A Comparative Case of the Sense of Belonging of Students and Black Neighborhood Stakeholders Utilizing Public Recreational Space Near an Urban College Campus

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A COMPARATIVE CASE OF THE SENSE OF BELONGING OF STUDENTS AND BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD STAKEHOLDERS UTILIZING PUBLIC RECREATIONAL SPACE NEAR AN URBAN COLLEGE CAMPUS

by

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ABSTRACT

At a time when regulation impacting colleges and universities has steadily increased, institutional leaders have explored ways to maximize their educational effectiveness, impact, and public contribution to their surrounding communities. Public colleges and universities often use public-private partnerships to develop institutionally owned or managed spaces on and surrounding their campuses. As a result, institutional stakeholders are infused with existing community neighborhoods, cultures and structures, which often results in permanent change imposed on these neighbors and neighborhoods. Using a comparative case study approach, this exploratory research explored the relationship between campus stakeholders utilizing campus and private recreational spaces and their sense of belonging to the campus environment in the three neighborhood areas in an urban area. The study involved the use of interviews and facilitated conversations determine: (a) how campus stakeholders’ sense of belonging is impacted using newly developed recreational space in their neighborhood and (b) how new public recreational space demographically and socially influences the surrounding community. The case in this study is a newly developed community park dedicated to the community it resides in. It also is a recreational space in a downtown, urban city. The space is partially managed and funded by a private developer, two major institutions of higher education, and the local government.
I dedicate this work in memoriam to Lovely Mae Hardy, Vera McCall, Lillie Bell, Stanley Reginald Jenkins, and Phillip Dee Penland. I also dedicate this work to Cynthia, Bryne, the Hardy’s, family, and friends who have supported me throughout this journey.

“The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created.”—bell hooks
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IRB: Institutional Review Board
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the downtown campus opened as a product of collaboration between two higher education institutions, private developers, and the city. The idea behind this campus capitalized on the city’s digital media industry and seeks to foster a work, live, and play lifestyle for these stakeholders (UCF, 2022, n.d.). The project’s mission is to “increase access for students, provide pathways into high-demand career fields, and foster collaboration with [our] neighbors in a meaningful way” (UCF, 2022, n.d.). One example of this project’s mission in its design is its openness in multiple areas with unfettered access to all stakeholders. No gates exist, and recreational green spaces, parking garages, apartment complexes, and office buildings encircle the campus. The project’s mission is ambitious and has relied on several formal and informal partnerships to sustain its relationship with the community.

Background

The Neighborhood 4 project- a mixed-use, 68-acre, private-public development project, is situated within a historically Black district in a large urban city of over 300,000 individuals. This district is located between three central, historically Black neighborhoods- Neighborhood 1, Neighborhood 2, and Neighborhood 3. These neighborhoods in this district have a unique role in the history of the development of the state. Neighborhood 1 is one of the city’s oldest Black neighborhoods, established in the 1880s to house the Black servant classes. From the 1880s until the mid-1940s, Neighborhood 1 grew to 18,000 residents with Black-owned businesses, schools, hotels, and theaters. In 1962, the construction of a significant interstate cut off the neighborhood from the rest of the city, causing significant economic disruption to the thriving Black community. Due to the economic depression of the community, the area has struggled over the years to re-establish itself as an economic engine for Black citizens. With the beginnings of the Neighborhood 4 project underway, developers and residents clashed over the project’s goals and how the neighborhood would be affected. In 2016, the city, college, and
university established the Neighborhood 1 council as a mechanism for its remaining residents to continue to advocate for better representation and consideration from the city, the institutions, and the developers in the areas as the downtown campus was constructed. The park in this case is supervised by the city parks and recreation department. As such, it is bound by park policies and regulations, including permitting, event reservations, and maintenance. All policies regarding the park are implemented and enforced from the city. Due to the historical components of the neighborhood, future processes need to support the residents’ goals.

Like many of the neighborhoods in the zip code, Neighborhood 1 has been the focus of many recent revitalization grants and projects in the city. Many public nonprofits, city organizations, and local governments have collaborated to institute a comprehensive plan for stabilizing and revitalizing the Neighborhood 1 area in the lead-up to the Neighborhood 4 project’s opening. The phased opening of Neighborhood 4 and the Downtown Campus shows a confluence of community members with residents of the Neighborhood 1, Neighborhood 2, and Neighborhood 3 communities. As a part of the generation of ideas to improve the relationship between Neighborhood 1 residents and Neighborhood 4 stakeholders, the dedication of a park space to the community was established. This park included a green space with individual statues to honor and shine a light on the work of these individuals in crafting the history of Neighborhood 1. The individuals were selected through a community submission and voted upon by the city and stakeholders in Neighborhoods 1 and 4. In 2021, the park opened with a ceremony that shared the history of these individuals with the public. The park included a large green lawn, statues with the individuals’ names, and a pavilion with a prominent, illuminated, letters of the city’s name. In 2023, after many participant interviews, a dog park and interactive art installations were added, which indicates that the park construction is ongoing.
The background to this study describes metrics that are academically situated within both little- and well-known scholarly areas and their intersecting roles in managing public experiences. This study’s academic areas of focus were community engagement in higher education, studentification, place attachment, spatial justice, and recreational space management. These areas were necessary to answer the research questions related to how stakeholders engage with the urban college campus through public use of adjacent recreational space and whether the maintenance and construction of recreational space can mediate the issues experienced in this case. The area is defined as Urban by the US Census reclassification in 2022, but, according to Milner’s typology of urban education, is classified as urban emergent. Because of characteristics associated with the school and the people in them, not only based on the larger social context where the schools and districts are located. They do encounter some of the
same scarcity of resource problems, but on a smaller scale (Milner, 2012). In this specific case of study, the management of particular areas of Neighborhood 4 is an example of community engagement in these multiple frameworks.

**Higher Education and Community Engagement**

Literature states that the mission of community engagement can be difficult. In the traditional sense, several factors impact the success of higher education institutions and their relationships with the neighboring community. Institutional leaders may seek to expand into different areas in a community to facilitate greater access to higher education. However, that desire to grow, combined with the budgetary limits of many institutions to fund this expansion, introduces public-private partnerships as mechanisms to facilitate institutional aims. The balanced management of socio-cultural changes where institutions of higher education have situated themselves influences the success of the relationship between the institution and stakeholders.

