC Application also referenced the social dimension when discussing community engagement at The College. In the president's opening letter to the Carnegie Foundation the following statement referencing the creation of the Pleasantville Area Collaborative highlighted the value of participating in the development of social structures that included other community institutions:

> Fortuitously, I (The College president) came into office at the same time as a new CEO of the Pleasantville Medical Center …we initiated a discussion of the parallel issues in recruitment and retention of talented staff in our two institutions. We recognized that quality of life is an essential component to maintaining the quality of care, education and services that each of our institutions could provide. Perhaps even more importantly, both [the Medical Center CEO] and I believed it was part of our mission to engage in community and service. It was clear to us that combining our efforts to leverage the skills and capabilities of multiple institutions to address broad issues would benefit everyone. Our discussions quickly expanded to include the new mayor … and the new superintendent of …the School District…, and our group has become known as the Pleasantville

Area Collaborative. *This is a productive, results oriented collaborative that serves the interests of our organizations and, by extension, the greater Pleasantville community.*

Among the focus group interview transcripts, the social aspect of place-building was referenced a total of 15 times. In most instances, the social nature of place-building was referenced within the frame of "relationship-building" among institutional and community representatives. For example, one of the faculty members who participated in FG2 made the following statement when discussing the importance of creating social connections between community members and institutional representatives. "[I]…think it's the connections between people. Yeah, if you're able to build connections with other people in that place." In another instance, an administrator during the same focus group session highlighted the importance of social connections and institutional place-building:

As an environmental scientist, I think a lot about how people are both shaped by the place where they are, and how they impact the place where they are, and kind of try to mold it to who they are, and that *sort of iterative process*, that back and forth between people and the place that they're in.

During another exchange, during FG3, an institutional administrator emphasized the importance of building and maintaining social structures, such as formalized meeting groups:

…there's a sort of a consensus that emerges from those [meeting groups]. So, I think those meeting groups are really important to sharing, you know, what sorts of things can be accomplished better. …so, just in going to those meetings every month, I've built *relationships*, and then like just in the last few months, I've been

able to, you know, kind of create new…we're working together more deeply, I guess.

**Nature.** References to the nature dimension were also found across the institutional documents. In total, this dimension was referenced 16 times in these documents. References in focus group data were not present so what is presented in this section is focused on what was found in the document data. The nature dimension of place-building "includes natural as opposed to man-made. Such as the landscape, earth, geography and natural resources" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21; Thomas & Banning, 2014, p. 55). One of the most salient references to the value of this dimension was found in the SP which stated:

> The College is fortunate to be located in a region with *abundant natural*
> *resources.* As a charter signatory of the American College & University
> Presidents Climate Commitment, we affirm our commitment to implementing a
> climate action plan to strategically reduce our environmental impact and realize
> the economic benefits of improved operational efficiencies.

Another reference, found in the CEC Application, highlighted the commitment to nature and the environment in an interview transcript from an interview with The College president:

> Dedication to the community is campus wide. It's routine for professors to take
> students out into the community to do research and projects: examples range from
> community art, *biomass development, aquaponics systems,* community health
> education*, watershed protection, a biodiesel program and a greenhouse gas*
> *inventory* in collaboration with the City of Pleasantville. …our student body

completed about 60,000 hours of community service has increasingly included *sustainability* efforts such as a bike program for young people in the community and *community gardening*.

Also discussed was a water quality initiative spearheaded by The College. This program, titled Creek Connections, was a partnership between local K-12 schools and The College that engaged teachers and students in conducting watershed research and learning about local waterways through hands-on, experiential collaborations. In another instance, the CEC Application stressed the importance the natural environment through an agreement between the Foundation for Sustainable Forests and The College. According to the CEC Application the partnership was designed to "…preserve and protect fragile ecosystems in Pennsylvania and southern New York while providing opportunities for landowners to support both nonprofit organizations."

**Built environment.** The built-environment, according to OPBT, included man-made buildings, roads, and other infrastructure associated with the institution and how these spaces are treated. This dimension would reflect the value placed on the built environment evidenced in aspects of these built spaces such as building architecture, landscaping, and historic preservation. The analysis revealed that this dimension was referenced a total of four times across institutional documents all of which were found in the institution's SP. No references were present in the focus group transcripts.

Two of the four references found focused on the on-campus built environment. For example, in the introductory sections, the following statement references the value of the on-campus built environment. "They [incoming students] will choose The College because they know that here, on one of the most beautiful campuses in the country, the

student experience is second to none." In another section, when discussing an initiative to restore and beautify the historic campus, the authors stated:

The College's first formal classes were taught in Smith Hall nearly 200 years ago, and with historically sensitive and sustainable renovation, graduating seniors can continue to march through Smith for two more centuries. We will restore it to its rightful place as one of America's foremost examples of Federalist architecture, and at the same time equip the building for modern, technology-based teaching, learning, and administration.

In the other instances, built environments beyond campus were discussed. For example, when articulating recommendations around the institution's investments in Pleasantville the following statement was included. "We will join with other community organizations and the local government to support efforts to develop and sustain thriving residential neighborhoods, invigorate the business sector …and increase the city's attractiveness."

## Findings for Research Question Three

Research question three asked "How, and to what degree, are the institution's place-building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships?" To address this question, the analysis focused on two data sources: institutional document data and focus group interview data. All data were systematically analyzed using the Framework Method of qualitative content analysis to better understand how and to what degree the institution's place building profiles were being reflected in its community engagement programing.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted in this study, The College was found to exhibit a highly contributive place-building profile. Contributive organizations, according to OPBT, view themselves as part of a larger network of business, people, institutions, and community leaders that share the burden of creating valuable places (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). The contributive place-building profile for The College was evidenced by the total place score (18.62) will within the contributive profile range (16-24), the concentration of contributive profiles across the OPBT place-building dimensions, and the support this profile provided in the qualitative content analysis of institutional documents and focus group interview data. Within the five dimensions, The College held a contributive place-building profile in all but one of the dimensions (social, economic, ethics, and built environment). The remaining dimension, nature, evidenced a transformative profile. Transformational place-building profiles conceptualize or identify themselves as change agents acting to improve the lives of individuals and groups in a particular place. Table 3, Table 16, and Figure 15 in the previous section illustrate the OPBI Scoring Matrix, the scores for each dimension, and their relationship to the total place score.

A total of 144 community engagement activities and partnerships were identified during the analysis of institutional document and focus group interview data. This database was used as a resource to identify, group, and connect specific activities and partnerships to place-building dimensions. Once each of the activities were categorized by the five place-building dimensions, activities were then carefully reviewed to determine how and to what degree each activity and partnership was or was not representative of each respective assigned profile. To establish the strength of these

alignments an analytical construct or framework was developed and employed for each of the dimensions by the researcher. These frameworks were based on the description of contributive and transformative organizations presented by OPBT researchers (Thomas & Cross, 2007; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). The application of the frameworks enabled the qualitative assignment of numeric scores for each of the related activities and partnerships. As presented in Tables 17, 19, and 21 each framework used a series of seven questions pulled from the OPBT literature. The higher the score assigned by the researcher, the more reflective the activity or partnership was of a contributive place-building profile for the social dimension. It is important to note that these constructs and scores generated only reflect the subjective assessment of the researcher. As such, this should be considered as a limitation of this analysis process.

To present the findings for research question three, the following section has been organized by three of the five place-building dimensions (social, nature, and built environment). These dimensions were chosen to focus the findings due to the concentration of activities and partnerships associated with these realms of place-building. Also, these focus areas align with the dimensions identified as highly important in OPBI results. Each section will briefly present the place-building profile identified for the dimension and detail the community engagement activities and partnerships that align with the associated profile. The final section provides a summary of all the findings that emerged during this analysis for research question three.

**Social Dimension: Contributive Place-Building Profile**

The social dimension of place-building includes the full spectrum of interactions between the institution's population and, among and between, other populations and organizations (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Within this dimension, the analysis of

173

survey, institutional document, and focus group interview data revealed that The College held a contributive place-building profile. Contributive place-builders, according to OPBT, view themselves as part of a larger network of business, people, institutions, and community leaders that share the burden of creating valuable places (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Organizations that exhibit a contributive place-building profile often make their strongest contributions within the social dimension of place, focusing on contributing to, and participating in, the social aspects of the places in which they are located (Thomas & Cross, 2007). According to place-building researchers, these contributions are frequently evidenced in regular donations to philanthropic initiatives and/or organizations and service oriented, charitable projects (Thomas & Cross, 2007).

Based on the analysis and finding presented here, there was strong support for the contributive profile in the social dimension for The College. To identify how and to what degree the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships were reflective of the institution's contributive profile within the social dimension, the analysis focused on institutional documents and focus group interview data. Within this data, a total of 144 activities and partnerships were identified as active between 2011 and 2017. Of these activities and partnerships, 84 (40 activities and 44 partnerships) were associated with the social aspects of place-building as defined in OPBT.

To establish the extent to which these activities and partnerships reflected a contributive place-building profile an analytical framework was developed and employed by the researcher. This analytical framework is presented in Table 17.

Table 17

*Analytical Framework for Social Dimension*

| **Question:** | The activity or partnership is representative of contributive place building profile because it.. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neither Agree or Disagree** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
| **1.** Enables, encourages, and cultivates social networks in the larger community. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **2.** Is part of a larger effort, not led by the institution. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **3.** Engages local community-based organizations that facilitate social and philanthropic activity. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **4.** It is sensitive to local norms and values. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **5.** Is designed to include the institution as "key contributor." | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **6.** Is service oriented. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **7.** Is locally focused. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The analysis revealed that the collection of activities and partnerships associated with the social dimension of place-building were highly representative of a contributive profile. In fact, 24 of 84, or 29 percent, received a perfect score (35). A perfect score, in this case, meant that the activity or partnership received a five for all of the questions included in the analytical framework (see Table 17). If the range is broadened to include activities and partnerships that received scores from 35 to 30 the analysis captured a total of 56, or 67 percent of the total number of activities and partnerships. Table 18 provides a summary of the scoring based on the analytical framework designed to illustrate the extent to which the institution's community engagement programming was reflective of the contributive profile for this dimension.

Table 18

*Scores for Activities and Partnerships Within the Social Dimension*

| Activity and Partnership Score | # of Activities | # of Partnerships | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 35-34 | 13 | 15 | **28** |
| 33-32 | 2 | 3 | **5** |
| 31-30 | 13 | 10 | **23** |
| 29-28 | 4 | 15 | **19** |
| <28 | 8 | 1 | **9** |

The following are two of the best examples of activities and partnerships

reflective of the institution's contributive profile. First, the TFR and CEC Application

documents both highlighted the Pleasantville Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

(VITA) which is an ongoing partnership between the Pleasantville Public Library,

Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and The College. Through this partnership, students

from The College are trained to complete federal, state and local tax returns for local

residents who are elderly, financially challenged, or others who have trouble filing their

taxes, have not filed taxes, or have tax questions. The VITA program is representative of

the institution's contributive profile in many ways but three are most notable. First, while

The College maintains a key role, it does not lead the program in the community. This is

evidenced by how the program in marketed and the role of other partners (IRS,

Pleasantville Library) during the tax season. Second, it is designed to connect

participants, including students, faculty, and administrators, to community residents

through face-to-face interactions. Third, the VITA program is service oriented. It is

generally understood that service activities are those that typically focus on the delivery

of expertise, resources, and services to community individuals, groups, organizations, and

the public in general. In this case, representatives from The College are the "experts" and community residents are those that need.

Second, the Health Coaching program is another example of an innovative partnership that is illustrative of the contributive profile of The College. The health coaching program is a partnership between the Pleasantville Medical Center and The College to train and place students on health coaching teams that are tasked with to extending healthcare beyond clinics and hospitals into the community, and even into patients' own homes. The goal is to build trusting relationships with at-risk patients in an effort to help them take better care of their own health. Since its inception in 2011, hundreds of patients and students have participated which has led to reductions in hospital admissions and emergency room visits. The health coaching program is another good example of the institution's contributive place-building profile in three ways. First, the program includes many other community-based organizations who are helping distribute information and recruit patients. This inclusion of other organizations not only enlarges the university-community social network, it also creates opportunities for the institution to deepen its engagement with other local agencies and organizations. Second, like the previous partnership, this program is not led by The College. In this case, the local hospital occupies the lead role working through its Community Health Network which is a diverse team of physicians, nurses, counselors, social workers, nutritionists and ancillary support personnel. Third, the program is locally oriented. The hospital, as the only full-service medical facility in the region, draws most of its patients from the local community of Pleasantville. As such, health coaching efforts are primarily focused on patients from Pleasantville area.

**Nature Dimension: Transformative Place-Building Profile**

The nature dimension of place is concerned with the natural, as opposed to human-made, elements, forces, and spaces of particular places, such as the landscape, earth, and natural resources (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Within this dimension, the analysis of survey, institutional document, and focus group interview data revealed that The College held a transformative place-building profile. Transformative organizations, according to OPBT, view themselves as critical agents of positive change in the communities in which they are located (Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Cross, 2007; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). They are highly focused on "team learning, collaboration, openness to change, and building partnerships" that revolve around "protecting the natural environment, neighborhoods, cultural heritage, local economy, and other resources" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 24). According to place-building researchers, the key difference between transformative and the other place-building profiles is that organizations exhibiting this profile hold themselves wholly responsible for the quality of places and employ an integrative strategy built around a shared vision of place (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Organizations with transformative place-building profiles differ from this with contributive profiles in that they see themselves as "change agents while contributive organizations view themselves more as stewards, maintaining quality of life without a vision for change" (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 49).

Based on the analysis and findings presented here, there was strong support for the institution's transformational profile in the nature dimension. To identify how and to what degree the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships were reflective of the institution's transformational profile, the analysis again focused on institutional documents and focus group interview data. Within this data, a total of 80 of

the 144 past and current activities and partnerships were identified as being associated

with the nature dimension as defined in OPBT. Among these, 16 were community

engagement activities and 64 were partnerships.

Following the identification of nature oriented activities and partnerships, an

analytical framework similar to the one developed for the social dimension was created.

The framework was based on the description of transformational organizations presented

by OPBT researchers (Thomas & Cross, 2007; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). As

presented in Table 19, the framework used a series of seven questions pulled from the

place-building literature and a Likert scale to enable the assignment of numeric scores for

each of the 80 activities and partnerships.

Table 19

*Analytical Framework for Nature Dimension*

| Question: | The activity or partnership is representative of transformative place building profile because it.. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neither Agree or Disagree** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
| **1.** Is based in reciprocity, collaboration, and partnership building. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **2.** Is holistic and integrative in its approach by including/referencing the other four dimensions of place. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **3.** Is focused on teaching and learning in partnership with members of the local community. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **4.** Builds on a shared vision of the larger community. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **5.** Holds the institution accountable to the community for the quality of its contributions to place. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **6.** Positions the institution in a leadership role within the activity or partnership. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **7.** Is "locally" focused. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The analysis revealed that the collection of activities and partnerships associated

with the nature dimension of place-building were highly representative of a

transformative profile. In fact, 11 of 80, or 14 percent activities and partnerships,

received either 35 or 34 points. If the range is broadened to include activities and partnerships that received scores from 35 to 30 the analysis captured a total of 73, or 91 percent, of the total number of activities and partnerships. Table 20 provides a summary of the scoring based on the analytical framework designed to illustrate the extent to which the institution's community engagement programming was reflective of the transformative profile for this dimension.