Positive and mutually advantageous economic, social, and cultural relationships between an institution of higher education and its community have always been crucial to the community’s success and the institution’s success (Bromley, 2006; Foote, 2017). In the United States, in the fall of 2019, approximately 19.6 million students attended colleges and universities, and these educational institutions likewise awarded over 2 million bachelor’s degrees (Education, 2022). Sixty-three percent of college and university students attended in-person or residential classes (Education, 2022). Historically, due to most students attending courses in person, students tend to occupy spaces near their college or university, often moving in and out of neighborhoods as the academic calendar progresses and their tenure at the institution changes (Bromley, 2006). Leaders at colleges and universities’ increasing interest in establishing a robust and identifiable campus identity that attracts students to a vibrant campus culture has heightened the need for educating, recruiting, graduating, and retaining students near
of institutional priority, the process of achieving this engagement can be complicated for many campuses to accomplish due to the latent effects of students’ involvement in the creation of local problems (Kinton, 2016; Perrone, 2019; Watts, 1964).

**Studentification and Community Engagement**

Literature states that the mission of community engagement can be difficult. In the traditional sense, several factors impact the success of higher education institutions and their relationships with the neighboring community. Institutions may seek to expand into different areas in a community to facilitate greater access to higher education. However, that desire to grow, combined with the budgetary limits of many institutions to fund this expansion, introduces public-private partnerships as mechanisms to facilitate institutional aims. The balanced management of socio-cultural changes where institutions of higher education have situated themselves influences the success of the relationship between the institution and stakeholders.

Higher education practice supports creating amenity spaces for stakeholder comfort as a high-impact practice for educating and retaining students in their respective institutions (Kuh, 2012). One of the stated goals of Neighborhood 4 was to attract stakeholders to the area through collaboration. Many students, faculty, and staff, especially at urban institutions of higher education, situate themselves in pre-
established communities outside of campus (La Roche et al., 2010). Student migration in and out of spaces adjacent to campus is called studentification. This concept, studentification, occurs when large numbers of students move into residential neighborhoods. “Studentification is a neologism that refers to the social, cultural, economic, and physical transformations of urban spaces resulting from increases in and concentrations of student populations” (Smith et al., 2014, p. 73).

Many higher education institutions have profound expressions of studentification in their campus adjacent communities (Smith, 2009). Studentification changes the “local age profiles, household and family structures, social class composition, and the rising prominence of localized life course-specific cultures of youth populations” (Sage, Smith, Hubbard, 2012, p.597). While students move into neighborhoods, families with children, older adults, and working populations depopulate from specific areas. This leads to schools and “family-oriented public services” falling in demand (Sage et al., 2012b, p.600 ). Studentification also causes areas of cities to become deserted during academic calendar breaks and holidays. Local economies rely and plan on student patronization and often shift their business models to market to or support students (Foote, 2017).

In this case, studentification creates an issue for higher education institutions that can directly conflict with the goals of the remaining private stakeholders in Neighborhood 4. While students, faculty, and staff of the Downtown campus need housing, surrounding neighbors in existing housing may feel the effects of consistent pricing differences, socialization, and feelings of imposition. So far, prior research on studentification involved the use of traditional geography and public governance foundations (Nakazawa, 2017). Considerable research has been devoted to understanding higher education’s presence in the community and how that presence differs worldwide. Research related to studentification primarily originates from Europe, Eastern Asia, and Canada. Outside of the United States, the nature of community engagement and studentification is viewed in separate categories of institutional responsibility. As previously mentioned, within most Westernized nations, specifically the United States,
visible efforts in community engagement by colleges and universities are driven by mission (Bernardo et al., 2012). In other countries, community engagement is inspired by society’s needs. Much less attention has been attributed to supporting the institution’s responsibility as a mediator for the effects of studentification via institutional engagement with the community. There is a knowledge gap related to how student migration, behavior, and engagement collectively impact campus communities in the United States. That knowledge gap widens in consideration of its place amongst recreation, social equity, spatial justice, and collaboration systems.

Recreational Space and Community Engagement

As this study highlights studentification and its impacts on the neighbors in question, it also calls into focus the importance of public recreational space as an indicator of an institution’s community engagement within a neighborhood. Public recreational spaces underpin the preservation processes in the United States. Since 1916 and the creation of the National Park Service, the traditional U.S. landscape has featured greenspaces and the preservation of natural resources. Parks serve many distinct purposes in planned urban cities in the United States (Cranz, 1978). The first purpose of parks is related to the well-being of citizens of an area. Cities with green spaces are shown to have healthier and happier residents, and residents are physiologically more well-off (Keniger et al., 2013; Larson et al., 2016).

The second purpose of planning parks into urban spaces is to delineate between residential or commercial spaces as landscape boundaries. Many traditional forms of urban planning and public management of parks rely on this view of landscape boundaries as separation. Unfortunately, in the American historical context, this separative process was designed to codify segregation and other redlining processes to separate cultural neighborhoods (Rigolon et al., 2018). Research shows that in predominately White neighborhoods, there are more accessible and better-maintained greenspaces than in poorer neighborhoods (Rigolon et al., 2018; Solecki & Welch, 1995).
Thirdly and more recently, public urban parks serve as spaces for engagement among community members and to create a sense of community (Cranz, 1978). Through this trend, additional considerations for the use and utilization of public parks become more relevant for institutions of higher education and public organizations to research and consider as they expand. The most considerable benefit to the study of parks and their utilization is the immediate societal implications about regard for citizens (Cranz, 1978). Poorer urban areas may also have characteristic social problems, such as safety, decreased civic participation, and a lower sense of psychological community when park spaces are abandoned (Chavis & Wandersman, 2002). Urban parks restore communities, socially integrate residents, and bond neighborhoods together (Harnik, 2006). In this case, parks in the Neighborhood 1 area can mediate between colleges’ and universities’ urban space and support residents’ sense of belonging under institutional goals.

The quantity and quality of public parks in urban areas is a complex topic of study due to the nature of construction in many urbanized regions surrounding college and university campuses (Keniger et al., 2013; Larson et al., 2016). Often, contracts and incentives guide the public-private partnerships between local governments, institutions of higher education, and developers regarding the construction of parks in these urban areas. This factor creates a problem for local governments to provide recreational spaces for their communities, revitalize neighborhoods, and maintain existing park spaces. As the national focus on environmental justice heightens, the federal government has incentivized city leaders to think through the process for redevelopment as balanced against the sustainability of green space and the well-being of community stakeholders (Koontz et al., 2017).

**Spatial Justice, Social Equity, and Community Engagement**

In this case, it is essential for those who live in and around parks to enjoy safe and sustainably managed spaces, particularly in neighborhoods of low socioeconomic status and historically
underrepresented populations. However, research shows there is nervousness about addressing social, racial, and economic inequity in the public administration of local communities (Gooden, 2015). While local governments have incentivized redevelopment projects to include public greenspaces, attempts at locating data, in this case, show that the follow-up and assessment of the inclusiveness of these spaces is an area of growth. Social equity in public administration highlights a need for communication and allocation of resources that influence the administration of equity.

Local governments should ensure that those who visit and enjoy urban park areas reflect the neighbors who live in the surrounding communities. In particular, the concepts of equity and accessibility of these spaces fall under the term spatial justice (Soja, 2009). Spatial justice serves as a foundational guiding term to draw attention to the “uneven development” of cities and how it impacts the meso geography of specific territories. In the case of the park, in Neighborhood 4, the park is publicized as a space designed to foster community engagement for all stakeholders in the area (Creative Village, 2022). In this case, under the guidance of spatial justice, neighbors can develop agency and use within the park and define its use through co-collaboration, counter-resilience, and collaborative management. Spatial justice also focuses on the authority of individual and organizational acts of resistance to shape and advocate for place attachments. Literature regarding individual resistance to systematic and organizational disenfranchisement shows effective participation can yield positive participation (S. Marsh & Wilkerson, 2021).

Researcher Positionality

This study’s primary investigator and author is a mid-level practitioner in student affairs and higher education in the southeastern United States. The researcher’s educational background is also formed in the Southern context, with most of their educational advancement done in the South. Additionally, the investigator is a Black, college-educated woman. The researcher’s racial identity has
been constructed from those experiences. The investigator who led the data collection and analysis has established skills in building rapport with students and higher education stakeholders by having work experience at the college campus central to this case. The study author contributed to interpreting findings and the implications of the study. It is likely that the researcher’s lens of understanding with the participants allows a transitioning effect between academic and individual when engaging in unstructured interviews and facilitated group conversations.

This case study focused on the sense of belonging that neighborhood stakeholders and students feel within these parks and how that sense impacts engagement with the institution and community. An institutional relationship focused on the engagement of diverse populations must also center on social equity in response to its presence in systems (Bryer, 2021). To serve and address issues of equity, institutional and individual actors must address their actions that have sustained inequality. In the forthcoming chapter, these themes will be further explained to highlight the themes in the specific case of the Park.

Chapter Two will review literature related to the case through the conceptual frameworks and gaps in literature that would further explain the phenomena. This chapter has additional theories within public administration, social equity, urban planning, and higher education. Chapter Three will further explore the comparative case study methodology and its employment in data collection, analysis, and exploratory consensus. Chapter Three will also consider the impacts of this methodology on engagement with stakeholders. Chapter Four will provide an overview of the specific narratives from study participants, exploration of community and social descriptors, and the role of the sense of belonging in the community’s future. Chapter Five will discuss the issues presented in the case and future opportunities for replication with other campus-adjacent neighborhood recreational spaces.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Much of the available literature on the sense of belonging to neighbors near urban campuses resulted from many sources outside the United States. In Europe, extensive studies on studentification have signaled an examination and adoption of the term as a descriptor of the insurgence of multi-family unit dwellings surrounding college campuses. Limited academic studies within the American context adopt studentification as an influencer on recreational space.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and their subsidiaries were used to conduct a thorough literature review including: studentification, urban university, higher education, community engagement, spatial justice, social equity, and recreational space. The search produced extensive research on these terms and their applications. The goal of this literature review is to create a framework for the intersecting themes within the environment of this study. Despite a deep review of existing literature, limited research is available regarding studentified park spaces in urbanized areas in the United States. The existing literature contains gaps that could explain the intersection of these themes. This framework is significant because it provides a venue for future collaborative partnerships to address neighborhood concerns and will produce novel literature relevant to the American context.

American Higher Education and its Financial Role in Urban Spaces

It is essential to highlight the U.S. context in higher education versus the world context. The U.S. higher education is uniquely situated as a highly regulated entity that serves as a mediator for entry into society (Kuh, 2012). The success of higher education institutions depends on their ability to demonstrate an impact on many internal and external stakeholders (i.e., parents, families, students, city governments, and federal entities). The Department of Education in the United States uses reflexive tools of governance with public and private institutions, whereby funding is awarded to institutions, and in turn,
the Department of Education and accrediting bodies stipulate rules and regulations related explicitly to campus expansion into local communities (Lawrence-Hughes, 2014). Financial incentivization is a crucial governing tool that meets local and federal government goals (Wiewel & Perry, 2005). For higher education, a relationship between government and institutions relies on mutually advantageous governance.

The history of higher education and its connection to the community traces back to its inception. The Morrill Act of 1862 established land grants to higher education institutions because Congress believed an educated public could sustain democracy (O’Mara, 2012). This study examined literature from the civil rights era and beyond and its relevance to community engagement in its relationship to the social equity and spatial justice lenses. The rationale for utilizing this time came from the origins of community engagement as a practice. Between 1950 and 1980, colleges and universities became prominent in the U.S. social and cultural sphere (O’Mara, 2012). With this rise in prominence, there was also a rise in the expansion of colleges and universities into areas immensely impacted by the economic downturn after World War 2. The commodification of higher education meant that colleges and universities were competing to attract and enroll the same pool of students (Astin & Astin, 2000). Most higher education institutions have sought to create idealized spaces that cater to students’ most basic needs and growth (Dalton et al., 2018; Kezar, 2005; Lester, 2013). Spaces dedicated to the needs of college students have included traditional campus structures, housing, classrooms, security, and student-centered spaces (i.e., recreation spaces, libraries, lounges, etcetera; Bromley, 2006; Lester, 2013). A desire to create and sustain these spaces that serve students has contributed to colleges and universities expanding into, enforcing the behaviors of, and developing into neighborhoods (Wiewel & Perry, 2005). In some cases, moving into neighborhoods during this time meant that community members in surrounding neighborhoods, who were in most cases disproportionately lower income and historically
Historically, traditionally accepted campus community behavior was influenced by institutional priority and expectations (Dalton et al., 2018; Pastor et al., 2013). Colleges and university leaders leveraged their collective impact through education and access to institutional resources, thereby delivering knowledge and deeming the community a problem to be solved (Harris & Holley, 2016; Jackson, 2014). Despite the historically mixed impacts of the college and university footprint, post-1980, colleges and universities have sought to change the Ivory Tower narrative to one of community stakeholders with an academic, industry, and government relationship model (Etkowitz et al., 2000, Rodin, 2015). Since 1980, colleges and universities have partnered with community stakeholders to support building an enmeshed community between its students, faculty, staff, and neighbors (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). Community engagement is the industry-recognized term for planned, positive, institutional partnership with the community. The literature cites engagement in higher education as a critical component to be ingrained into the institutional mission. In 2000, the Kellogg Commission challenged higher education to be nimble in its approach to community engagement (Astin & Astin, 2000; Bromley, 2006; O’Mara, 2012). The Kellogg Commission highlighted seven components of effective engagement with the community- respond to community concerns, involve community partners in problem-solving, maintain neutrality when there are divergent community views, make expertise accessible to the community, integrate engagement with the community teaching, research, and service missions, align engagement with the university/college, and work with community partners to jointly seek funding for community projects (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). These criteria are seminal mandates of the institution by the government to address the engagement of the college and university, especially in times of expansion or nervousness in the community.
**Recreational Space Management and Role in Urban Space**