Table 20

*Scores for Activities and Partnerships Within the Nature Dimension*

| Activity and Partnership Score | # of Activities | # of Partnerships | Total |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 35-34 | 5 | 6 | **11** |
| 33-32 | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| 31-30 | 5 | 55 | **60** |
| <30 | 5 | 2 | **7** |

The following is the best example of community engagement activities and partnerships reflective of the institution's transformative profile in the nature dimension. Creek Connections (CC) is a powerful example of the institution's transformative profile within the nature dimension and representative of many of the other activities and partnerships aligned with this dimension. CC is an award-winning partnership between The College and regional K-12 schools to turn waterways in Northwest Pennsylvania Southwest New York, and the Pittsburgh area into outdoor environmental laboratories. The program is a hands-on, inquiry based investigation of local waterways that involves over 40 different secondary schools and the classes of 50 teachers. This collaboration between the college and schools in the region for the purpose of encouraging natural science education engages faculty and students at The College in bringing watershed education successfully into the classroom. Participants from the college act as liaisons to

schools to assist teachers with the ongoing water quality monitoring, data analysis, macroinvertebrate sampling, independent research project procedures, Student Research Symposium preparation, and classroom presentations. CC is a prime illustrative example of the institution transformative place-building profile in two key ways. First, it is based in reciprocity and collaboration with local communities. This collaboration is evidenced by the extensive efforts undertaken by representatives from The College in connecting program goals to the teaching goals of participating schools and the environmental goals of local watershed planning organizations. Through these interactions program activities are designed to enable alignments between these goals while connecting participants to local waterways and resources. Second, the program is built around a shared vision or interest in improving local waterways. For example, in Pleasantville, the community has prioritized one of the local streams as the focus of environmental remediation, gateway opportunities, and recreational amenities. Working through the CC program, organizers at The College were able to concentrate many of their activities around this waterway as a means to both learn and reconnect residents to this resource.

**Built Environment Dimension: Contributive Place-Building Profile**

The built environment dimension of place includes man-made buildings, roads, and other infrastructure associated with the institution and how these spaces are treated. This dimension would reflect the value placed on the built environment evidenced in aspects of these built spaces such as building architecture, landscaping, and historic preservation (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Within this dimension, the analysis of survey, institutional document, and focus group interview data revealed that The College held a contributive place-building profile. Contributive place-builders, according to OPBT, view themselves as part of a larger network of business, people, institutions, and

community leaders that share the burden of creating valuable places (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

Based on the analysis and findings presented here, there was support for the institution's contributive profile in the built environment dimension. However, support was not as reflective of the institution's profile in this dimension as in the previous two. To identify how and to what degree the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships were reflective of the institution's profile, the analysis again focused on institutional documents and focus group interview data. Within this data, a total of 10 of the 144 past and current activities and partnerships were identified as being associated with the built environment dimension as defined in OPBT. Among these, three were community engagement activities and six were partnerships.

Following the identification of this sub-set of activities and partnerships, an analytical framework was developed. This framework was similar to the one developed for the social dimensions but differed slightly with regard to the qualifying statements. These statements were developed based on the description of contributive organizations presented by OPBT researchers (Thomas & Cross, 2007; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). As presented in Table 21, the framework used a series of seven questions pulled from the place-building literature and a Likert scale to enable the assignment of numeric scores for each of the 10 activities and partnerships.

Table 21

*Analytical Framework for Built Environment Dimension*

| Question: | The activity or partnership is representative of contributive place building profile because it | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neither Agree or Disagree** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
| **1.** Seeks to improve aspects of the man-made or built environment in ways that conform to the local context. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **2.** Is part of a larger effort, not led by the institution. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **3.** Engages local community-based organizations that facilitate help facilitate improvements. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **4.** It is sensitive to local norms and values. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **5.** Is designed to include the institution as "key contributor." | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **6.** Is service oriented. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **7.** Is locally focused. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The analysis revealed that the collection of activities and partnerships associated with the built environment dimension of place-building were "cautiously" representative of a contributive profile. This assessment is based on the small number of activities and partnerships associated with this dimension. The application of the analytical framework revealed that three partnerships received a perfect score of 35 points. One received a score of 31, two received a score of 30 and the remaining three received a score of 29.

One of the most illustrative examples of the institution's contributive profile, among the identified community engagement activities and partnerships for this dimension, was the Art & Environment Initiative (A&EI). While the title of this activity was art and the environment, it has translated into a series of public art installations in public spaces across Pleasantville which has dramatically changed and enriched the built environment in the community. The projects were focused on transforming highly visible

wall sections and alleyways in downtown into murals that were representative of local

history and waterways. Another project artistically transformed 11 newspaper racks into

functional works of art that promote community, environmental awareness, civic

engagement, reading, and literacy. These projects were representative of a contributive

profile in that they improved the look and feel of these spaces in ways that were

respectful of local history and positioned The College as part of a much larger effort to

improve the quality of downtown areas.

## Summary

Chapter four presented a detailed analysis and findings for the study. Based on the

analysis of institutional document, survey, and focus group interview data, a collection of

seven major findings were identified in the previous sections. These findings largely

satisfied the three research questions guiding the investigation. Each of these findings

have been summarized below.

Finding 1: The analysis of institutional document and focus group interview data

revealed that The College has a highly-developed "local sense of place." A "local sense

of place" is used here to mean a sense of attachment and connectedness to places

immediately adjacent or near the institution (Kennelly & Shaivastava, 2013).

Finding 2: The institution has prioritized its role as "relationship builder" in

surrounding communities. This role was defined as being responsible for creating and

cultivating social interactions between The College and local organizations, institutions,

and individuals. Within this role, there was a strong institutional interest in creating

standing structures of engagement designed to connect the community and campus (i.e.

committees, programs, and communication networks).

Finding 3: Community engagement at The College exhibited a hyperlocal orientation. This highly local focus was reflective of how the institution has cultivated a local sense of place across the institution and in the community. The hyperlocal concentration of community engagement at The College was evidenced by identifying and mapping a total of 144 community engagement activities and partnerships, 59 of which were located within the political boundaries of the institution's host community.

Finding 4: The College exhibited a highly contributive place-building profile. Contributive organizations, according to OPBT, view themselves as part of a larger network of business, people, institutions, and community leaders that share the burden of creating valuable places (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

Finding 5: As a highly contributive place-builder, The College has adopted an interdependent agent perspective when it comes to place. Interdependent organizations, according to OPBT, view themselves as members of a community and, as such, are mutually responsible for the well-being of the places in which they are located (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). This viewpoint was supported in the analysis of institutional document, survey, and focus group interview data.

Finding 6: The College was highly focused on the social, nature, and built environment dimensions of place-building. This finding was evidenced in text identified in institutional document data, OPBI results, and focus group discussions with community engagement actors at the institution.

Finding 7: Community engagement activities and partnerships at The College were highly reflective of the institution's contributive profile in the social and built

185

environment dimensions and of the institution's transformative profile in the nature dimension.

In the last chapter of this document, Chapter Five, findings will be discussed and aligned with the literature around this topic and the theoretical framework guiding the study. Also included are sections detailing this research's contribution to the larger body of knowledge, recommendations for future research, and summary conclusions that may be made based on the finding outlined in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Across the nation there is a growing interest in place-based community engagement. Unlike "a-place" or "place-neutral" approaches, place-based engagement is rooted in creating intentional connections between the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships and the unique lived experience within particular geographies or places (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015). However, as the interest in place-based engagement has grown, there is little agreement in higher education regarding how place-based engagement should be operationalized in communities which is crippling the place-building potential of colleges and universities (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Moore, 2014; Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015).

Understanding this problem, the research presented here sought to better understand how institutions of higher learning build place through engagement. To frame this investigation, the research focused on one highly-engaged institution of higher learning located in northwestern Pennsylvania. To ensure the confidentiality of the research site, this institution is referred to here as "The College." What made The College an ideal site for this research was its status as a highly-engaged institution, as delineated by its receipt of the highly prestigious Community Engagement Classification distributed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the institution's stated interest in better understanding the place-based nature of its engagement activities and partnerships.

To explore the ideas of place and place-building within the context of institutional community engagement this study used the theoretical framework of Organizational

Place-Building Theory (OPBT). OPBT was developed by researchers to explain the degree to which organizations value and invest in their social and geographic locations (Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Cross, 2007; Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Three key concepts underpin OPBT: a) place-building dimensions, b) agent perspectives, and c) place-building profiles. According to OPBT, place is a multi-dimensional concept that includes five distinct realms (Thomas & Cross, 2007). These dimensions include social relationships, economic relationships, nature, ethics, and built environment. Agent perspective is about how the organization views place, the meaning it is given, and how this influences their goals and contributions to place. Two possible agent perspectives are identified in OPBT, interdependent and independent. The place-building profiles identified in OPBT are based on how organization value place, the related corporate culture, and the place-based strategies and behaviors undertaken by the organization. Possible profiles include: transformational, contributive, contingent, and exploitive which, together, make up a continuum of organizational place-building typologies (Thomas & Kimball, 2012).

Using OPBT as a theoretical lens of analysis, the study employed an explanatory mixed methods descriptive case study design that focused on three types of qualitative and quantitative data. This data included: a) institutional document data, b) survey data, and c) focus group interview data. Institutional document data consisted of a collection of six institutional and community engagement framing documents (i.e. strategic plans and reports) and the institution's 2015 Community Engagement Classification application submitted to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Survey data consisted of a 29 question Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI) questionnaire

developed and tested by place-building researchers as part of OPBT. The OPBI was distributed to a total of 56 community engagement actors at The College. Community engagement actors were defined as administrators and faculty members at The College who were directly involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. Among the 56 actors identified, a total of 35 completed the survey. Within this sample, 18 were faculty members and 17 administrators at The College. Focus group interview data consisted of a series of three semi-structured focus group interview sessions with 27 community engagement actors. This sample included 15 were administrators and 12 faculty members.

Guiding the analysis of this data were three research questions: 1) How has the institution conceptualized place and place-building within the context of community engagement? 2) According to OPBT, what are the institution's place-building profiles? and 3) How, and to what degree, are the institution's place-building profiles reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships?

The balance of this chapter includes sections that summarize findings and their alignments with current literature and this study's theoretical framework (OPBT). Other sections detail the contributions of this research, suggestions for future research, and the conclusions that emerged from the study.

**Summary and Discussion of Major Findings**

**Research Question One**

Research question one examined how The College had conceptualized place and place-building within the context of its community engagement. To address this question the analysis focused on two types of data: institutional document and focus group interview data. What emerged from the qualitative analysis of this data was a set of four

189

key findings that, in large part, satisfied research question one. The following section presents a summary of major finding for research question one and what these findings mean within the larger context of community engagement in higher education.

**Local sense of place.** The first finding was that The College conceptualizes "place" as being local. This determination was made by analyzing the content of seven institutional documents and three focus group transcripts to identify how place was being discussed. The analysis revealed that a collection of nine terms were used to discuss particular bounded geographies beyond the institution's physical campus. These terms included: "the/our community," "Pleasantville," "local," "the town," "the city," "region," "world," "global," and "nation." Once all the references found were examined in context, a clear local theme emerged. In fact, of the 334 references to place identified in the documents, 304 were connected to local places or those immediately adjacent to The College campus.

A "local sense of place" was defined in this research as feelings of attachment to and connectedness with the place in which the institution has a physical presence (Kennelly & Shaivastava, 2013). The local notion of place that emerged in this research was most evident in *how* the institution, and its actors, discussed place in its framing documents and focus group interviews. One of the best examples of this localized notion of place was the following statement taken from the institution's strategic plan: "Part of our heritage is a strong commitment to engage in the civic life of *our community.*" In another example, taken from FG1, one institutional administrator revealed a highly localized notion of place by stating:

190

…our office has different programs and each program has a different goal and different model, but it's all about community engagement, getting to know *Pleasantville*, and because *Pleasantville* is these students' homes this is their home for four years and so it's getting them, not just involved in their passions and their interests in service but also getting them to know *Pleasantville* itself.

Evidenced in both of these examples is a clear sense of belonging to and being part of the local community. "Faced with the reality that they cannot move, many colleges and universities have increasingly come to see themselves as 'local stakeholders'…" in the communities in which they are located (Bromley, 2006, p. 11). The view of the institution as local stakeholder, and community member, is clearly part of The College's approach to community engagement and one that is germane to place-based strategies. This sense of belonging and membership is neatly reflected in the following quote taken from FG1 in which one institutional administrator stated:

I think part of it is *belonging* but for me I think fun, freedom, power, *belonging* is four things that motivate me, and so it's fun to get out there and work… There's an element of power because I can see a change and it's also I planted that tree, I have a sense of *belonging* here in this community. It's home.

As noted in chapter two of this document, place-based approaches begin with the recognition of the institution as being "of" the community and not merely "in" the community (Bond & Paterson, 2005). While this may seem a simple, logical assumption from which to initiate engagement, it is a relatively new way of thinking within the academy. Traditional engagement models position the institution as a detached, scholarly entity that is divorced from the civic, social, and political life of its larger community

(Chatterton, 2000). This detached view of the university has been somewhat encouraged by global and national research agendas that prioritized work in exotic locations and avoided tackling problems in the collective "backyard" of the academy (Silka, Teisl, & Settele, 2015). Place-based approaches challenge a detached view by acknowledging the "social embeddedness" of institutions in their larger communities (Furco, 2010). This acknowledgement enables these institutions to become equal and participating members of the community, "working collaboratively to address communal and institutional issues" (Gupton, Sullivan, & Johnston-Goodstar, 2014, p. 186). Nancy Cantor (2013) advances this understanding of institutions as respective members of their communities by stating: "When we work in communities, we must also work with communities, acknowledging that we are indeed part of the community, and that all involved share in the production of problems and in their solutions" (p. 19). Paul Pibbenow (2015), president of Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, builds on Cantor's description of the connection between universities and the places they occupy by stating that colleges and universities are "indigenous communities" that are "native to a particular place" (p. 5).

**Place-Building roles.** The second finding revolved around how the institution framed its place-building role in communities beyond its campus. The analysis of institutional document and focus group interview data revealed that five place-building roles had been identified in the documents and by community engagement actors at The College. These roles included: 1) relationship builder, 2) environmental steward, 3) community developer, 4) citizenship leader, and 5) economic developer. Among these roles, the most frequently referenced was the institution's role as relationship builder

192

which was defined in this study as being responsible for creating and cultivating social interactions between The College and local organizations, institutions, and individuals (Bruning, Mcgrew, & Cooper, 2006). A further analysis of text referencing this role revealed five notable themes in the relationship builder role discussion. Among these, the most salient were ideas of: a) reciprocity, b) structure, c) sustained commitment, and d) inclusion.

The analysis revealed that The College has a highly developed sense of the institution's role in the community beyond its campus boundaries. Discussions of these roles were evidenced both in institutional framing documents and among community engagement actors interviewed for the study. An example of this highly developed conceptualization of the institution's role was articulated by one of the participants in FG1.

> But I also think within the institution our role is also, to go to John's point (actual name withheld to maintain confidentiality), helping to build the sense of place, not just at The College but within Pleasantville and our region as well, so like that's more on us to help those partnerships happen, as well as kind of the bigger picture. We're a part of this larger community of kind of change-makers within a community.

In another example, found in the institution's strategic plan, the role of The College is artfully described in the following recommendation.

> Invest in Pleasantville in ways that support our mission and provide a marketing advantage to the town and the College—The College's success has been intertwined with the well-being of our local community since the College's

inception. Both must be successful if either is to thrive. We will join with other

community organizations and the local government to support efforts to develop

and sustain thriving residential neighborhoods, invigorate the business sector,

expand experiential learning opportunities, and increase the city's attractiveness.

In these examples and many other instances across the data the place-building role

has been given shape and substance. When compiled and reviewed, what emerged was

not only a collection of roles framed by the institution but also the ingredients of how

these roles should be articulated in the community. As presented in the previous chapter

(4), many of role-based discussions found in institutional documents and focus group

transcripts were focused on the institution's role a relationship builder. In framing this

role, themes of reciprocity, structure, sustained commitment, and inclusion were woven

throughout the data.

This idea of prioritizing relationship building within the community engagement

framework at colleges and universities has been identified as important to reframing

community engagement in higher education. This point is driven home by Moore (2014)

in the following statement on the topic. "…institutional change is necessary to facilitate

building and maintaining strong relationships with partners…Without such change,

engagement will remain an outcome, or product, accomplished as possible within

existing structures" (p. 33). Based on the analysis and findings presented here, The

College is well ahead of other institutions with regard to prioritization of relationship

structures that enable sustained, inclusive, reciprocal relationships between the institution

and its local community.