This section of the literature describes research and scholarly works related to the impact of recreational space management practices on the sense of belonging of neighbors near urban campuses. It is essential to evaluate the literature and supporting methodologies to solve the problem of stakeholders’ sense of belonging in urban parks. Collaborative space management for recreational spaces consistently comes up as a mechanism for addressing access and maximum citizen participation issues. Collaborative space management at its core is a management practice (Brudney & England, 1983; Emerson et al., 2012). According to Vigoda (2002), Collaboration relies on a need to be responsive to the needs of those who utilize services but takes this responsiveness further to cooperate with the needs of the community as a part of a co-productive process. In this conceptual framework surrounding public spaces such as recreational spaces, citizens are sophisticated clients in the public service industry and are to be treated as equal participants. Collaborating requires delegating decision-making and authority to accomplish large tasks like this park within Neighborhood 4 (Gulati et al., 1994). Collaboration theory states that stakeholders have the right and responsibility to work with local government to create more beneficial conditions for their environment. The process of solving issues related to the sense of belonging of neighbors in campus adjacent neighborhoods to the park cannot solely be solved by the campus. A collaborative framework is required to solve complex problems with multiple supportive partnerships (Agranoff, 2007). A collaborative approach for managing public services was developed by Emerson et al. (2012) and details a largely accurate basis for including collaboration as a defining term for practices related to the [Park Name] (Emerson et al., 2012).

Utilizing collaboration as a theory of mediating neighbors’ sense of belonging surrounding Neighborhood 4, the motivation to address these concerns is detailed as a shared characteristic of the operators of the park, Neighborhood 4, the University, the College, and neighbors in the campus adjacent community. There is a capacity for action from all groups as neighbors and community
stakeholders have situated the park as a community space (Creative Village, 2022). Literature shows that urbanized areas lacking community engagement and coproduction often develop into spaces devoid of community connection (Jackson, 2014; Lawrence-Hughes, 2014; Lefebvre, 2012). Principled engagement is also the basis for holistically maintained and welcoming greenspace to support healthy and well-supported communities (Thibault et al., 2004). The outcome of the collaborative governance process is one where there are extensions of the neighbor’s actions to that of the institutional and local stakeholders and a reflexive transformation of the system (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 1995).

This case argues that the park in this case falls under the health and human service category as its upkeep is essential to the community’s health (Keniger et al., 2013). In this case, the literature states that stakeholders who manage these spaces must work in a network to “satisfy the needs and expectations of those groups within a community that have both a direct and indirect interest in seeing that client needs are adequately met” (Provan & Milward, 2001, p.417). Collaboration as a central tool of governing recreational spaces in urbanized campus adjacent areas is intentional to the argument of the research questions. If the literature states that collaborative networks are necessary to address the neighbors’ sense of belonging in a community, then the neighbors must also be included in the proposed solution. Layered within the collaborative approach are tenets of accountability. According to Provan and Milward (2001), “community-based networks must be judged by the contribution they make to the communities they are trying to serve” (p. 416). Stakeholders of recreational spaces in urbanized campus-adjacent areas must also ensure sustainability by establishing legitimacy and support from the surrounding residents. Each public manager or organization must act as a single entity within the network; however, the individual partner must clearly understand the “how” and “why” of their involvement with the community (Cousens et al., 2006). This individual actors’ understanding of the networked purpose and motivation is more relevant to fostering community engagement in the recreational space.
The strength of recreational space processes in these highly networked urbanized areas relies heavily on partnerships to alleviate social, economic, and political pressures in recreation delivery (Stankey et al., 1999). One aspect of the management of recreational spaces in urbanized campus-adjacent areas is the use of proximity as a proxy for the effectiveness of city parks (Anderson et al., 2008). Proximate visitation to urban park systems yields more significant impact, financial stimulus, and benefits to the surrounding neighborhood (Koontz et al., 2017). As mentioned in the literature related to higher education sites in urbanized areas, urban areas suffer from a lower sense of psychological community than others. Recreational space placement, collaboration, and utilization between institutions of higher education and stakeholders is imperative to determine residents’ sense of belonging to the area. Managers and stakeholders of park should try to ensure accessibility and inclusivity to community parks by its community members.

In the literature, accessibility to recreational spaces indicated a positive sense of belonging for stakeholders (Floyd et al., 2015). Accessibility of recreational spaces in urbanized campus-adjacent areas requires collaboration with transportation partners and construction partners to design walkable routes to the parks (Harnik, 2006). One example of this practice is Greenville, South Carolina, with the Park Hop system (Besenyi et al., 2015). This collaborative model between stakeholders, recreation entities, and transportation officials yielded favorable visitor rates and health for youth in the parks. The literature shows that park managers collaborating with organizations to program and enrich the recreational space’s attractiveness to the community show a deeper connection with the neighborhoods (Arni & Khairil, 2013).

The literature further shows that as local governments consider the maintenance and construction of urban spheres, they should consider decentralizing the management practices of park
areas (Arni & Khairil, 2013). Traditional urban planning models suggest that planners within urbanized spaces are the experts in delivering services—this is a dated practice that has not been used in much time (McAvoy, 1991). However, modern approaches to recreational space management processes offer a transactive planning approach that includes the public in the planning process, and, values public input over the planner’s expertise (Friedman & America, 1973; McAvoy, 1991). Transactive planning positively impacts public trust, consensus, and communication in development times (Stankey et al., 1999).