**Interdependent agent perspective.** The third key finding that emerged revolved around how The College had conceptualized itself as a social actor or agent, in relation to the place in which it was located (Thomas & Cross, 2007). According to OPBT, there are two possible types of place agent perspectives for organizations: interdependent and independent. The former describes organizations that view themselves and their success as fundamentally tied to the well-being of place and the latter describes organizations that conceptualize themselves and their success as wholly detached from any aspect of place or its qualities (Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Cross, 2007; Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). Based on the analysis of institutional document, survey, and focus group interview data, The College views itself as interdependent on the quality of the place in which is it is located (Pleasantville). As an interdependent organization, The College considers itself as responsible for well-being of Pleasantville and views their success as being tied to the quality of that place. Similar to other organizations that have adopted an interdependent perspective, The College actively seeks opportunities to invest and contribute to the multiple aspects of place (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

In the review of literature presented in chapter two, the idea that institutions of higher learning are intimately tied to the places in which they exist was a recognizable thematic thread woven into the literature around engagement, especially over the last two decades (Allen, Prange, Smith-Howell, Woods, & Reed, 2016; Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002; Moore, 2014; Saltmarsh et al., 2015). As argued in the literature around the anchor institution movement, colleges and universities are physically bound to the geographies in which they exist and as such, the well-being of these institutions is

inextricably tied to the success of the communities in which they are located, and vice versa (Fulbright-Anderson, Auspos, and Anderson, 2001). In this way, institutions of higher learning are part of the broader community and "cannot thrive if surrounded by a sea of poverty, disinvestment, dilapidated housing, and other signs of a failing social structure" (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010, p. 23).

This simple, but powerful, acknowledgment by The College is, in many ways, driving its place-based approach to engagement. Evidence of this was found in the institution's strategic plan which states: "The College's success has been intertwined with the well-being of our local community since the College's inception. Both must be successful if either is to thrive." The same sense of interdependency, and its influence on how engagement is articulated in the larger community was also part of the focus group discussions. One of the best examples was a statement made by a faculty member during FG1.

> I think one of the things that drive our engagement is the recognition that we are dependent on the community…and in order for the college to thrive the community needs to thrive. …I think …we work from a position where we recognize that we're like interdependent, right?

**Hyperlocal geography of engagement.** The fourth key finding, with regard to how The College conceptualizes place and place building, continued the previously identified local theme. This local orientation emerged in the analysis of the spatial distribution of community engagement activities and partnerships at the institution. To examine this distribution, the researcher reviewed institutional documents, focus group interview transcripts, and other data provided by the Office of Civic Engagement and

196

found on the institution's website with the goal of identifying as many community

engagement activities and partnerships as possible between 2011-2017. This analysis

revealed a total of 171 community engagement activities and partnerships. However, a

specific geography (address) could only be identified for 144 of the initial 171. Of these,

31 activities were community engagement activities and 113 were community

engagement partnerships. Next the researcher used specialized mapping software

(ArcGIS) to identify patterns within the spatial distribution of the 144 mapped activities

and partnerships.

What emerged was a highly local spatial distribution. In fact, of the 144 activities

and partnerships, 59 were within the political boundaries of community in which The

College was located, an additional 14 were within five miles of the boundary, and an

additional 12 were located within 25 miles (see Table 14 and Figure 13). This group of

85 activities captured all of the community engagement activities (31) and 54 of the 113

partnerships. The hyperlocal distribution of community engagement programming

identified during the spatial analysis was supported the local sense of place that

previously emerged during the qualitative analysis of institutional document and focus

group interview data.

In many ways, the hyperlocal distribution of community engagement activities

and partnerships at The College was a reflection of how the institution had

conceptualized engagement in its institutional and community engagement framing

documents. In other words, The College is doing what it said it was going to do in terms

of where it chose to focus its engagement. The intensely local focus that emerged was

also evidenced of the institution's place-based approach to engagement. Hyperlocal

approaches differs from other regional, national, or global engagement approaches which do not leverage the university's physical location (Britton & Aires, 2014). As highlighted in chapter two, for resident institutions of higher learning the "shared concern about a place is bound up in their physical tie to it, which elongates and grounds their commitments to the place" (Dostilio, 2017, p. 31). In this way, hyperlocal concentrations of community engagement activities and partnerships is "a subtle differentiator" between place-based efforts and place-neutral approaches (Dostilio, 2017. p. 32).

**Research Question Two**

Research question two was designed to determine the institution's place-building profiles for each of the five place-building dimensions identified in OPBT. The aim of this question was to use OPBT to help frame the place-building relationship between the institution and their associated community and environment (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). To do this, the analysis focused on three data sources: survey results generated by the Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI) questionnaire and related text found in institutional documents and focus group interview transcripts.

The analysis of survey data revealed that The College exhibited a "highly" contributive place-building profile. Highly is used here because the combined OPBI results across both sample groups (18.62) was less than four points from indicating a transformational profile. Within the five dimensions of place presented in OPBT (social, economic, nature, ethics, and built environment), the lowest combined scores were found in the social, nature, and built environment. In fact, scores for the nature dimension were lowest (14.73), indicating a transformational place-building profile for this dimension (see Table 15). These results were well supported by finding that emerged during the qualitative analysis of institutional documents and focus group transcripts which

contained frequent references to environmental initiatives, activities and partnerships undertaken by The College. Results for the social dimension were also low (16.29), only 1.29 points from a transformational profile. This highly contributive result was also well supported by qualitative findings that reflected a clear prioritization of relationship building in the local community. Results for the built environment dimension were slightly higher (18.89) but also well within the contributive range.

The analysis of OPBI results revealed significant differences between administrator and faculty member scores across the five dimensions. On the whole, when the scores were averaged across these groups, faculty members scored The College an average of 8.25 points lower than administrators. These scores meant that faculty members at The College viewed the institution as having a different place-building profile (transformational) than the one assigned by administrators (contributive) in all but one of the place-building dimensions (social). Differences between faculty member and administrator scores were most evident in the nature and ethics dimensions in which averages differed by 8.94 and 8.56 respectively (see Table 15). Despite these differences, when scores were averaged for each group across all five dimensions, there was solid agreement for a contributive place-building profile for each dimension. This conclusions was further reinforced when these totals were averaged to generate a total place score of 18.62 which, using the OPBI Scoring Matrix, reflected a strong contributive place-building profile for the institution (see Table 15).

The analysis of institutional document and focus group interview data strongly supported the place-building profiles indicated by OPBI results. The strongest support for

these profiles were found in discussions around the social, nature, and built environment dimensions of place-building.

As presented in chapter two of this document, OPBT provides a framework for examining the "place-building relations between organizations and their associated communities and environments" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 21). To do this, the theory breaks place into five distinct constructs or dimensions (social, economic, nature, ethics, and built environment) within which researchers can assess to what extent the organization values each. These assessments can then be aligned with particular place-building profiles identified in OPBT. Possible place-building profiles include: transformational, contributive, contingent, and exploitive (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016; Kimball & Thomas, 2012).

The analysis indicated that The College is a "highly" contributive place-builder. Contributive organizations, according to OPBT, "conceptualize themselves as investors and contributors to the well-being of places in which they operate" (Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 21; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016, p. 23). The culture within these organizations is "focused on 'giving back' and conforming to local norms and values" (Thomas, 2004 as cited by Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 21). This profile differs from organizations that exhibit a transformational profile who see themselves as being wholly responsible for the quality of the places in which they are located, contingent organizations that see themselves simply as participants in places, and exploitive organizations that "view themselves as independent agents with little or no obligation to the places in which they are located" (Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 21).

**Research Question Three**

Research question three was designed to determine how and to what degree the institution's place-building profiles were reflected in its community engagement activities and partnerships. The purpose of this question was to confirm the accuracy of the place-building profiles qualitatively assigned or, to say this a different way, determine what kind of place-builder the institution actually was. To address this question, focused on the previously developed list of 144 community engagement activities and partnerships. Within this list, activities and partnerships were grouped by each of the five place-building dimensions presented in OPBT. Once grouped, it became clear that, based on the description of each dimension presented in OPBT, most activities and partnerships were aligned with the social, nature, and built environment dimensions of place-building. A total of 84 were aligned with the social dimension, 80 were aligned with the nature dimension, and 10 were associate with the built environment dimension. It is important to note that some activities were associated with more than one dimension which is why when these totals are summed, they do not equal 144. It is also important to note that the dimensional focus found within this list of activities and partnerships, neatly aligned with the findings for research question two which indicated that the same three dimensions were highly important to OPBI respondents and were most frequently discussed across institutional documents and focus group transcripts.

Next, analytical frameworks were developed for each dimension to qualitatively determine the extent to which each related activity and partnerships was reflective of the previously assigned place building profile (see Table 17, 19, and 21). The constructs and the scores generated were used as an analytical tool to quantify the degree to which the

201

institution's community engagement activities and partnerships were aligned with previously assigned place-building profiles. Scores generated are limited to the subjective assessment of the researcher.

Based on the analysis and findings for research question one, The College was found to exhibit a contributive profile for the social dimension, a transformational profile for the nature dimension, and a contributive profile for the built environment dimension. Each analytical framework developed for research question three was based on the description and characteristics of contributive and transformational organizations presented in the OPBT literature (Thomas & Cross, 2007; Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

Within the social dimension, analysis revealed that the collection of activities and partnerships associated with the social dimension of place-building were highly representative of a contributive profile. In fact, 24 of 84 identified activities and partnerships received a perfect score (35) when the analytical framework for this dimension was applied. If the range was broadened to include activities and partnerships that received scores from 35 to 30 the analysis captured a total of 56, or 67 percent of the total number of activities and partnerships associated with this dimension (see Table 18).

Within the nature dimension, the analysis revealed that the collection of activities and partnerships associated with the nature dimension of place-building were highly representative of the institution's transformational profile for this dimension. In fact, 11 of 80 identified activities and partnerships associated with this dimension received either a 35 or 34 points. If the range was broadened to include activities and partnerships that

received scores from 35 to 30 the analysis captured a total of 73, or 91 percent of the total number of identified activities and partnerships (see Table 20).

Finally, within the built environment dimension the analysis revealed that the collection of activities and partnerships associated with the built environment dimension of place-building were "cautiously" representative of a contributive profile. This assessment is based on the small number of activities and partnerships (10) associated with this dimension. However, when each of these activities were examined using the analytical framework developed for this dimension, three received a perfect score of 35, one received a score of 31, two scored 30, and the remaining three received a score of 29. These scores, while highly reflective of the institution's contributive profile were balanced by the lack of activities and partnerships associated with the built environment dimension.

The findings for research question three indicate that community engagement activities and partnerships at The College were, to a high degree, reflective of the institution's place-building profiles. This confirmation was important because it presents OPBT as an objective tool that can be used to not only identify a particular place-builder typology, but also as a tool that can be employed to assess how these typologies are being operationalized by the institution. Prior research has empirically demonstrated that many colleges and universities, in some way, value and invest in the places in which they are located but beyond economic measures, there has been no way to systematically identify, assess, and report these commitments from a place-building perspective (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Moore, 2014).

**Conclusions**

But what does all this mean for higher education, or more specifically, for community engagement scholars and practitioners? Based on the findings from this study, the following six conclusions have been drawn and are presented for consideration:

1. <u>Place-building is inherently local.</u>

Place-building is necessarily a local pursuit. To frame the importance of localism in building place a different way, it is impossible to build place--in distant places. Distant places are "there" and we (the institution) are here. Being here means that local institutional place-building, in its best form, is grounded in the particulars of a place and its people, land, and history (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015). This physical connection to local places binds resident institutions to the "complexities, identities, and values of local lived experiences" (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015, p. 101). Underpinning the conclusion that place-building is inherently local is the understanding that local places have unique local voices, histories, cultures, politics, and ecologies that inform the design, purpose, and process of engagement (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015). Assembling this understanding and building from it requires institutional belonging, membership, and physical connection all of which are possible "here" but impossible "there". Findings presented here indicate that The College has not only developed this understanding but operationalized this notion in its community engagement activities and partnerships.

2. <u>Place-building is unique.</u>

The analysis of engagement at The College reinforced the notion that place-building is not easily transferable. In other words, it cannot be simply "picked up and

exported to almost any other community without much need for modification" (Siemers, Harrison, Clayton, & Stanley, 2015, p. 101). For example, the Grow Pleasantville project worked with community leaders engage area youth in reimaging the local community in ways that created feelings of connection and investment in their hometown. Activities were designed allow participants to identify local problems and create local solutions that enable positive change. This type of engagement is not transferable. It is, quite simply, unique to the issues, assets, and character of local community and its population.

3. <u>Place-building requires institutional framing.</u>

  Institutional framing is an intentional, inclusive, institutional process designed to unpack the meaning of place and the institution's role within it. The process would enable and encourage a deliberative, university-wide dialog designed to define and debate the nature of the institution's relationship with place and how it could be improved. The product would formalize agreements around these topics and serve as strategic guide for place-building across the institution. Findings presented here reflected evidence of institutional framing and its positive impact on how the institution and its actors perceive and enact their place-based role in the local community.

4. <u>Geography is important.</u>

  Understanding the geography of engagement is important. Findings from this study indicated a highly local distribution; however, the data used had to be developed during the project. Tracking engagement geography is simple and should be part of any active institutional assessment or evaluative process. Once a geography is established, it could be used as a decision-making tool that informs resource allocation, investment strategies, and impact measurements.

5.  <u>Place-building is a moral imperative.</u>

The investments of resident institutions of higher learning in the communities in which they exist could be viewed not just a good thing to do, but rather something they are morally compelled to do. Author Paul Pribbenow (2014) speaks to this in the following text taken from a recent article.

> …colleges are indigenous communities. That is, they are native to a particular place. They are native to a particular environment and to a particular set of values and practices that define the institution. And that means something for the way they live their lives; it means something for the ways in which they understand what it means to be faithful and generous with their place and values and presence.

Findings from this study indicated that The College has intentionally identified itself as part of the indigenous community and as such, responsible for its well-being. One administrator during the focus group interviews articulated the institution's place-based obligation this way in the following statement.

> You know, we're invested in this community. We can't just pack up and move somewhere else. This is home for us, and so we want to always try and make it a better place, and you can argue over what better means, and we do that sometimes, but I think we have an obligation as a citizen…All the people at the institution are citizens [and work within that structure] to make this place better. We have a role. We have an obligation to do that.

6. <u>Place-based engagement is transformative.</u>

Place-based engagement presents an exciting opportunity for institutions to transform the educational experience. Now more than ever, as higher education faces declining enrollment, challenging town-gown interactions, decreased state and federal funding, place-based engagement presents an unprecedented opportunity to redefine the college experience. Findings that emerged in this study suggest that by prioritizing community engagement, institutions can create unique teaching and learning experiences that will attract students and faculty, reenergize the community-university relationship, and build lasting bonds between students and the community that have been shown to translate into increased alumni contributions (Weerts & Hudson, 2009).

## Contributions and Implications

Based on the review of the literature presented in Chapter Two, the community engagement movement in higher education has begun to recognize the value of place-based approaches to community engagement (Kimball & Thomas, 2012; Moore, 2014). Although place and place-building are not a new concepts, they continue to be uniformly misunderstood, treated in reductionist ways, or simply ignored (Thomas & Cross, 2007). The purpose of this study was to close this gap in understanding by exploring the how one, highly-engaged institution of higher learning had conceptualized place and place-building and how these ideas were being operationalized within the context of the institution's community engagement programming.

What emerged were a set of findings that largely addressed the research questions guiding the study. These findings have been synthesized into the following seven statements that represent this study's contribution to the existing body of knowledge and their implications for scholars and practitioners. It should be stressed that this review of

implications is by no means exhaustive and should be through of as simply a primer designed to stimulate thinking on insights from this study may impact the future of community engagement in higher education.

1. The institution has adopted a place-building approach to engagement.

   Place-building among highly-engaged institutions is frequently assumed in the community engagement literature (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010; Brownell, 1993; Elmendorf, Reindl, & Williams, 2002; Noel & Earwicker, 2015). However, it had not been empirically demonstrated prior to this investigation. This finding not only encourages additional studies that would include larger sample sizes, it also introduces the OPBT as a viable framework for assessing the place-building relationships between institutions of higher learning and their associated communities and environments.

2. The institution conceptualizes place as being local (local sense of place).

   "What places are important?" has been a long-standing question among community engagement scholars and practitioners (Chatterton, 2000). Prior literature has failed to address this question due to a lack of interest and the absence of tools and methods designed to address the query. However, more and more voices have called for institutions to enact their roles as stewards of place, figuring out where to engage and using these decisions to shape engagement programming have become important. Findings here present a model to make these determinations and highlight the importance of including discussions of "where" during institutional planning processes.

3. The institution sees itself as member of the local community and recognizes that institutions of higher learning, and the places they operate, are mutually dependent on each other (interdependent agent perspective).

Traditional community engagement approaches presuppose institutions of higher learning as a detached, scholarly entities divorced from the civic, social, and political life of surrounding communities (Chatterton, 2000). These detached views have been encouraged by global and national research agendas that prioritize work in exotic locations (Silka, Teisl, & Settele, 2015). Findings reveal that The College has not only adopted an interdependent view of place but used this view as a strategic frame to inform, shape, and direct its community engagement programming. Like the previous finding, this research presents OPBT as a viable framework for quantifying these collective institutional perceptions through the analysis of institutional framing documents and the content of institutional community engagement programming.

4. <u>The institution conceptualizes itself as an investor and contributor to the well-being of the local community (contributive place-building profile).</u>

One of the challenges faced by institutions of higher learning seeking to better understand the nature of their place-building relationships with surrounding communities is the lack of some set of place-building principles, guidelines, or rubrics (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). As presented in the literature review, this challenge has handicapped the ability of these institutions to quantify, assess, or evaluate place-based university-community relationships. Findings here not only present OPBT as a suitable assessment model but also provide a discussion framework around which practitioners can define, debate, and envision the institution's place-based roles and activities. Through this work, institutions can be empowered to not only identify their position on the place-building continuum, but also collaborate on changing this position if they wish to do so (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

5. <u>The primary place-building role adopted by the institution is that of relationship builder. As a relationship builder, the institution has prioritized structure, reciprocity, inclusion, and sustained commitments in building local relationships.</u>

The primary focus of higher education is teaching and learning. However, as the community engagement movement has gained momentum, the individual roles adopted by institutions, in their communities, have become increasingly important (Bruning, Mcgrew, & Cooper, 2006). However, emerging literature around the topic has not provided a framework for understanding these roles or methods for investigating how these roles are being fulfilled in the community. Findings here illustrate that not only can these roles be identified, they can also be unpacked, through careful analysis of institutional data, to uncover how these roles are being enacted through community engagement activities and partnerships.

6. <u>Most of the community engagement activities and partnerships undertaken by the institution are in local communities (hyperlocal orientation).</u>

Like other human activities, community engagement in higher education has a geography. The geography of engagement is important for a variety of reasons but relevant here in identifying where The College had chosen to invest its human, fiscal, and knowledge resources within the framework of its community engagement. Findings here, for the first time, provided empirical evidence of the spatial distribution of these investments in a way that highlighted alignments between the institution's conceptual ideas of place where these ideas were being articulated in the larger community. In the future, similar methods could be used by other institutions help guide institutional decision-making.

7. <u>The focus of community engagement at the institution is on the social, nature, and built environment aspects of place (place-building dimensions).</u>

As highlighted in previous sections, prior to the introduction of OPBT there was no accepted framework with which place-building could be benchmarked or measured. Findings here not only identify the focus of the institution's place-building efforts but also highlight areas that could be improved. This 360 view of place-building through engagement offers institutions a framework that can be used to better focus and align place-based activities and partnerships with goals specific to the enhancement of these efforts.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following five considerations for additional study are presented:

1. The scope of future studies should include more highly-engaged institutions. In this investigation, the scope was limited to a single highly-engaged institution. This limitation prevents findings from being representative of the entire population of highly-engaged colleges and universities. Future studies should consider how the quantitative and qualitative methods used here could be replicated to include a representative sample of the population of highly-engaged institutions.

2. Future studies of place-based community engagement should include community partners. External stakeholders (those outside the institution) could include community representatives from business, government, and community-based organizations who are directly involved in the community

engagement initiatives undertaken by the college or university. The inclusion of samples from these external stakeholder populations would not only provide a more rich profile of engagement efforts, but also better align institutional intent with community impact.

3. The geographic circumstance or setting of colleges and universities may impact the nature of their place-based engagement activities and partnerships (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). Future studies should be undertaken to compare and contrast place-based engagement strategies among institutions of higher learning situated in different geographies. Based on findings here, existing literature, and a preliminary review of these geographies a logical distinctions may be made between institutions that are physically "embedded" in either urban or small town environments, institutions located in suburban environments, and "enclave" institutions that are situated far away from any built environment. Possible research questions could include: How does the geographic circumstance (place) of highly-engaged institutions of higher learning influence the content, focus, and structure of place-based community engagement activities and partnerships?

4. Another factor influencing the development and delivery of place-based community engagement initiatives is the type of institution. For example, how do small private institutions of higher learning conceptualize place and place-building as compared to large, public research universities? Future research should investigate these differences within the context of place-based

engagement by replicating and/or adapting methods used in this study to

address this and related questions.

5. One of the most interesting but unintended findings of this research was the

rational driving the hyperlocal distribution of community engagement at The

College. Thematic patterns, identified during the analysis of focus group

interview transcripts, included logistics (getting students/faculty to

engagement sites), institutional leadership (explicit and implicit directives

from institutional leadership to engage locally), and community membership

(feelings of belonging held by students and faculty). These emerging drivers

may have significant impacts on not only where engagement happens, but also

how it could be influenced by institutional policy decisions. For example,

feelings of connection to local communities could be made possible by

developing programs and incentives designed to encourage faculty members

to live in the community in which the institution is located. Future research

should attempt to unpack how institutions and community engagement actors

make decisions about where to engage with the aim of using related findings

to develop and adapt institutional policies to support the engagement goals of

the institution.

**Summary**

Place matters, especially within the context of community engagement in higher

education. Place provides a conceptual framework, organizing principle, and

accountability structure that can be used to redefine the role of higher education in

society (Hopkins & Ferris, eds., 2015). This work is happening.  Growing numbers of

colleges and universities are recognizing that they are bound to particular places by

mission and invested capital and therefore have a role in making these places better (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). These institutions are not only giving renewed purpose and direction to university-community interactions, they have also elevated the engagement discussion. Findings presented in this study help to inform this emerging discussion, but more research, debate, and deliberation is needed. Through these efforts, scholars and practitioners will be better able to unpack ideas the complex ideas of place and place-building in ways that continue to transform community engagement in higher education.

References

Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous*. New York: Vintage.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, ATSDR. (2013). *Principles of community engagement* (2nd ed). Atlanta, GA: Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Allen, J. A., Prange, K., Smith-Howell, D., Woods, S., & Reed, B. J. (2016). Love of place: The metropolitan university advantage: 2015 CUMU National Conference in Omaha. *Psychology Faculty Publications, 167*, 86-96. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/psychfacpub/167

American Association of State Colleges and Universities. (2006). *Making place matter: Tools and insights for universities called to regional stewardship* (pp. 1-69).

Anchor Institutions Task Force. (2009). *Retooling HUD for a catalytic federal government: A report to the Secretary Shaun Donovan* (pp. 147-169) (P. C. Brophy & R. D. Godsil, Eds.). Philadelphia, PA: Penn Institute for Urban Research, University of Pennsylvania.

Axelroth, R., & Dubb, S. (2010). *The road half traveled: University engagement at a crossroads* (pp. 1-224). College Park, MD: The Democracy Collabrative.

Bader, G. E., & Rossi, C. A. (2002). *Focus groups: A step-by-step guide*. San Diego, CA: The Bader Group.

Barajas, H. L., & Martin, L. (2016). Shared space, liminal space: Five years into a community-university place-based experiment. *Metropolitan Universities, 27*(3), 47-66.

Basso, K. H. (1996). *Wisdom sits in places: Landscape and language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque, NM: Univ. of New Mexico Press.

Beere, C. A., Votruba, J. C., & Wells, G. W. (2011). *Becoming an engaged campus: A practical guide for institutionalizing public engagement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Benson, L., Harkavy, I. R., & Puckett, J. L. (2007). *Dewey's dream: Universities and democracies in an age of education reform: Civil society, public schools, and democratic citizenship*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Berg, P. (1978). *Reinhabiting a separate country: A bioregional anthology of northern California*. San Francisco, CA: Planet Drum Foundation.

Bernard, H. R. (1994). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Berry, W. (1987). *Home economics*. New York, NY: North Point Press.

Berry, W. (1992). *Sex, economy, freedom & community: Eight essays*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Birch, E., Perry, D. C., & Taylor, H. L. (2013). Universities as anchor institutions. *Journal Of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement, 17*(3), 7-15.

Blanton, J. (2007). Engagement as a brand position in the higher education marketplace. *International Journal of Educational Advancement, 7*(2), 143-154. doi:10.1057/palgrave.ijea.2150056

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism; perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bok, D. (1982). *Beyond the ivory tower: Social responsibilities and the modern university*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bond, R., & Paterson, L. (2005). Coming down from the ivory tower? Academics' civic and economic engagement with the community. *Oxford Review of Education, 31*(3), 331-351. doi:10.1080/03054980500221934

Bonnen, J. T. (1998). The land-grant idea and the evolving outreach university. In *University-community collaborations for the twenty-first century: Outreach scholarship for youth and families* (In R. M. Lerner & L. A. K. Simon). New York, NY: Garland Publications.

Bowers, C. A. (1993). *Education, cultural myths, and the ecological crisis: Toward deep changes*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Boyer, E. L. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. *Journal of Public Service & Outreach, 1*(1), 11-20.

Bradford, N. (2005). *Place-based public policy: Towards a new urban and community agenda for Canada* (pp. 1-64). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Bridger, J. C., & Alter, T. R. (2006). The engaged university, community development, and public scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 11*(1), 163-178.

Britton, J., & Aires, K. W. (2014). Planning for community engagement: Drexel University creates the Dornsife Center for Neighborhood Partnerships. *Planning for Higher Education Journal, 43*(1), 64-75.

Brownell, B. A. (1993). Metropolitan universities: Past, present, and future. *Metropolitan Universities, 4*(3), 13-21. Retrieved from https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/muj/article/view/19331.

Brukardt, M. J., Holland, B., Percy, S. L., & Zimpher, N. (2004). *Calling the question: Is higher education ready to commit to community engagement?* (pp. 1-24.) Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Idea Office, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Bruning, S. D., Mcgrew, S., & Cooper, M. (2006). Town-gown relationships: Exploring university-community engagement from the perspective of community members. *Public Relations Review, 32*(2), 125-130. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.02.005

Bruns, K., Sonka, S. T., Furco, A., Swanson, L., & Fitzgerald, H. E. (2016). The centrality of engagement in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 20*(1), 223-243.

Bryson, J. M. (2010). The future of public and nonprofit strategic planning in the United States. *Public Administration Review, 70*, 255-267. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02285.x

Buttimer, A. (1976). Grasping the dynamism of lifeworld. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 18*(4), 501-506. doi:10.1177/030913259401800405

Buttimer, A. (1976). Grasping the dynamism of lifeworld. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 66*(2), 277-292. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8306.1976.tb01090.x

Cameron, R. (2009). A sequential mixed model research design: Design, analytical and display issues. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, 3*(2), 140-152. doi:10.5172/mra.3.2.140

Campbell, R., Patterson, D., & Bybee, D. (2011). Using mixed methods to evaluate a

community intervention for sexual assault survivors: A methodological tale.

*Violence Against Women, 17*(3), 376-388. doi:10.1177/1077801211398622

Campus Compact. (2012). *Deepening the roots of civic engagement: Campus compact

2011 Annual Membership Survey Executive Summary*. Boston, MA: Campus

Compact.

Campus Compact. (2015). Home - campus compact. Retrieved September, 2016, from

http://compact.org/

Cantor, N., & Englot, P. (2015). Reinventing scholar-educators as citizens and public

workers. In H. Boyte (Ed.), *Democracy's education: Public work, citizenship, and

future of colleges and universities* (pp. 77-79). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt

University Press.

Cantor, N. (2009). A new Morrill Act: Higher education anchors the "Remaking of

America". *The Presidency, 12*(3), 16-22.

Cantor, N. (2011). *Anchor Institutions-Connecting with Community for Innovation and

Opportunity* (Paper 38, pp. 1-18). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, Office of

the Chancellor.

Cantor, N. (2012). *The public mission of higher education:Barn-raisings a century later*.

Address presented at University of Wisconsin-Madison Teaching & Learning

Symposium, Advancing the Year of the Wisconsin Idea.

Carey, T. A., Carey, M., Stalker, K., Mullan, R. J., Murray, L. K., & Spratt, M. B. (2007). Psychological change from the inside looking out: A qualitative investigation. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 7*(3), 178-187. doi:10.1080/14733140701514613

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (2015). 2015 Carnegie elective community engagement classification: Re-classification documentation framework. Retrieved from http://nerche.org/images/stories/projects/Carnegie/2015/2015_reclassification_framework.pdf

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT). (2015). The elective community engagement classification. 1-16. Retrieved from http://nerche.org/images/ stories/projects/Carnegie/2015/2015_first-time_framework.pdf

Casey, E. (1996). How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time. In K. Basso & S. Feld (Eds.), *Senses of place* (pp. 13-52). Sante Fe, NM: Chool of American Research Press.

Center for Disease Control/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). (2013). *Principles of community engagement* (2nd ed). Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health.

Chatterton, P. (2000). The cultural role of universities in the community: Revisiting the university - community debate. *Environment and Planning A, 32*(1), 165-181. doi:10.1068/a3243

Checkoway, B. (1997). Reinventing the research university for public service. *Journal of Planning Literature, 11*(3), 307-319. doi:10.1177/088541229701100301

Child, D. (2006). *The essentials of factor analysis* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU). (2004). *Declaration of metropolitan universities*. Towson, MD: CUMU.

Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU). (2017). Coalition history - Coalition of urban and metropolitan universities. Retrieved from http://www.cumuonline.org/?page=coalitionhistory

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study*. Lecture

    presented at University of Nebraska- Lincoln, DBER Speaker Series, Paper 48.

    Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

    *approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

The Daily Beast. (2012). College Rankings 2012: Most Rigorous Schools". Retrieved

    from http://www.thedailybeast.com/

Deeley, S. J. (2010). Service-learning: Thinking outside the box. *Active Learning in*

    *Higher Education, 11*(1), 43-53. doi:10.1177/1469787409355870

Dellheim, C. (1986). Business in time: The historian and corporate culture. *The Public*

    *Historian, 8*, 9-22.

Dew, J. R. (2012). The Future of American Higher Education. *World Future Society,* 7-

    13. Retrieved from http://www.troy.edu/studentservices/assets/documents/The-

    Future-of-American-Higher-Education.pdf

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). *Mail and internet surveys* (3rd

    ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Dostilio, L. D. (2017). Neighborhood-emplaced centers: A trend within American urban

    community-university engagement. *Australasian Journal of University-*

    *Community Engagement, 11*(1).

Driscoll, A. (2008). Carnegie's community-engagement classification: Intentions and

    insights. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 40*(1), 38-41.

    doi:10.3200/CHNG.40.1.38-41

222

Driscoll, A. (2009). Carnegie's new community engagement classification: Affirming higher education's role in community. *New Directions for Higher Education, 2009*(147), 5-12. doi:10.1002/he.353

Driscoll, A. (2014). Analysis of the Carnegie classification of community engagement: Patterns and impact on institutions. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 2014*(162), 3-15. doi:10.1002/ir.20072

Elmendorf, E., Reindl, T., & Williams, M. (2002). *Stepping forward as stewards of place: A guide for leading public engagement as state colleges and universities* (pp. 1-43). Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

Entrikin, J. N. (1991). *The betweenness of place: Toward a geography of modernity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Farr, J. (2004). Social capital: A conceptual history. *Political Theory, 32*(1), 6-33. doi:10.1177/0090591703254978

Fettes, M., & Judson, G. (2011). Imagination and the cognitive tools of place-making. *The Journal of Environmental Education, 42*(2), 123-135.

Fisher, R., Fabricant, M., & Simmons, L. (2004). Understanding contemporary university-community connections. *Journal of Community Practice, 12*(3-4), 13-34. doi:10.1300/j125v12n03_02

Foreman, B. K. (2010). *An investigation of the success of organizations involved in community engagement initiatives* (Doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Charlotte) (pp. 1-144). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Fulbright-Anderson, K., Auspos, P., & Anderson, A. (2001). *Community involvement in partnerships with educational institutions, medical centers, and utility companies* (pp. 1-27). Aspen, CO: Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Furco, A. (2010). The engaged campus: Toward a comprehensive approach to public engagement. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 58*(4), 375-390. doi:10.1080/00071005.2010.527656

Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 13*(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2288-13-117

Gardner, J. W. (1998). *Remarks to the campus compact strategic planning committee*. Lecture presented in February 10, 1998, San Francisco, CA.