Transactive planning occurs not only at the onset of a space’s development but also throughout the space’s existence. Literature states that the community should oversee the park to combat some of the traditional issues that parks face, such as ecological disruption, conflict, and crowding, particularly in urbanized areas facing studentification (Cousens et al., 2006; Hubbard, 2008). The definition of a community with invested park oversight will ensure that there is democratic decision-making as it relates to recreational space management (Stankey et al., 1999; Thibault et al., 2004).

Parks and recreational spaces are traditionally positioned as health and wellness resources, and there is plentiful research on the financial, social, and environmental output (Larson et al., 2016; Rigolon et al., 2018; Thibault et al., 2004). However, the literature on the social impacts of park management processes on the community is limited (Floyd et al., 2015). This case, as it relates to recreational spaces in urban campus-adjacent areas, is situated in the gap between existing urban planning and spatial justice literature to connect management processes with ensuring diverse urban park participation.

**Spatial Justice, Place Attachment, and Social Equity**

The research states that contemporary urbanized spaces are made up of inequalities of space that produce exclusionary landscapes among diverse populations (Sibley, 1995). Social equity should be a driver of institutional priorities, while maintaining a level of allegiance to the institution and its stakeholders (Patterson et al., 2014). Institutions have over time been challenged to move from
responsiveness to collaboration to avoid the trap of being seen as fixing community’s problems. However, public institutions of higher education are still required to support and maintain a level of intrusion in communities (Vigoda-Gadot, 2004). Utilizing social equity principles in public administration and higher education requires that administrators “prioritize the justice in the service it provides” (Gooden, 2015, p.79). Organizations can be motivated to operate in an equitable way through a combination of internal and external motivators.

Higher education and public administrators are similar in their focus on community collaborative efforts. Both are responsible for shaping the landscapes and communities, which results in tension between the various social and cultural groups (Gooden, 2015; Ng & Ren, 2015). This tension yields cases of higher education institutions that have failed to address equitable expansion into surrounding communities (Moskowitz, 2014). The literature shows that in Philadelphia, irresponsible university expansion has resulted in resident-student conflicts, producing crime, discrimination, and prejudice (Scott, 2022). Social equity principles promote compensation and recompense for community stakeholders living in communities surrounding higher education institutions (Scott, 2022).

**Spatial Justice**

In urban planning, a concept related to the allocation and organization of spatial resources is called spatial justice. Spatial justice serves as a foundational guiding work to draw attention to the action of uneven economic development of cities and how it impacts the mesogeography of specific territories (Soja, 2009, ). In public administration, power, resource negotiation, and privilege are relied on as sources of decision-making in uneven development. Soja (2009) articulated that coalition building among community members disrupts uneven development and supports community self-advocacy. A large part of the effectiveness of coalitions is their size and scope within a community. Moving closer toward a strategic spatial consciousness and thus a spatial theory of Justice, it becomes evident and
challenging that these socially produced geographies, created by human actions, can be changed or transformed through human agency (Soja, 2009). Under the theoretical framework of spatial justice, there is a fundamental right to the city with all citizens are entitled to equal participation in city resources, utilities, and spaces. This study used this framework to investigate whether different citizens experience and feel belonging engaging in public recreational space. According to Gooden (2015), “All public policies involve the distribution of resources” (p.21.). These resources include housing, recreational space, and public utilities; individual rights to these resources yield consistent negotiation about equitable interactions (Patterson et al., 2014).

**Place Attachment**

Place attachment describes the emotional bonds individuals develop with places of significance or a relational tie between individuals and locations (Altman & Low, 2012; Lewicka, 2011). For the area within this study, place attachment could have applied due to the historical significance of the neighborhoods to the formation of Downtown Orlando. Residents in areas who have developed place attachment do so through various metrics and verbal and non-verbal indicators (Lewicka, 2011). The research on place attachment is complex and has been through several components and factors about cultural definitions and maintaining the integrity of spaces (Altman & Low, 2012). Space, as defined through the research, can refer to the micro spatial attachments (i.e., one’s favorite parking space, one’s favorite newsstand) or the macro spatial attachment (i.e., living in a home for 30 years; Altman & Low, 2012). Both definitions of place rely on the emotional concepts of loyalty, pride, and solidarity (Bryer et al., 2023). Pride in individuals as residents of a specific place is an integral component of co-productive revitalization and successful neighborhood reinvigoration (Brown et al., 2004). In the case of [Park Name], the cooperative effort to improve the community helps explain the collaborative mission by the stakeholders involved (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). The behaviors related to the park may be guided by how communities plan to utilize and promote spaces. According to the literature, there is one caveat: the
sharing of a typical neighborhood space by diverse groups does not inevitably lead to a sense of community; therefore, it is essential to understand the various meanings that a neighborhood holds for its residents to create thriving places because those meanings often express the needs and values of their users (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995).

As a result, the existence of an attachment to a space (i.e., a neighborhood or a park) does not solely mean that the bonds are inherent without effective mobilization from stakeholders. The types and effects of various stakeholders moderate the degree and influence of place attachment in urban contexts (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). The next concept, studentification, details how students and college stakeholders impact how spaces are shaped.

**Studentification**

Studentification is a European concept that details the migratory patterns and influences of groups of students moving in and out of neighborhoods and communities. Researchers have long held that student migration patterns influence and change the community in which they reside over time. Before 2019, there had not been an institution of higher education in Downtown Orlando for over 50 years. The influx of students into the area of this study leaves some space to describe the phenomena within the institutional and collaborative context. Only one major peer-reviewed research study utilizes studentification examples in the American context. This study involved evaluating three primary authors’ research to explore and frame how this problem uniquely affects the U.S. urban sphere. Sage et al. 2014) stated that the studentification process has implications for communities near urban campuses, making this research significantly relevant for future planners. Students living, learning, and socializing in spaces not designed originally for their lifestyle change the landscape and experiences of the residents (Hubbard, 2009; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2014). The first effect of studentification on communities is demographic migration- students moving into neighborhoods and residents moving out of
neighborhoods. According to Sage et al. (2012), “Research on the linkages between student migration and residential change in university towns and cities has mainly focused on neighborhoods with deeply engrained and relatively mature expressions of studentification “(p.1).