Gay, L. R., Airasian, P. W., & Mills, G. E. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (9th ed.). Boston, MS: Pearson.

Graham, S., & Healey, P. (1999). Relational concepts of space and place: Issues for planning theory and practice. *European Planning Studies, 7*(5), 623-646. doi:10.1080/09654319908720542

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11*(3), 255-274. doi:10.2307/1163620

Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher, 32*(4), 3-12. doi:10.3102/0013189X032004003

Gupton, J. T., Sullivan, A. L., & Johnston-Goodstar, K. (2014). The role of university engagement in the community. *International Journal of Educational Reform, 23*(3), 181-190.

Guthey, G. T., Whiteman, G., & Elmes, M. (2014). Place and sense of place. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 23*(3), 254-265. doi:10.1177/1056492613517511

Habraken, N. J. (1998). *The Structure of the Ordinary*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Petska, K. S., & Creswell, D. J. (2005). Mixed methods research designs in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 224-235. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.224

Harkavy, I., & Axelroth Hodges, R. (2012). *Democratic devolution: How America's colleges and universities can strengthen their communities* (pp. 1-12). Philadephia, PA: Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania.

Harkavy, I. (1998). School-community-university partnerships: Effectively integrating community building and education reform. *Presentation at the Joint Forum Between the U. S. Department of Education and the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development*. Washington, DC.

Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hatch, M. J. (1993). The dynamics of organizational culture. *The Academy of Organizational Management Review, 18*(4), 657-693.

Healey, P. (1999). Institutionalist analysis, communicative planning, and shaping places. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 19*(2), 111-121. doi:10.1177/0739456x9901900201

Hillier, B., & Hanson, J. (1984). *The social logic of space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hillier, J. (2001). Imagined Value: The Poetics and Politics of Place. In A. Madanipour, A. Hull, & P. Healey (Eds.), *The Governance of Place: Space and planning processes* (pp. 69-101). Sydney: Ashgate.

Hoch, C. (1994). *What planners do: Power, politics, and persuasion*. Chicago, IL: Planners Press.

Holland, B. A. (1997). Analyzing the institutional committment to service. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 4*, 30-41.

Holland, B. A. (2001). Toward a definition and characterization of the engaged campus: Six cases. *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum, 12*(3), 20-29.

Hollander, E. L., & Saltmarsh, J. (2000). The engaged university. *Academe, 86*(4), 29-32.

Hopkins, E. M., & Ferris, J. M. (Eds.). (2015). *Place-Based initiatives in the context of public policy and markets: Moving to higher ground* (pp. 1-107). Los Angeles, CA: The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy Sol Price Center for Social Innovation, University of Southern California.

Houghton, K., Foth, M., & Miller, E. (2015). Urban acupuncture: Hybrid social and technological practices for hyperlocal placemaking. *Journal of Urban Technology, 22*(3), 3-19. doi:10.1080/10630732.2015.1040290

Hubbard, P., Kitchin, R., & Valentine, G. (2008). *Key texts in human geography*. Los

    Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Hudson, R. (2001). *Producing Places*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hynie, M., MacNevin, W., Prescod, C., Rieder,, B., & Schwartzentruber, L. (2016). The

    morning after: Stakeholder reflections on the sustainability of a community-

    campus engagement center in the changing environment. *Metropolitan*

    *Universities, 27*(3), 27-46.

Hyper-local [Def. 1]. (n.d.). In *Google Defintition*. Retrieved December 12, 2016, from

    https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-

    instant&rlz=1C1OPRB_enUS701US702&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=hyper-

    local+defintion&*

Ivankova, N. V., & Stick, S. L. (2006). Students' persistence in a distributed doctoral

    program in educational leadership in higher education: A mixed methods study.

    *Research in Higher Education, 48*(1), 93-135. doi:10.1007/s11162-006-9025-4

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random

    House.

Jacobs, J. (1984). *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life*. New

    York, NY: Rondom House.

Jacoby, B. (2009). *Civic engagement in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-

    Bass.

Jongbloed, B., Enders, J., & Salerno, C. (2008). Self-assessment exercises: A comparison

    between a private sector organisation and higher education institutions.

    *International Journal of Production Economics, 114*(1), 105-118.

    doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2008.01.005

Keith, M., & Pile, S. (Eds.). (1993). *Place and the politics of identity*. London:

    Routledge.

Keller, G. (2010). *Academic strategy: The management revolution in american higher*

    *education*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kellogg Commission. (2000). *Renewing the covenant: Learning, discovery, and*

    *engagement in a new age and different world.* Washington, DC: National

    Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

Kellogg Commission. (2001). *Returning to our roots: Executive summaries of the reports*

    *of the Kellogg Commission on the future of state and land-grant universites* (pp.

    1-38). Washington, DC: National Association of State Universities and Land-

    Grant Colleges.

Kennelly, J. J., & Shivastava, P. (2013). Sustainability and place-based enterprise.

    *Organization & Environment, 26*(1), 83-101. doi:10.1177/1086026612475068

Kimball, M. J., & Thomas, D. F. (2012). Place-building theory: A framework for

    assessing and advancing community engagement in higher education. *Michigan*

    *Journal of Community Service Learning,* 19-27.

Kohlbacher, F. (2005). The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research.

    *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 7*(1).

    Retrieved from http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0601211.

Kramer, M., & Kania, J. (2011). Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, 9*(1), 36-41.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus group: A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Krueger, R. A. (1998). *Developing questions for focus groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lapovsky, L. (2013). *The Higher Education Business Model: Innovation and Financial Sustainability* (pp. 1-11). New York, NY: TIAA Institute. Retrieved from https://www.tiaainstitute.org/publication/higher-education-business-model.

Le, T., & LeÌ,, Q. (2013). *Conducting research in a changing and challenging world*. New York: Nova.

Lee, T. G. (2012). *Community engagement: Spanning boundaries between university and community* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2012) (pp. 1-132). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Lefebvre, H. (1974). *The production of space*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Contractions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 97-128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Lynton, E. A., & Elman, S. E. (1988). *New priorities for the university: Meeting society's needs for applied knowledge and competent individuals*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods, and
methodology. *Issues in Educational Research, 16*, 193-205.

MacLellan, D. (2006). Exploring a place-based approach for civic engagement. In *Annual
Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association* (pp. 1-20). Toronto,
Ontario: Canadian Political Science Association.

Massey, D. B. (1994). *Space, place and gender*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Mattessich, P. W., Murray-Close, M., & Monsey, B. R. (2008). *Collaboration: What
makes it work*. Saint Paul, MN: Fielsstone Alliance.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. London: Forgotten Books.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*.
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Middleton, A., Murie, A., & Groves, R. (2005). Social Capital and Neighbourhoods that
Work. *Urban Studies, 42*(10), 1711-1738. doi:10.1080/00420980500231589

Moore, T. L. (2014). *Community-university engagement: A process for building
democratic communities*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Moore, T. L. (2014). The road half traveled: University engagement at a crossroads.
*Journal Of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement, 18*(4), 253-257.

Morfessis, I., & Malachuk, D. (2011). • Economic Development in the Post Crisis Era:
Globalization's Evolving Opportunities, Challenges & Tensions. *Economic
Development Journal, 10*(3), 19-27.

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London, UK:
SAGE.

Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research, 40*(2). doi:10.1097/00006199-199103000-00014

Morse, J. M. (2003). Principles of mixed methods and multimethod research design. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (pp. 189-208). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

NCES National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, The College. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/InstitutionProfile.aspx?unitId=adacabb1b1b4

Needham, R. (1975). Polythetic classification: Convergence and consequences. *Man, 10*(3), 349-369. doi:10.2307/2799807

Netshandama, V. O. (2010). Community development as an approach to community engagement in rural-based higher education institutions in South Africa. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 24*(3), 342-356.

New England Resource Center for Higher Education, NERCHE. (2016). Community engagement classification. Retrieved September, 2016, from http://www.nerche.org/

Niglas, K. (2009). How the novice researcher can make sense of mixed methods designs. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, 3*(1), 34-46. doi:10.5172/mra.455.3.1.34

Nilsen, E. B. (2005). Rethinking place in planning: Opportunities in northern and aboriginal planning in Nunavut, Canada. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 14*(1), 22-37.

Noel, J., & Earwicker, D. P. (2015). Documenting community engagement practices and outcomes: Insights from recipients of the 2010 Carnegie community engagement classification. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 19*(3), 33-61.

O'Connor, J. (2006). Civic engagement in higher education. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 38*(5), 52-58. doi:10.3200/CHNG.38.5.52-58

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Dickinson, W. B., Leech, N. L., & Zoran, A. G. (2009). A qualitative framework for collecting and analyzing data in focus group research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8*(3), 1-21. doi:10.1177/160940690900800301

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Slate, J. R., Leech, N. L., & Collins, K. M. (2007). Conducting mixed analyses: A general typology. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, 1*(1), 4-17. doi:10.5172/mra.455.1.1.4

Oram, F. (2007). *Peterson's four-year colleges 2008*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Thomson/Peterson's.

Pansiri, J. (2009). Evolution of a doctoral thesis research topic and methodology: A personal experience. *Tourism Management, 30*(1), 83-89. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2008.04.001

Peaslee, L., Hahn, A., & Coonerty, C. (2002). *Colleges and Universities as Economic Anchors: Profiles of Promising Practices* (pp. 1-19). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Peterson's Guide to Colleges and Universities. (2017). The College. Retrieved from https://www.petersons.com/

Place definition - Google search. (n.d.). Retrieved February, 2017, from

    https://www.google.com/search?q=place%2Bdefinition&rlz=1C1OPRB_enUS70

    1US702&oq=place%2Bdefinition&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j0l5.4535j0j4&sourceid=

    chrome&ie=UTF-8

Ponce, O. A., & Pagan-Maldonado, N. (2015). Mixed methods research in education:

    Capturing the complexity of the profession. *International Journal of Educational*

    *Excellence, 1*(1), 111-135. doi:10.18562/ijee.2015.0005

Pope, C., Ziebland, S., & Mays, N. (2000). Qualitative research: Analysing qualitative

    data. *British Medical Journal, 320*, 114-116.

    doi:https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.320.7227

Pribbenow, P. C. (2015). Generosity and Faithfulness: A Meditation on Why Place

    Matters for Higher Education. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and*

    *Engagement, 19*(2), 5-11.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*.

    New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Ramaley, J. A. (2000). Embracing Civic Responsibility. *American Association for Higher*

    *Education Bulletin, 52*(20), 9-13.

Reardon, K. (2006). Promoting reciprocity within community/university development

    partnerships: Lessons from the field. *Planning Practice and Research, 21*(1), 95-

    107. doi:10.1080/02697450600901566

Reardon, S. F., Matthews, S. A., Oâ™Sullivan, D., Lee, B. A., Firebaugh, G., Farrell,

    C. R., & Bischoff, K. (2008). The Geographic Scale of Metropolitan Racial

    Segregation. *Demography, 45*(3), 489-514. doi:10.1353/dem.0.0019

Relph, E. (1981). *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography*. London: Routledge.

Relph, E. (1993). The Reclamation of Place. *Orion, 12*(1).

Relph, E. C. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. London: Pion.

Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Roberts, P. (2009). Shaping, making and managing places: Creating and maintaining sustainable communities through the delivery of enhanced skills and knowledge. *Town Planning Review, 80*(4-5), 437-454. doi:10.3828/tpr.2009.6

Rodman, M. C. (1992). Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality. *American Anthropologist, 94*(3), 640-656. doi:10.1525/aa.1992.94.3.02a00060

Roper, C. D., & Hirth, M. A. (2005). A History of Change in the Third Mission of Higher Education: The Evolution of One-way Service to Interactive Engagement. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 10*(3), 3-21.

Rushing, W. (2009). *Memphis and the paradox of place: Globalization in the American South*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Sack, R. D. (1988). The Consumer's World: Place as Context. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 78*(4), 642-664. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8306.1988.tb00236.x

Sagoff, M. (1986). Values and preferences. *Ethics, 96*(2), 301-316.

Saguaro Seminar. (2010). Civic Engagement in America. Retrieved September, 2016, from https://www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/socialcapitalprimer.htm

Saltmarsh, J., Hartley, M., & Clayton, P. (2009). *Democratic Engagement White Paper* (pp. 1-15). Boston, MA: New England Resource Center for Higher Education.

234

Saltmarsh, J., O'Meara, K., Sandmann, L., Giles, D., Jr., Cowdery, K., Liang, J., & Buglione, S. (2014). *Becoming a Steward of Place: Lessons from AASCU Carnegie Community Engagement Applications*. Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Saltmarsh, J., O'Meara, K., Sandmann, L., Giles, D., Jr., Cowdery, K., Liang, J., & Buglione, S. (2015). *Operationalizing Stewards of Place: Implementing Regional Engagement and Economic Development Strategies* (pp. 1-212). Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Schneekloth, L. H., & Shibley, R. G. (1995). *Placemaking: The art and practice of building communities*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Schneider, B., Brief, A. P., & Guzzo, R. A. (1996). Creating a climate and culture for sustainable organizational change. *Organizational Dynamics, 24*, 6-19.

Schoenberger, E. (1997). *The cultural crisis of the firm*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Schonlau, M., Fricker, R. D., & Elliott, M. N. (2002). *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

Shrivastava, P., & Kennelly, J. J. (2013). Sustainability and Place-Based Enterprise. *Organization & Environment, 26*(1), 83-101. doi:10.1177/1086026612475068

Siemers, C. K., Harrison, B., Clayton, P. H., & Stanley, T. A. (2015). Engaging place as partner. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 22*(1), 101-104.

Silberberg, S., Lorah, K., Disbrow, R., & Muessig, A. (2013). *Places in the making: How placemaking builds places and communities* (pp. 1-63). Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

235

Silka, L., Teisl, M., & Settele, J. (2015). Place-Based Approaches to Engagement. In W. Jacob, S. E. Sutin, J. C. Weidman, & J. L. Yeager (Eds.), *Community Engagement in Higher Education* (pp. 89-102). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense.

Simpson, M. A. (2011). *Community Engagement in Higher Education: Precived Costs and Benefits of Twelve Core Practices* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia) (pp. 1-181). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Simpson, M. A. (2011). *Community Engagement in Higher Education: Precived Costs and Benefits of Twelve Core Practices* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Georgia. Retrieved Fall, 2015, from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. L. (1999). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies, and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern Geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso.

Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Sorkin, M. (2006). Jane Jacobs: Fighting Back Until the Very End. *Architectural Record, 194*(6), 71-72.

Soska, T., & Johnson Butterfield, A. K. (2004). *University-community partnerships: Universities in civic engagement*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Social Work Practice Press.

Stout, A. C. (2008). *New Towns from Gowns: Urban Form and Placemaking at College Campuses* (Master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008) (pp. 1-180). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thomas, D. F., & Cross, J. E. (2007). Organizations as Place Builders. *Department of Management Faculty Publication, Paper 1*, 33-61. Retrieved from http://digscholarship.unco.edu/managefacpub/1

Thomas, D. F. (2004). *Toward and Understanding of Organizational Place Building in Communities* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

Thomas, D. F., Kimball, M., & Suhr, D. (2016). The Organizational Place Building Inventory: An instrument for assessing and facilitating Place-Based corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Corporate Citizenship, 2016*(63), 17-41.

Thomas, D. F., & Banning, J. H. (2014). Place Building and Mission Statements: A Match or Misfit? Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business Research, 3(2), 52-74.

Thurman, N., Pascal, J., & Bradshaw, P. (2012). Can big media do Big Society? A critical case study of commercial, convergent hyperlocal news. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics, 8*(2), 269-285. doi:10.1386/macp.8.2-3.269_1

Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). Pleasantville, Pennsylvania. Retrieved from

    https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/RHI105210/4248360

U.S News and World Report. (2017). How Does The College Rank Among America's

    Best Colleges? Retrieved from https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/thecollege-

    3230

Votruba, J. C. (2002). *Stewards of Place*. Washington, DC: American Association of

    State Colleges and Universities.

Weber, R. P. (1985). *Basic content analysis* (Quantitative Applications in the Social

    Sciences). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Weerts, D., & Hudson, E. (2009). Engagement and institutional advancement. *New

    Directions for Higher Education, 2009*(147), 65-74. doi:10.1002/he.359

Weerts, D. J., & Ronca, J. M. (2006). Examining Differences in State Support for Higher

    Education: A Comparative Study of State Appropriations for Research I

    Universities. *The Journal of Higher Education, 77*(6), 935-967.

    doi:10.1353/jhe.2006.0054

Weerts, D. J., & Sandmann, L. R. (2008). Building a Two-Way Street: Challenges and

    Opportunities for Community Engagement at Research Universities. *The Review

    of Higher Education, 32*(1), 73-106. doi:10.1353/rhe.0.0027

Weitzman, E. A. (2000). Software and Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S.

    Lincoln (Authors), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 803-820). Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage.

Werlen, B. (1993). *Society Action and Space: An Alternative Human Geography*. New

    York, NY: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall.

Whyte, W. H. (1980). *The social life of small urban spaces*. Washington, DC: Conservation Foundation.

Wilkinson, K. P. (1991). *The community in rural America*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press.

Winter, A., Wiseman, J., & Muirhead, B. (2005). *Beyond rhetoric : University-community engagement in Victoria* (pp. 1-132). Brisbane, Qld: Eidos.

Wright, S. (Ed.). (1994). *Anthropology of organizations*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Applications of case study research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Zelinsky, W. (1973). *The cultural geography of the United States*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Appendix A

Site Approval

# Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies
  in Education
Davis Hall, Room 303
570 S. Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

724-357-2400
Internet:  *http://www.iup.edu*

April 6, 2017

Jeff Raykes
Doctoral Candidate, IUP
116 N. Clymer Ave.
Indiana, PA  15701

███████████████████████████

RE:    Request for Site Approval, Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional
        Place Building in Higher Education

Dear Dr. ███████

Please accept this letter as a written request to conduct a research study at ████████College located in
████████ Pennsylvania. In order to help you make an informed decision, I have included summary
information about myself, the project, and research methods used in this study.

My name is Jeff Raykes, and I am a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership Studies
program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of Dr. Kelli Paquette, a professor in
the Professional Studies in Education at IUP. I am conducting a doctoral research study regarding place
building through community engagement in higher education titled *Place Matters: A Mixed Methods
Case Study of Institutional Place Building in Higher Education.*

As you know, community engagement is one of the biggest movements in higher education in the last
several decades. Within this movement, there is a growing interest in place-based approaches. Given this
increasing interest, the purpose of this research is to better understand how "highly-engaged" institutions
of higher learning have conceptualized place and place building, and how these ideas are being
operationalized within the framework of their community engagement activities and partnerships.
████████ College is an ideal site for this study based on its receipt of the Community Engagement
Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2008 and 2015.

This study will use a three-prong approach in gathering data. First, I seeking to analyze three types of
institutional documents: 1) institutional framing documents (i.e. mission and vision statements), 2)
community engagement framing documents (i.e. strategic plan), and 3) 2015 Community Engagement
Classification (CEC) application materials. As part of this request, I am asking that ████████ College,
through your office, share these documents with me for analysis. Second, I am seeking to distribute a
short questionnaire containing Likert-scale responses to institutional administrators and faculty members
who have been directly involved in the institution's 2015 community engagement activities and
partnerships (community engagement actors). As part of this request, I am asking that ████████ College,
through your office, share a list of these community engagement actors with me to enable the distribution
of the survey. This survey, titled the Organizational Place Building Inventory, is designed to assess the

institution's place-building values and strategies along the five dimensions of place building (ethical, social, natural, built environment, and economic). Finally, I am seeking to conduct a series of focus groups on the topic of place and place-building based on the results from the document analysis and questionnaire. Focus group participants would include institutional administrators and faculty members that completed the questionnaire. Selected participants in the study, if willing, will sign a consent form indicating their agreement to participate prior to their involvement in the study. They will be free to refuse to answer any question, as well as withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me through personal conversation, written communication, a telephone call, or through email.

Any and all information that the participants provide will be kept confidential. I will not use any names, personal information, or any participant or institutional identifiers for any purposes outside of this research project. All data will be kept secure on a password protected hard-drive and hardcopy materials will be secured in a locked cabinet.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of allowing me to conduct a research study at your institution. A form to indicate your willingness to participate in the study is enclosed with this letter. If you would, please print a copy of this form on your professional letterhead, complete the information including your signature, and return it to me in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact me by telephone or email using the contact information provided below.

Your time and cooperation is very much appreciated.


Sincerely,

Jeff Raykes


Principle Investigator:
Jeff Raykes, Doctoral Candidate, IUP
116 N. Clymer Ave.
Indiana, PA 15701
(724) 388-7710
fpnh@iup.edu

Faculty Sponsor:
Dr. Kelli Paquette, Professor, IUP
305 Davis Hall, 570 11th Street
Indiana, PA 15701-1080
724-357-2400
kpaquett@iup.edu

██████ College Site Approval Template

██████ **College Letterhead**

Date

██████ Address, etc.

Jeff Raykes
Doctoral Candidate, IUP 116 N. Clymer Ave.
Indiana, PA 15701

RE:   Site Approval, Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place Building in Higher
      Education

Dear Jeff Raykes:

Based on our review of your research and our discussions regarding its implementation, I agree to share the institutional documents requested for analysis and will provide a list of institutional community engagement actors (potential participants). Further, I give you permission to email identified as potential participants, distribute the Organizational Place Building Inventory questionnaire, and conduct focus groups with respondents for data collection purposes.

I reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if the institutional circumstances change. I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

Further, I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and that it will remain in a secured location.

Sincerely,


██████ Representative Contact information

April 10, 2017

Jeff Raykes
Doctoral Candidate, IUP
116 N. Clymer Ave.
Indiana, PA 15701

RE: Site Approval, Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place
Building in Higher Education

Dear Jeff Raykes:

Based on our review of your research and our discussions regarding its
implementation, I agree to share the institutional documents requested for analysis and will
provide a list of institutional community engagement actors (potential participants). Further, I
give you permission to email identified as potential participants, distribute the Organizational
Place Building Inventory questionnaire, and conduct focus groups with respondents for data
collection purposes.

I reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if the institutional
circumstances change. I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

Further, I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and that it
will remain in a secured location.

Sincerely,

Appendix B

Permission to use Survey

**Jeff Raykes**

| | |
|---|---|
| To: | Thomas, David |
| Cc: | Kimball, Michael; Jeff Raykes |
| Subject: | RE: Permission to use the OPBI for Doctoral Dissertation-Jeff Raykes |

From: Jeff Raykes [mailto:jsraykes@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 11:00 AM
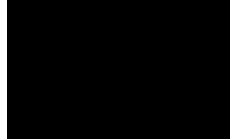To: Thomas, David <David.Thomas@unco.edu>
Cc: Kimball, Michael <Michael.Kimball@unco.edu>;Jeff Raykes <fpnh@iup.edu>
Subject: Re: Permission to use the OPBI for Doctoral Dissertation-Jeff Raykes

Good morning Dr. Thomas! Thank you very much for your permission to use the OPBI with the slight modifications included to square it with our institutional setting. I would be happy to share a copy of the revised inventory (see PDF attached to previous email) and you have my permission to use the modified survey as you see fit. I am very interested in your research efforts so please keep me in the loop wherever/whenever possible.

Thanks again to you and Dr. Kimball for you assistance in completing their project.

Feel free to contact me anytime with questions or concerns.

Jsr
Sent from my iPad

On Mar 15, 2017, at 6:58 PM, Thomas, David <David.Thomas@unco.edu> wrote:

> greetings
>
> you have permission, but please note in the dissertation the OPBI was used with permission of Dr. David Thomas. In addition, please send me a copy of the revised inventory and your permission to use your adaptations.
>
> thanks and best of luck
>
> David Thomas, PhD
> Assistant Professor of Management
> Director Entrepreneurship Program
> Monfort College of Business
> University of Northern Colorado
> Greeley, CO 80639
> T. 970.351.2074
> F. 970.351.1097

From: Kimball, Michael
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 4:36:23 PM
To: Jeff Raykes
Cc: fpnh@iup.edu; Thomas, David
Subject: Re: Permission to use the OPBI for Doctoral Dissertation-Jeff Raykes

Hi Jeff,

A belated Merry Christmas! Out here in Northern Colorado, however, it feels much more like late spring, with temps hitting 75 today.

I have CC'd this reply to **David Thomas** as he is the OPBI's founding father. David, I've been working with Jeff since last semester on the development of his dissertation project as an innovative application of place building theory. Would you be willing to review this email and attachment? Please share any feedback and, if the content meets with your approval, grant your blessing.

I'll stay tuned.
Cheers,
Mike

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Jeff Raykes" <jsraykes@gmail.com>
> **Date:** March 15, 2017 at 4:08:17 PM MDT
> **To:** "'Kimball, Michael'" <Michael.Kimball@unco.edu>
> **Cc:** <fpnh@iup.edu>, "Jeff Raykes" <jraykes@ceo.co.indiana.pa.us>
> **Subject: Permission to use the OPBI for Doctoral Dissertation-Jeff Raykes**
>
> Hello Dr. Kimball—I hope all is well. We are digging out of a significant snowfall here!
>
> I would like to secure your permission to use the Organizational Place Building Inventory for my doctoral dissertation titled Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place Building in Higher Education. As you and I have discussed, I have made some very minor modifications due to how I will be using within an institutional setting.
>
> On all the questions I substituted the term institution for organization. Additional modifications were made to the following questions:
>
> Q3: changed "business practices" to "for the impacts its operations have in the community."
> Q5: changed "employees" to "population"
> Q9: changed "its clients" to "area businesses"
> Q12: deleted the word "taxes"
> Q22: changed "business strategy" to "institutional strategy"
> Q23: changed "firm" to "institution"
> Q24: changed "business place" to "ethical environment" and added the words "policy and"
> Q26: changed "office building" to "campus"
> Q28: changed "office space" to "campus" and deleted the word "working"
>
> I have attached the modified version I would like to use to this email for your review. Your response will be included in by appendix and possibly in the IRB submission. If you are willing, please respond with your consent.
>
> As always, thanks for your support and interest in this project!
>
> Thanks, jsr
> ------------------------------------
> Jeff Raykes
> 724-388-7710
> jsraykes@gmail.com

# Appendix C

## Organizational Place Building Inventory

My official role at The College is:  *(circle one)*

Administrator  Full-Time Faculty Member  Part-Time Faculty Member  Other _____

| Please answer each of the following questions by circling the most accurate response to the statement. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** My institution invests its resources to create positive change for the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **2** My institution collaborates with other organizations to improve the community's education programs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **3** My institution is accountable for the impacts its operations have in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **4** My institution invests its assets and resources to help sustain the community's culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **5** My institution's population is expected to contribute their time or money to local philanthropic activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **6** My institution invests its resources to increase opportunities for civic participation and investment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **7** My institution places a high priority on its economic influence in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **8** My institution commits resources to the economic development of the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **9** My institution helps its area businesses improve their business practices. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **10** My institution's success is designed to contribute to the economic success of the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **11** My institution is recognized for its contributions to the local economy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **12** My institution's sole contribution is to the community's economy, i.e. creating jobs, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **13** My institution mission includes improving the well-being of the natural environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

1

| 14 | My institution utilizes best practices that protect local resources, such as the natural environment, water, geography, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | My institution s a leader in actions that protect the natural environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 16 | My institution is respected for its improvements to the natural environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17 | My institution contributes financially to activities that build an environmentally sustainable community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18 | My institution considers the extent of its impact on the environment in all its activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 19 | My institution's mission includes a financial commitment to the social well-being of the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 20 | My institution holds itself accountable for the impact its operation has on the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 21 | My institution works to enhance its legitimacy as a leader in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 22 | Building my institution's influence in the community is a key institutional strategy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 23 | My institution invests its resources for the common good even when there is a cost to the institution. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 24 | My institution initiates policy and practices that help build a more ethical environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 25 | My institution invests in projects that support community renewal (such as historic neighborhoods and tourism, entertainment facilities). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 26 | My institution's campus helps to create a sense of place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 27 | My institution contributes to community redevelopment projects that advance economic development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 28 | My institution's campus is valued as a place where its population can create meaningful relationships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 29 | My institution's mission considers the economic wellbeing of the entire community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2

Informed Consent, Parts I and II

# Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies
  in Education
Davis Hall, Room 303
570 S. Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

724-357-2400
Internet: *http://www.iup.edu*

**Online Informed Consent Form (Phase I)**
Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place-Building in Higher Education

**Researcher:**
My name is Jeff Raykes, and I am a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership Studies program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of Dr. Kelli Paquette, a professor in the Professional Studies in Education at IUP. I am conducting a doctoral research study regarding place-building through community engagement in higher education.

**Background Information:**
As you may know, community engagement is one of the biggest movements in higher education in the last several decades. Within this movement, there is a growing interest in place-based approaches. While the exact definition is still emerging, there is general agreement that place-based approaches are rooted in how an institution recognizes, values, and integrates the meanings individuals and groups give to a place, within the frame of its community engagement activities and partnerships. Given the increasing attention being paid to this type of engagement, this research seeks to better understand how highly-engaged institutions of higher learning are conceptualizing place and place-building, and how these ideas are being operationalized within the framework of their community engagement. The College was selected as the site for this study based on its receipt of the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2008 and 2015.

**Inclusion Criteria:**
To be included, participants must meet three criteria:

1) Be at least 18 years old,

2) Be a current institutional administrator and/or full-time or part-time faculty member at The College with at least one year of experience,

3) Be directly involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships.

**Procedures:**
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:
- Complete an online questionnaire designed to assess the institution's place-building values and strategies which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete (Phase I)
- Participate in one focus group interview lasting approximately 60 minutes during a time that does not interfere with your administrative or teaching duties or responsibilities (Phase II).

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study and later change

your mind, you will be asked to simply notify me of your intention to opt out at your earliest convenience. However, if you opt out of the study after completing the survey in Phase I, the survey data will still be included in the final results as the anonymity protections included as part of the survey process make withdrawal of the data impossible. Additionally, if you opt out during either phase of the study, your relationship with the researcher, the institution, or IUP will not be adversely affected. You may also print a copy of this form to keep using the print function within your browser. Printed copies of this form will be presented and reviewed by the principle investigator prior to the start of the focus group interviews (Phase II) and copies will be made available to participants.

**Risks and Benefits of the Study:**
Participating in this study poses minimal risks to your safety or wellbeing. The benefits of the study may provide interested administrators and faculty members with a clearer awareness of how the institution is conceptualizing place and place-building through engagement activities and partnerships.

**Payment:** There is no payment for participating in the study.

**Privacy:**
During Phase I, all survey responses collected during the course of this study will remain anonymous. Each completed survey will receive an electronically assigned number to maintain anonymity throughout the collection and analysis process. These numbers will only be seen by the principle investigator and be used for study purposes only. During Phase II, all the focus group interview data will be kept confidential. Ground rules for focus group sessions will include provisions for the use of only first names during the session and participants will be asked to protect confidentiality by not sharing information regarding who participated or the information shared during the sessions. Further confidentially protections include the use of pseudonyms during transcription. All study data will be kept secure at all times in a locked filing cabinet and/or a password protected hard drive and retained for three years as mandated by federal law. When the study is finished, the study results may be presented at conferences and/or published in academic journals. However, your name and any recognizable information will not be included or disclosed in any way.

**Contact Information:**
Feel free to contact the researcher, Jeff Raykes, by email at fpnh@iup.edu or by telephone at (724) 388-7710 (cell) with any questions regarding this study.
Additionally, my faculty sponsor's contact information is: Dr. Kelli Paquette, Professor/Department Chair, IUP Department of Professional Studies in Education, kpaquett@iup.edu, 724-357-2400 or 305 Davis Hall, 570 11th Street, Indiana, PA 15705.