Sage et al. (2012b), along with the US Department of Commerce (2020), posited that evidence of this migratory shift is reflected in the policies of the U.S. Census. In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau asked college and university presidents with significant off campus populations” (Benson & Bishaw, 2017, n.p.) to provide roster information of students who live off campus to determine an accurate location. In its letter, the Census Bureau acknowledged that the consistent movement of college students in and out of communities has implications for “community funding, political representation, and planning decisions “(Dillingham, 2020, n.p.).

The literature shows that community migration due to studentification can shift neighborhood demographics significantly within a year. Charbonneau et al. (2006) stated the demographics in some neighborhoods, which previously could have consisted of families, are now students with different public needs. Research shows that in studentified areas, families are being displaced by local student populations. Familial departures are tied to the closure of schools, daycares, and other community facilities, playgrounds, parks, et cetera (Sage et al., 2012b). According to Sage et al. (2012a):

In some local neighborhoods, the volume of their placement/displacement of local families by transient student populations is, in part, connected to the gradual closure of local crèches, nurseries, schools and other community facilities (e.g., halls) as the total number of children on local school rolls plummet. (p.117)

The research in this study is supported by evidence of studentification affecting the neighborhood locations. The area in this study has begun to experience some of the school closure issues related to studentification since the announcement of the redevelopment project. Two local organizations serving children have closed to make way for the Neighborhood 4 project and school
consolidation: Charter School and the Youth Center. Neighborhoods become segregated between student and non-student populations. The literature also highlights that studentification has ties to gentrification. Neighborhoods that undergo studentification also experience some shifts in their racial makeup (Foote, 2017). According to Nakazawa (2017), “From this perspective, students who are supposed to be gentrifiers are “traditional students”—white, middle-class, and who have enrolled in a university in their late teens and left the parental home when entering a university“ (p.2).

Based on a deep review of the literature, even though university demographics are becoming more diverse, the literature signals that the students living closest to campus (and in the process of studentification) are primarily White (Smith, 2004). The literature surrounding the economic impacts of identified spaces also discusses spatial politics (Pickren, 2012). Pickren’s (2012) study, one of a handful of studies conducted in the United States, examined that the shift of spaces that held diverse families in Athens, Georgia, to student housing directly heightened broader political issues surrounding land use and diversity.

The literature also states that studentification is a vital planning issue in many urban communities (Revington & August, 2020). In concern for many communities, researchers such as Revington and August (2020) have long considered how to sustain communities near urban campuses economically. The researchers conducted a document analysis of urban planning projects for student housing off-campus and noted that the challenge with studentification is its impact on economically sustaining the areas around it (Revington et al., 2020). Researchers have also long identified that studentification drives the demand for increased off-campus housing in proximal communities to urban campuses (Ghani & Sulaiman, 2021). This demand creates an economic need for student-centered spaces, even if these spaces do not align with the local community’s housing needs. Off-campus student population growth at institutions and their demand for housing leads to a student housing shortage in proximal communities. This shortage drives the constant construction of student-centered property.
Often, this construction results in an urban build-up and multi-unit dwellings that are created inexpensively with little regard for sustainability and economic impact on the community (He, 2015). The environmental impact of new construction for these multi-unit dwellings over time is aggregated by the relocation and migration of students into community spaces. The process of creating large multi-unit dwellings relies on the demolition of existing single-family and community residences.

Itard and Klunder (2007) determined that “transformation is a much more environmentally efficient way to achieve the same result than demolition and rebuilding” (p.266 ). However, the demolition of single-family spaces is incredibly cheap (Garmendia et al., 2012). This cheapness, researchers state, is a significant financial motivation for off-campus housing providers to attempt to remove existing structures and saturate proximal communities with student housing and studentified spaces. Researchers call this process financialization (Harris & Holley, 2016; Revington & August, 2020). This process is a demonstrated pattern of off-campus entities investing and strategizing to capitalize on studentified markets in connection with higher education institutions. Financialization has a direct link to higher housing costs and age segregation. Businesses have an economic motivation to earn money by supporting age stratification and raising housing costs for non-student populations (Revington & August 2020).

Urban planners have long considered communities’ sustainability and holistic livelihood in urban planning theory (Gómez-Baggethun & Barton, 2013). Gómez-Baggethun and Barton (2013) detailed that the urban ecosystem should have several sustainable priorities and be restored in naturally concrete areas, like urban campuses and adjacent communities. Many of these ecosystem traits are essential services to the area. Baggethun and Barton also detailed that these sustainable practices have a “valuation language” that captures the value they add to economies (p.238). The most sustainable act is to re-insert sustainable practices into urban areas that have seen high levels of migration, like studentified spaces (Ng & Ren, 2015).
In this literature review, several research projects detail that studentified spaces primarily comprise college students in urbanized spaces. Socially, this creates a significant shift in the social landscape of communities, including social service needs like schools and churches (Pickren, 2012). There are cultural changes to what community members expect living in proximal spaces (Bromley, 2006). In their paper, Woldoff and Weiss (2018) discussed that non-student residents in proximal spaces perceive studentification as the reason for declining neighborhoods. The lopsided demographics of college communities are home to increased crime and misbehavior (Woldoff & Weiss, 2018). In urban areas, a passive tolerance for disorder and mediative relationships between students and non-student relationships exists (Hubbard, 2008). Those individuals who do not tolerate crime and behavior issues often move out of the areas and leave students to fend for themselves, where community members witness students misbehaving and all but leave their communities disrupted (Hubbard, 2008). Research states that these community members include police and regulators, who “may normalize a certain level of disorder” in the college town context, as they are under political pressure to keep students happy and may even be sympathetic to students who are just “kids being kids” (Woldoff & Weiss, 2018, p.268).

In addition to the tolerance of misbehavior in communities proximal to urban campuses, there is often a high recreational culture that urban campuses support in their students. According to Woldoff and Weiss (2018), “Across the country, college enrollments are outpacing the construction of student housing, and students are often directed toward older residential enclaves, causing studentification, disorder, and conflict” (p. 259).
Figure 2. Conceptual map of studentification in relationship to higher education (Jenkins, 2023).

**Sense of Belonging**

This study discusses essential topics relevant to the conversation surrounding studentification in relationship to other systemic factors in urban campus-adjacent spaces. A sense of belonging is identified in the literature as “a subjective feeling of value and respect derived from a reciprocal relationship to an external referent that is built on a foundation of shared experiences, beliefs or personal characteristics” (Mahar et al., 2013, p.1030). There is another broader tie into the mission of higher education and public service organizations to create a sense of belonging for their stakeholders visiting their spaces. The overall theoretical components of a sense of belonging can contribute to how institutions of higher education, local governments, and their partners can carry out their missions of recreational space engagement. However, to understand the effectiveness of a sense of belonging as an indicator of engagement, one must realize a sense of belonging as it relates to human psychology, physical recreational space, and social cohesiveness. The need to belong is a fundamental aspect of
human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 2017; Crisp, 2010). The authors demonstrated that the need to belong affects all outcomes related to goal orientation, and if the need is impacted, there can be adverse effects on basic human needs (i.e., health and happiness; Baumeister & Leary, 2017; Crisp, 2010). The need to belong is the driver of humans to build a connection to each other and their surroundings and is a strong predictor of satisfaction and motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 2017; Hagerty et al., 1996). At its base level, a strong sense of belonging measures are tied to improved mental health (Hagerty et al., 1992). A missed sense of belonging is linked to an increased likelihood of suicidal ideation (Hatcher & Stubbersfield, 2013). In this chapter section, it is essential to highlight the various parts of the literature that apply to the multiple stakeholders in the Neighborhood 4 and the park in this case.

For this review, the literature surrounding a sense of belonging because of engagement with a specific location was primarily divided into educational and recreational spaces. In terms of a recreational space-based sense of belonging, strong results tie active participation in recreational space to a sense of belonging. In New Zealand, researchers explored visitors’ motivations to visit Porongia Forest Park. The study’s results articulated that visitors to the park did so due to a place attachment (Pan & Ryan, 2007). The place attachment was primarily influenced by social identity and motivation factors attached to specific clusters of visitors. Attachment to a particular place due to the feelings experienced in that space is a common thread in the literature related to the sense of belonging in recreational spaces. In terms of historically marginalized populations, access to quality green space in urban areas is documented as a positive indicator of a sense of belonging, and participants relied on the social interaction from utilizing public recreational space to improved feelings of inclusion (McEwan et al., 2020; Plane & Klodawsky, 2013). In historically marginalized communities, research further suggests that the feelings of inclusion are from active participation in recreational space, not a passive observation of the natural beauty of recreational space; active participation is what most largely impacts a sense of belonging in urban recreational space (Jørgensen, 2010; Lefebvre, 2012; McEwan et al., 2020; Pipitone &
Jović, 2022). Feelings of inclusion, representation, and safety promote positive cross-cultural collaboration and belonging in urban recreational spaces (Powers et al., 2022).

Regarding a sense of belonging in educational spaces, research details that students’ feelings of support and belonging to their institution highly influence productive outcomes in education, increased persistence, and reduced attrition (O’Keeffe, 2013; Strayhorn, 2018). Strayhorn (2018) also highlighted that this sense of belonging for diverse college students is tied to their social identities and their formation in the cultural context (Strayhorn, 2018). While it is essential to discuss students’ sense of belonging in this study, the literature shares that the student’s sense of belonging is the primary driver of institutional placement in urbanized contexts (Carter, 2017).

Qualitative research measures a sense of belonging through values expressed by participants in all settings that influence the research, in this case. As a result of the literature involving a sense of belonging, this research utilized defined metrics to determine whether there is a sense of belonging in the Neighborhood 4 and the Park in this case. There are defined assessment strategies that support a sense of belonging via specific factors (Hagerty et al., 1992; Williams & Downing, 1998)-

1. Positive emotions towards a recreational space.
2. Positive relationships with other community members.
3. Willingness to engage with a recreational space.
4. Change in personal attributes to align with a recreational space.

These four criteria were developed through thoroughly examining the sense of belonging literature and are used to determine stakeholders’ connections.
Problem Statement

The theoretical foundation of this study shows that this problem is worthy of exploration. The consistent influx and movement of students in and out of communities creates an impression of community change for existing neighborhoods around college campuses. The issue of recreational space to moderate the effects of studentification on community engagement is a plausible solution to stakeholders’ sense of belonging in their community. As institutions of higher education partner with city leaders on developing infrastructure, recreational space can be used to address institutional, systemic, and managerial problems.

Study Overview

The objective of this study was to explore how the utilization of public recreational space manifests in stakeholders’ experiences, perceptions, and behaviors. The study included semi structured individual interviews and facilitated conversations of neighborhood stakeholders and students. The study centered on two research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How is campus stakeholders’ sense of belonging impacted by using newly developed campus adjacent recreational space in their neighborhood?

Sense of belonging among community members is a marker of effects of studentification, positive acculturation, and evidence of community engagement. To consider sense of belonging in this specific case is to determine, at an early point in time after campus opening, whether the institutional and community aims are positively enriching the area or impacting neighborhood stakeholders’ ability to connect to and engage with the space. Answering this question is a significant outcome to the research due to its close relationship to the park’s establishment and purpose for the neighborhoods.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): To what extent does utilization of campus-adjacent public recreational space and its culture influence the surrounding community’s behavior?
The use or non-use of campus-adjacent recreational space could support additional measures of the diversity of the space and whether that space represents the surrounding community’s visits to the park. Because this study is descriptive, the embedded case study approach applies a photographic example of the circumstances involved in this example. Case studies are empirical studies exploring an event in real-world settings (Yin, 2012). The descriptive case study was necessary due to data collection within specific frames of inquiry (i.e., testing studentification and humanistic theory). The methodology for this study allowed for more inferential processes through data collection and synthesis. The study population were students or neighborhood stakeholders to neighborhoods 1, 2, 3, or 4. The research was conducted at the park between April and December 2023. Individuals were invited to complete either an individual interview or participate in facilitated conversations where they shared their experiences and sense of belonging using the park. The study sample was identified through criterion sampling. The study population is highly localized to focus on the neighborhoods of emphasis.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the existing methodology to validate the comparative case study approach within the conceptual framework and the evolution of the case study methodology. In that review, Yin’s (2012) case study research and applications work was a foundation for this research. Yin’s work solidified case study research as a viable means for exploring natural world phenomena in their appropriate context. This research was based on recommendations from Stake (1995) as a basis for understanding the limitations and priorities of case studies in community research.

This study used a comparative, exploratory, non-experimental case study approach. The research study employed the descriptive case study method to describe the impacts of the theoretical frames on participants’ sense of belonging. This study utilized a comparative case study approach (see Stake, 1995) with interviews and facilitated conversations for two groups of participants.