**This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: (724) 357-7730).**

**By clicking 'Next' at the bottom of this page, you consent to participating in this study. If you do not wish to participate, you may simply close your web browser at any time.**

# Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Professional Studies  
 in Education  
Davis Hall, Room 303  
570 S. Eleventh Street  
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1087

724-357-2400  
Internet: *http://www.iup.edu*

**Informed Consent Form (Phase II)**

Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place-Building in Higher Education

**Researcher:**

My name is Jeff Raykes, and I am a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership Studies program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of Dr. Kelli Paquette, a professor in the Professional Studies in Education at IUP. I am conducting a doctoral research study regarding place-building through community engagement in higher education.

**Background Information:**

As you may know, community engagement is one of the biggest movements in higher education in the last several decades. Within this movement, there is a growing interest in place-based approaches. While the exact definition is still emerging, there is general agreement that place-based approaches are rooted in how an institution recognizes, values, and integrates the meanings individuals and groups give to a place, within the frame of its community engagement activities and partnerships. Given the increasing attention being paid to this type of engagement, this research seeks to better understand how highly-engaged institutions of higher learning are conceptualizing place and place-building, and how these ideas are being operationalized within the framework of their community engagement. The College was selected as the site for this study based on its receipt of the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2008 and 2015.

**Inclusion Criteria:**

To be included, participants must meet three criteria:

1) Be at least 18 years old,

2) Be a current institutional administrator and/or full-time or part-time faculty member at The College with at least one year of experience,

3) Be directly involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships.

**Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete an online questionnaire designed to assess the institution's place-building values and strategies which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete (Phase I)

- Participate in one focus group interview lasting approximately 60 minutes during a time that does not interfere with your administrative or teaching duties or responsibilities (Phase II).

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study and later change your mind, you will be asked to simply notify me of your intention to opt out at your earliest convenience. However, if you opt out of the study after completing the survey in Phase I, the survey data will still be included in the final results as the anonymity protections included as part of the survey process make withdrawal of the data impossible. Additionally, if you opt out during either phase of the study, your relationship with the researcher, the institution, or IUP will not be adversely affected. You may also print a copy of this form to keep using the print function within your browser. Printed copies of this form will be presented and reviewed by the principle investigator prior to the start of the focus group interviews (Phase II) and copies will be made available to participants.

**Risks and Benefits of the Study:**
Participating in this study poses minimal risks to your safety or wellbeing. The benefits of the study may provide interested administrators and faculty members with a clearer awareness of how the institution is conceptualizing place and place-building through engagement activities and partnerships.

**Payment:** There is no payment for participating in the study.

**Privacy:**
During Phase I, all survey responses collected during the course of this study will remain anonymous. Each completed survey will receive an electronically assigned number to maintain anonymity throughout the collection and analysis process. These numbers will only be seen by the principle investigator and be used for study purposes only. During Phase II, all the focus group interview data will be kept confidential. Ground rules for focus group sessions will include provisions for the use of only first names during the session and participants will be asked to protect confidentiality by not sharing information regarding who participated or the information shared during the sessions. Further confidentially protections include the use of pseudonyms during transcription. All study data will be kept secure at all times in a locked filing cabinet and/or a password protected hard drive and retained for three years as mandated by federal law. When the study is finished, the study results may be presented at conferences and/or published in academic journals. However, your name and any recognizable information will not be included or disclosed in any way.

**Contact Information:**
Feel free to contact the researcher, Jeff Raykes, by email at fpnh@iup.edu or by telephone at (724) 388-7710 (cell) with any questions regarding this study.

Additionally, my faculty sponsor's contact information is: Dr. Kelli Paquette, Professor/Department Chair, IUP Department of Professional Studies in Education, kpaquett@iup.edu, 724-357-2400 or 305 Davis Hall, 570 11th Street, Indiana, PA 15705.

**Statement of Consent:**

**1.** ☐ I have read the above information and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

**2. <u>And (optional)</u>**

☐ I would like to be provided with a written summary of the results of this study. The email I would like you to use when sending the summary is _____.

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date of Consent: _____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, answered any questions raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____     _____
Date                        Investigator's Signature

**This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: (724) 357-7730).**

# Appendix E

## E-mails

**Email 1: Project Announcement, Sent 4-11-2017**

Subject: Asking for help with an important PhD research project

Friends

I am writing to ask a favor. ███████ is the subject of dissertation work focused on "place-based engagement."

Jeff Raykes (cc'ed above), a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership Studies program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, is researching place-building through community engagement here a█████████████ As part of the partnership, we need your help completing a survey and participating in one of three, short focus groups organized around the topic taking place on our campus Monday April 24th and Tuesday, April 25th.

This research project will provide a better understanding of the place-based orientation of our community engagement efforts within and beyond the curriculum and create a discussion framework for us going forward.

In the next few days you will be contacted by Jeff, via email, announcing the study and providing a link to the online survey along with information about the focus group sessions.

Thank you in advance for helping us think about new and emerging ways to engage our surrounding communities.

If you have questions feel free to contact me or Jeff (cc'ed above) anytime. Thanks!

████████████

Hello everyone!

**The purpose of this communication is to provide the information necessary for participation in an ongoing study of place-building through community engagement at** ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉. Included in this email is a brief overview of the study, participation instructions, and how to contact me if any questions or concerns arise.

As you may know, community engagement is one of the biggest movements in higher education in the last several decades. Within this movement, there is a growing interest in place-based approaches. While the exact definition is still emerging, there is general agreement that place-based approaches are rooted in how an institution recognizes, values, and integrates the meanings individuals and groups give to a place, within the frame of its community engagement activities and partnerships. Given the increasing attention being paid to this type of engagement, this research seeks to better understand how highly-engaged institutions of higher learning are conceptualizing place and place-building, and how these ideas are being operationalized within the framework of their community engagement. ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ was selected as the site for this study based on its receipt of the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2008 and 2015.

To gather this information, I have worked with ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉, Director of Civic Engagement at ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ (cc'ed above) to identify institutional administrators and faculty members, like you, that have been directly involved in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete an online questionnaire designed to assess the institution's place-building values and strategies which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete

- Participate in one focus group interview lasting approximately 60 minutes during a time that does not interfere with your administrative or teaching duties or responsibilities.

All survey responses and interview data collected during the course of this study will remain confidential and documents obtained will kept secure at all times in a locked filing cabinet and/or a password protected hard drive and retained for three years as mandated by federal law. When the study is finished, the study results may be presented at conferences and/or published in academic journals. However, your name and any recognizable information will not be included or disclosed in any way.

**To participate, simply click on the URL below.** The opening webpage will ask that you read and agree to the Informed Consent Form. Following this, you will be guided through the 29 question survey. The final portion of the survey includes a list of focus group interview days and times.

https://iup.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bC5NP8q1DUllH3T

**Focus group interviews have been planned for the following days/times:** Monday, April 24, 12-1pm in ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ (Lunch will be provided); Monday, April 24, 4-5pm in ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ and Tuesday, April 25, 8-9am in ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ (Breakfast will be provided). Please indicate which day/time works best for you when completing the survey.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You will be free to refuse to answer any interview question or withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me by phone or email. Additionally, if you would like a copy of the study to better understand this issue and findings at ███████████ you will be provided a final copy of the dissertation upon request.

Printed copies of the survey will be provided at the focus group sessions for those who have not completed it online or would prefer hardcopy materials. Finally, Informed Consent Forms have been included as part of the Qualtrics survey and hardcopies will be available at the focus group interview sessions.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me anytime via email at fpnh@iup.edu or by phone at (724) 388-7710.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in this study!

Jeff Raykes

Principle Investigator:
Jeff Raykes, Doctoral Candidate, IUP
116 N. Clymer Ave.
Indiana, PA 15701
(724) 388-7710
fpnh@iup.edu

Faculty Sponsor:
Dr. Kelli Paquette, Professor, IUP
305 Davis Hall, 570 11th Street
Indiana, PA 15701-1080
724-357-2400
kpaquett@iup.edu


**This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: (724) 357-7730).**

Good morning,

We are working to better understand place-building through community engagement at ▆▆▆▆ ▆▆▆▆ ….and need  your help!

The purpose of this email is to encourage your participation in this important research project designed to explore how highly-engaged institutions of higher learning, like ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆ are conceptualizing place and place-building, and how these ideas are being operationalized within the framework of their community engagement activities and partnerships.

We are reaching out to you because over the last several months, we have been working with ▆▆▆▆ ▆▆▆▆, Director of Civic Engagement at ▆▆▆▆ (cc'ed above) to identify key "community engagement actors"  across the institution.  You are part of this important group.

Participation will only takes a few minutes (actually around 10 ☺) to complete an online survey with 29 Likert scale questions designed to assess the institution's place-building values and strategies. Participation is voluntary and any information you share will be kept confidential.

**To participate, simply click on the URL below.** The opening webpage will ask that you read and agree to the Informed Consent Form. Following this, you will be guided through the 29 question survey. The final portion of the survey includes a list of focus group interview days and times.

https://iup.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bC5NP8q1DUllH3T

**Follow-up focus group interviews have been planned for the following days/times:** Monday, April 24, 12-1pm i ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆(Lunch will be provided); Monday, April 24, 4-5pm in ▆▆▆▆ ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆and Tuesday, April 25, 8-9am in ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆

Hello again community engagement actors at ███████████!

As most of you are aware, we are working to better understand place-building through community engagement at your institution and could really use your insight, thoughts, and ideas regarding this topic.

**The purpose of this email reminder is to encourage any of you that have not completed the survey, to do so at your earliest convenience.** Participation is voluntary and any information you share will be kept confidential. If you have already taken the survey, thank you and we look forward to seeing you next week at the focus group sessions next week!

**Completing the online survey will only takes about 10 minutes**. It consists of a series of 29 Likert scale questions that revolve around the place building values and
strategies that are informing community engagement at ██████████████ Results from this survey will be used to "seed" the upcoming focus group discussions planned for Monday and Tuesday of next week (see below).

If you would like your results to be included it is important that you complete the survey by this **Friday, April 21 @4pm.**

**To participate, simply click on the URL below.** The opening webpage will ask that you read and agree to the Informed Consent Form. Following this, you will be guided through the survey. The final portion of the survey includes a list of focus group interview days and times.

https://iup.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bC5NP8q1DUllH3T

**Follow-up focus group interviews have been planned for the following days/times:** Monday, April 24, 12-1pm in ███████████ (Lunch will be provided); Monday, April 24, 4-5pm in ███████████ ██████████████████ and Tuesday, April 25, 8-9am in ███████████████████████████████ (Breakfast will be provided). Please indicate which day/time works best for you when completing the survey.

**For more information about this project,** please see the attached pdf of the last two email invitations to participate in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me or ███████████████(cc'ed above) at any time using the contact information below.

Thank you in advance for being part of this exciting project!

**This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: (724) 357-7730).**

Jeff Raykes
----------------------------
Jeff Raykes
(724) 388-7710
fpnh@iup.edu

Hello everyone,

This email is the **final reminder to please take a few minutes and complete an online survey** designed to explore the place-building values and strategies that are informing community engagement at █████████████.

So far we have great participation and I would like to thank each of you that have taken the time to be part of this research project.

As you know, results from this survey will be used to frame the upcoming focus groups scheduled for Monday and Tuesday of next week (see below), so we really need your thoughts and ideas. With this in mind, it is important that if you have not completed the survey that you do so **before the end of the day today** so that we can include your feedback during the focus group sessions.

The survey consists of a series of 29 Likert scale questions and will only take about 10 minutes to complete.

**To participate, simply click on the URL below.** The opening webpage will ask that you read and agree to the Informed Consent Form. Following this, you will be guided through the survey. The final portion of the survey includes a list of focus group interview days and times. Participation is voluntary and any information you share will be kept confidential.

**https://iup.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bC5NP8q1DUllH3T**

**The focus groups have been planned for the following days/times:** <u>Monday, April 24, 12-1pm in</u> ████████ ███████████ Lunch will be provided); <u>Monday, April 24, 4-5pm in</u> ██████████████████ ██████████ <u>Tuesday, April 25, 8-9am in Pelletier Collaboratory</u>, █████████████ Breakfast will be provided). Please indicate which day/time works best for you when completing the survey.

**For more information about this project,** please see the attached pdf of the last three email invitations to participate in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me or █████████████ (cc'ed above) at any time using the contact information below.

Thank you in advance for being part of this exciting project!

Jeff Raykes

**This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: (724) 357-7730).**

----------------------------
Jeff Raykes
(724) 388-7710
fpnh@iup.edu

# Appendix F

# Focus Group Protocol

**Welcome**

Good afternoon/evening. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion of place and place-building at The College.

My name is Jeff Raykes and I am an Administration and Leadership doctoral student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania will be acting as the moderator for today's focus group session. With me today is _____*Assistant Moderator*_____ who will serve as our Assistant Moderator.

**Topic** _____

As you know, having completed the Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI), we are conducting a mixed methods descriptive case study dissertation project designed to examine how a highly-engaged institution of higher learning conceptualizes place and place-building within the context of its community engagement activities and partnerships. The College was selected for this project based on its receipt of the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2015.

To start today's conversation we would like to share some of the data we have already gathered regarding place and place-building at The College. As we present this information we would like to listen to your thoughts and ideas regarding these findings, with the goal of expanding our understanding of the nature of the institution's place-based relationships and how these relationships are being reflected in your community engagement programing.

The people in this room were purposefully selected because each of you are community engagement actors. By this we mean that you have been directly connected to this institution's community engagement activities and partnerships in your institutional roles as administrators or faculty members.

Today's discussion will revolve around six key themes related to place and place-building. These themes, referred to here as "dimensions", include: 1) Geography, 2) Nature, 3) Social Relationships, 4) Built Environment, 5) Ethics, and 6) Economic Relationships. These dimensions were developed using this study's theoretic framework, Organizational Place-Building Theory, first published in 2007 by researchers at University of Northern Colorado.

The final results of these focus groups sessions will be transcribed, analyzed, and integrated into findings from our analysis of institutional documents and OPBI results with the aim of determining how this institution's thinks about place and its role within it. The contribution of this research is significant because very little is known about how highly-engaged institutions of higher learning conceptualize place or how these institutions contribute to or detract from the construction of place through community engagement.

**Handouts**

At you seat you will find three handouts. **Handout 1** is a list of key terms and their definitions. This handout can be used by you at any point during today's discussion to enable a common

1

understanding of key place related terms and concepts. **Handout 2** is a map and list of the places and "flagship" community engagement activities and partnerships identified during our analysis of institutional documents. **Handout 3** is a overview of OPBI results for The College. **Handout 4** brief, visual description of Organizational Place-Building Theory, the theoretical framework for this study.

### Guidelines

Before we begin, let me suggest three guidelines to help make our discussion more productive.

One, there are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view. Keep in mind that you don't need to agree with others, but should be respectful as others share their views.

Two, because we are recording this discussion, it is important that you speak loudly and that you only speak one at a time. We don't want to miss any of your comments.

Three, we will only use first names during this session. No reports generated as part of this study will link what you say to your name. In this way, we will maintain your confidentiality. In addition, we ask that you also respect the confidentiality of everyone here. Please don't repeat who said what when you leave this room.

### My Role

During the two hours we'll be here, I will ask you questions, and listen to what you have to say. I will not participate in the discussion. So please, feel free to respond to each other and to speak directly to others in the group.

We want to hear from all of you. We're interested in both majority and minority viewpoints, common and uncommon experiences. So I may sometimes act as a traffic cop by encouraging someone who has been quiet to talk, or by asking someone to hold off for a few minutes.

If it is OK with you, we will turn on the recorder and start now.

### Let's begin with introductions

1. Please tell us your first name, your institutional role and your connection to community engagement, and your favorite place around the College campus.

## FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

### I. Geography

Now that we know a little bit about each other, I would like talk about the concept of "place". We are interested to know more about how this institution conceptualizes place and how it is articulated through within the context of community engagement at The College.

We will approach this topic in two ways. First we will discuss our definition of place and second, we will talk about the places that have been identified by this institution.

In this research, we have defined place as being both geographic (a location on a map) and social (interactions between people), (**see Handout 1**) and organized around the meanings people, or groups of people, give to specific locations. Thought of this way, place is not one dimensional, discrete, or simple. Rather, it is a complex, multi-dimensional "social construct" that can be

2

nurtured and transformed through individual or collective effort. Given this definition, one can see that organizations, including institutions of higher learning, can play powerful roles in the collaborative, social construction of place.

> **2.** Please describe how this definition aligns with, or is different from, your understanding of place and the institutions role within it?

> **3.** How do you think this institution has, or has not, intentionally defined place and its role within it?

Next, let's talk about the places that emerged from our analysis of institutional documents at The College. To start the conversation I would like to share with you what **I think I know** about the places that are important to The College. We will use this information to seed our discussion.

Based on our review, the following geographies have been identified by the College. I have organized these by the frequency of their mention within these documents. These, along with a map of the institution's "flagship" community engagement activities, have also been provided in **Handout 2**.

Please take a minute to consider these places.

> **4.** Why do you think these places have been identified by the College?

> **5.** Are there any other places you think are important and why?

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

In the next segment of our discussion we would like to talk about the institution's place-building profiles. According the Organizational Place-Building Theory there are four place-building profiles: Exploitive, Contingent, Contributive, and Transformative. These profiles represent the different strategies organizations use and ways they invest in place along the five place-building dimensions: Social Relations, Economic Relations, Nature, Built Environment, and Ethics. Together, these profiles make up a continuum on which an organization can be located for each dimension. The continuum, along with descriptions of each of the profiles have been provided in **Handout 3**.

In the next part of this session will review the institution's place-building profiles for each of the five dimensions of place and gather your reactions, thoughts, and ideas. These qualitative determinations have been made by the researcher based on the document analysis and OPBI results. Final determinations will include findings from these focus group interviews.

**II. Nature**
The first place-building profile to discuss is for the nature dimension. This dimension includes the natural, as opposed to human-made, elements, forces, and spaces, such as the landscape, earth, and natural resources. Within this dimension, OPBI results indicate that the institution has a _____ place-building profile.

> **6.** How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to nature and the environment?

3

7.  Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships?

### III.  Social Relationships

The second place-building profile to discuss is for the social relationships dimension. This dimension includes the full spectrum of interactions between the institution's population and, among and between, other populations and organizations.  It is concerned with how certain spaces are treated in such a way that reflects the culture, strategies, and values of the institution and other populations and organizations. In other words, how does The College encourage the development of social structures (i.e. trust, norms, and social networks), through its values and investments, in ways that facilitate collective action around social well-being (social capital)? Within this dimension, OPBI results indicate that the institution has a _____ place-building profile.

8.  How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to development of social structures in ways that facilitate collective action around community well-being?

9.  Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships?

### IV.  Built Environment

The third place-building profile to discuss is for the built environment dimension. This dimension includes man-made buildings, roads, and other infrastructure associated with the institution and how these spaces are treated. This dimension would reflect the value placed on the built environment evidenced in aspects of these built spaces such as building architecture, landscaping, and historic preservation. Within this dimension, OPBI results indicate that the institution has a _____ place-building profile.

10. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to the built environment?

11. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships?

### V.  Ethics

The fourth place-building profile to discuss is for the ethics dimension. This dimension includes the educational functions of the institution and how these reinforce the implicit and explicit contract with external populations, through which the institution seeks to establish itself as legitimate. This dimension measures how an institution's practices are modelled in higher education, its own institutional culture, and in and among its stakeholders.  Within this dimension, OPBI results indicate that the institution has a _____ place-building profile.

12. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to the ethical aspects of place?

4

13. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships?

**VI. Economic Relationships**

The fifth and final place-building profile to discuss is for the economic relationship dimension. This dimension includes the institution's level of investment in the fiscal well-being of the places identified by the institution. For example, how does the institution attract skilled workforces to these places? How does it seek to improve the economic viability in, and around, these places? How does the institution create new opportunities for economic growth? Within this dimension, OPBI results indicate that the institution has a _____ place-building profile.

14. How do you think this profile aligns with, or is different from, your perception of the institution's contributions to fiscal well-being of place?

15. Please describe, from your experience as a community engagement actor, how the institution's place-building profile for this dimension is, or is not, reflected in the institution's community engagement activities and partnerships?

**THANK YOU, SUMMARY, AND FOLLOW-UP**

Thank you for your contributions in expanding our understanding how this institution thinks about place and its role within it. In our conversation we have spent time soliciting your feedback regarding each of the six key themes related to place and place-building. In the coming weeks we will be working to analyze the transcripts from this interaction and incorporating them into our findings. I would also like to remind you that no reports will link what you say to your name. In this way, we will maintain your confidentiality. A summary of results and findings will be made available to each of you via the email you have provided.

The last question today is designed to capture anything you think we may have missed.

16. Please reflect on today's discussion regarding place and place-building at The College. Do you have anything else you would like to discuss or comment on regarding the six place-building themes presented?

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this research.

**Key Probes**

"Can you tell me more about...,"

"Can you give me examples?",

"What else would you include?"

5

# Appendix G

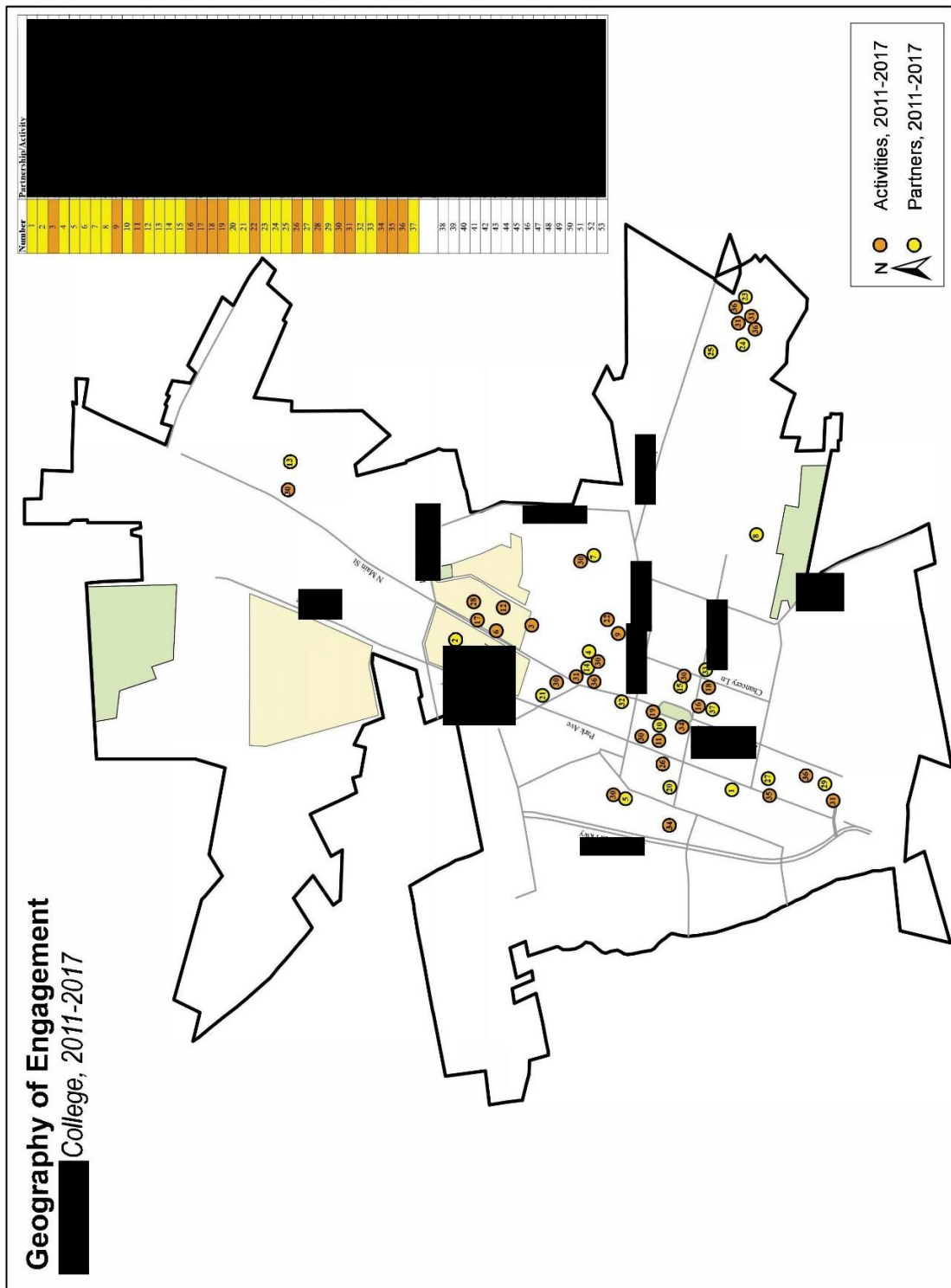## Focus Group Handouts

**KEY TERMS AND DEFINTIONS**

Place Matters: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Institutional Place-Building in Higher Education

1. **Community Engagement.** The "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (CFAT, 2015; Driscoll, 2008, p. 39).

2. **Community Engagement Actor.** Individuals directly involved in the strategic and operational aspects of an institution's community engagement efforts.

3. **Community Engagement Classification.** The community engagement classification is a voluntary, elective classification for public and private two and four-year colleges and universities established in 2006 (CFAT, 2015). The classification is organized and advanced by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for the purpose of recognizing highly-engaged institutions of higher learning that could demonstrate collaborations "between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 39).

4. **Highly-Engaged Institution of Higher Learning.** Colleges and universities that have demonstrated high levels of commitment to community engagement based on their receipt of the prestigious Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification.

5. **Organizational Place-Building Theory (OPBT).** "Place-building theory (OPBT) is a prescriptive approach that frames and investigates place building relations between organizations and their associated communities and environments" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016.p. 21). There are three key components that underpin place-building theory: a) place-building dimensions, b) agent perspectives, and c) place-building profiles.

    a. **Place-Building Dimensions.** Researchers agree that place is a multi-dimensional concept (Graham and Healey, 1999; Gustafson, 2001; Healey, 1999; Nilsen, 2005; Talen, 2000; Sack, 1997). Based on this research, OPBT has presented a model for understanding the meanings associated with places along five dimensions: nature, social relationships, material environment, ethics, and economic relationships" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016). OPBT is designed to explain how an organization values place along these five dimensions or "latent constructs" of place (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016.p. 17).

    b. **Agent Perspectives.** OPBT identifies two different organizational agent perspectives: independent and interdependent. These perspectives encompass how organizations conceptualize themselves in relation to place. These conceptualizations, in turn, influence the meaning assigned and contributions to place by the organization. Organizations that adopt an independent agent perspective considers itself, and its success, as removed or disconnected from the place in which it is located. Organizations that adopt an interdependent agent perspective "view themselves as members of a community and recognize that organizations and places are mutually dependent on each other" (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016.p. 22).
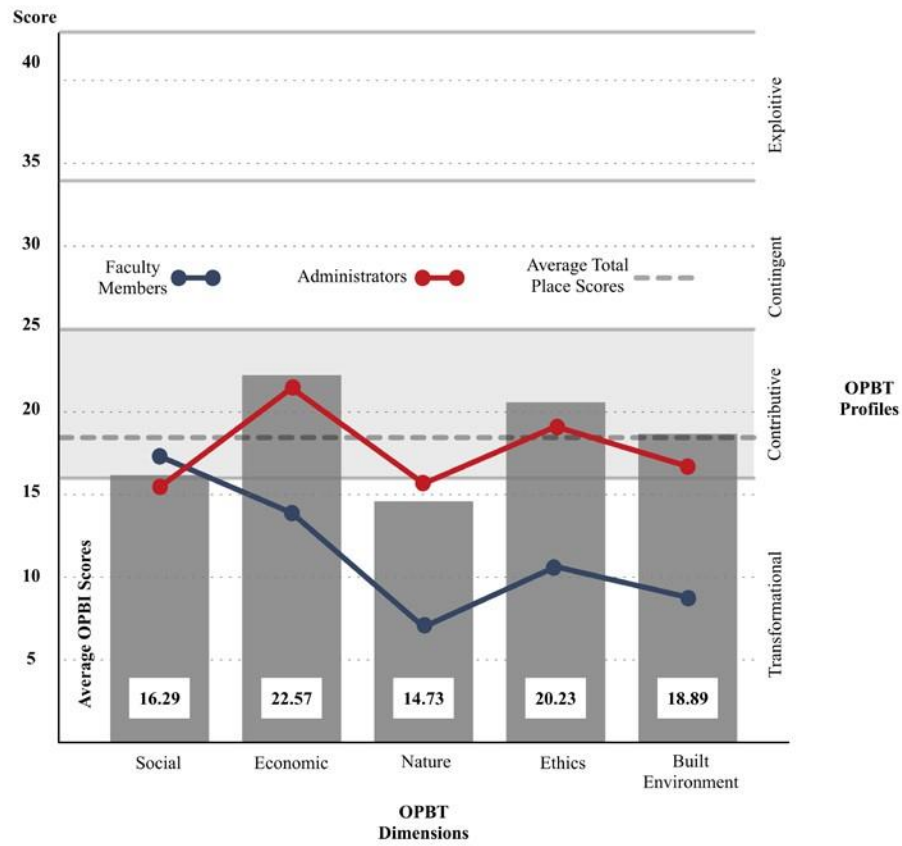
**c. Place-Building Profiles** (see Handout #3)**.** The four place-building profiles, developed as part of OPBT (Thomas & Cross, 2007), are designed to represent the different strategies organizations/institutions use to, and ways they invest in, place along the five place-building dimensions (nature, social relationships, material environment, ethics, and economic relationships). The four profiles identified by Thomas and Cross (2007) include: transformational, contributive, contingent, and exploitive. Together, these profiles make up a place-building continuum on which an organization/institutions can be located (Thomas & Cross, 2007).

1. **Organizational Place-Building Inventory (OPBI).** The OPBI is an objective survey instrument designed to assess an organization's place-building values and strategies. The 29 question instrument is organized along the five dimensions of OPBT: nature, social relationships, material environment, ethics, and economic relationships (Thomas, Kimball, & Suhr, 2016).

**7. Place.** Place has been defined by this research as being "both geographic and social, and is    organized around the meanings individuals and groups give to a place in its setting"                (Thomas & Cross, 2007, p. 37). Places take on meaning through the events that occur      within that construct and their and its description is fused with human goals, values, and              intentions (Kimball & Thomas, 2012, p. 20).

8. **Place-Building.** "The process by which all human beings transform the places in which we find ourselves into the places in which we live" (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, p. 1). Place- building is both an art and practice, and is not solely about "strengthening relationships of people to their places", but also about "fostering relationships among the people in places" (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, p. 1). In this way, place-building is essentially a social endeavor, built around the mobilization of people, organizations, and institutions to address issues of community well-being (MacLellan, 2006).

Geography of Engagement
College, 2011-2017

| Dimension | Administrators | Place-Building Profile | Faculty Members | Place-Building Profile | Totals | Place-Building Profile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social | 15.24 | Transformational | 17.28 | Contributive | **16.29** | Contributive |
| Economic | 21.35 | Contributive | 14.00 | Transformational | **22.57** | Contributive |
| Nature | 15.94 | Contributive | 7.00 | Transformational | **14.73** | Transformational |
| Ethics | 19.06 | Contributive | 10.50 | Transformational | **20.23** | Contributive |
| Built Environment | 17.15 | Contributive | 9.00 | Transformational | **18.89** | Contributive |
| **Total Place Score** | **19.50** | **Contributive** | **17.75** | **Contributive** | **18.62** | **Contributive** |

## Independent Agent Perspective

Organization views itself as merely occupants of place

View a community's resources as only a means to satisfy organizational needs

Jobs and tax revenues are the organization's primary place based contribution

## Interdependent Agent Perspective

Organization and community are mutually dependent on each other

Organization considers itself responsible for the well-being of the community

Seeks opportunities to invest and contribute

| Exploitive | Contingent | Contributive | Transformational |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Contributions are limited to legal requirements or to protect brand/image | • Contributions are conditional and measured | • Contributions are broad based and serve the firm and community | • Committed to creating opportunities that build community and protect the environment |
| • Removed from the community | • Engaged in community activities that create financial gain | • Supports activities that help them fit into the community | • Facilitates change that improves community economic and social well-being |
| • Values the community solely for its favorable economic and political policies toward business | • Values the community primarily for its geographic, political and economic assets | • Values the community on a number of levels but primarily for its social and business network | • Advocates for all community values, especially its cultural and ethical heritage |