Comparative case studies allow for specific phenomena to be explained through testable theories. The main aim of this chosen case study approach was to determine what the students and stakeholders have in common regarding their sense of belonging when visiting the park in this case (Dion, 1998). As described in the Chapter Two, the elements and theories related to studentification, higher education, community engagement, and spatial justice converge in the park. Each group, student, and stakeholder believe the park to be a community space with needs that can be compared between groups and applied to understanding park development. This researcher sought to study two groups’ experiences associated with the physical location and real-life context. The comparative case study approach was warranted (see Bartlett, 2017; Yin, 2012). Compared to other types of case study research, comparative case studies explain why the participants’ sense of belonging differs between groups. Due to the lack of research regarding studentification and the sense of belonging among various groups in
the United States and specifically the urban context, a case study approach was supported to develop this knowledge (see Padgett, 2016; Yin, 2012).

**The Comparative Case Study as Implemented**

If this research were to use other research methods, there would be difficulty in limiting threats to the research integrity. For example, due to the units of analyses present in this case and the nature of the neighborhoods and their overlapping influences, there would be little ability to control extraneous variables presented, such as the influence of schools, outside events, and community interventions, and co-existing community planning (see Stake, 1995). As such, the comparative case study addresses these limitations. Individual interviews and facilitated group conversations were used as data collection methods. Both methods allowed narratives to develop via responses for each group within the comparison. While a historical approach could have addressed the narratives within this study, the issues related to contemporary issues in the context of this space could not be considered (see Yin, 2012). For example, the researcher could have utilized a historical approach to ask individuals to describe past experiences affecting their sense of belonging. However, to accurately describe the social context for this study, it was essential to utilize recent development and patterns in the case related to the campus expansion and the dedication of the park for the community’s use, to honor its history, and as a connecting space between students and neighborhood stakeholders. All corresponding instruments were submitted to the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval for this study. Once IRB approval was obtained, participant recruitment began.

**Population & Sample**

Qualitative studies typically focus on smaller populations, yet studies should derive enough reliable measures to reach saturation when no new information is introduced (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Two groups of participants (i.e., students and neighborhood stakeholders) were selected for this study.
The stakeholders in this study were defined utilizing the theoretical application from McGrath and Whitty (2017). This definition uses a reflexive approach that centers on “an entity with a stake (interest) in the subject activity” (McGrath & Whitty, 2017, p. 722. The activity an entity may have an interest in may vary according to the area’s level of separation and involvement. This definition is critical to understanding stakeholder participants’ level of engagement and interest in the park, influencing their sense of belonging. Students in this study were defined as those enrolled solely at the campus.

The literature review for this study showed a need to explore the current experiences of these groups in the social context of urban development and campus expansion. Historic disparities exist between these two groups’ (students and neighborhood stakeholders) experiences in public recreation in campus adjacent spaces. It was important to determine if the participants in these groups who experience a sense of belonging have similar experiences in newly developed campus adjoining spaces.

The comparative case study approach requires that the inclusion criteria be narrowed within the participant groups to address potential influences outside the case phenomena (Dion, 1998; Yin, 2012). The first group of the study was made up of students at a nearby college campus who only took classes at the campus in question, and, also lived in the neighborhoods in this study. The campus holds classes all year long and has student housing dedicated to housing students attending the campus. The second group in this study were stakeholders who had a relationship with neighborhoods 1, 2, 3, and 4 for at least 2 years. The sample selection was purposive to reduce the external factors within the case.

**Sample Selection**

The sample for this comparative case study was selected through criterion sampling (Creswell, 2000). The following inclusion criteria was used:

1. A stakeholder in the four neighborhoods for 2 or more years, AND/OR
2. be a Downtown Campus student enrolled solely at the Downtown campus living in the four neighborhoods after May 2022.

Case Selection

Participants selected to determine the sense of belonging were chosen due to the review of the literature framework for the research questions. After a review, the literature noted that there may be documented historical tension between students and stakeholders when studying campus adjacent space. Participants were recruited from neighborhood associations, stakeholder groups, and the proximal campus community. Flyers and emails were sent to neighborhood associations, university housing, university faculty and staff, the city parks and recreation, area development corporations, apartment complexes, businesses, and employers surrounding the park. Recruitment within the neighborhoods is based on immediate proximity to the park and to the campus. A recruitment flyer was sent to listservs of association membership and community organizations. The neighborhoods in question are primarily connected by socio-historical policy as members of the same city district; therefore, utilizing associations may yield a strong study pool among its participants.

The criterion sampling strategy results in a study sample of participants with close connections to the park. The relevance of park participation in urban neighborhoods is a connection readily identified in the literature. Participants who live near or work near the park were sub-samples identified to address the potential supplemental research questions.

Procedures and Data Collection

Qualitative research necessitates that the data collection process is conducted separately from the analysis process, and to ensure depth, rigorous research must include data from various sources. In terms of community-based research, the narratives and themes are co-produced from participant responses (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 1995; Creswell & Poth, 2018, Creswell & Miller, 2000). Collecting
multiple sources of case study data, known as triangulation, improves study validity (Yin, 2012). Various measures that result in the same conclusions suggest triangulation has occurred. In terms of this specific case, obtaining individual interviews with participants along with facilitated conversations provided direct discussions that members of the other group do not influence, and getting facilitated conversations provided insight into how the opinions of each group are shaped by the thoughts of the other.

Participants were asked to participate in an hour-long one-on-one semi structured interview or a 90-minute facilitated conversation and subsequently complete a demographic survey via Qualtrics. Participants chose whether they would like to participate in a facilitated conversation or interview. Most participants chose to participate in an individual interview.

Table 1 List of questions asked during the individual interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question category</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>A sense of belonging is defined as—“the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment. A “system” can be a relationship or organization, and an environment can be natural or cultural.” So, based on this provided definition, what does the sense of belonging mean to you? What questions do you believe need to be asked about the conversation around [park name] and your sense of belonging?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sense of belonging, place attachment, community engagement | What questions do you believe need to be asked about the conversation around [Park Name] and your (or students’) sense of belonging? How do you think your sense of belonging would be impacted by using the [Park Name]?
| Sense of belonging, spatial justice | What do you see as your role in your community? How does [Park Name] make you want to interact with others in the campus community? |
| Community engagement | How do you think the [Park Name] fits into the bigger picture of [Neighborhood 4]?
| Community engagement, sense of belonging, place attachment | What do you notice about the [Park Name]?
The researcher conducted one 90-minute (including a 15-minute break) facilitated conversation and 12 individual interviews. The facilitated conversation and individual interviews took place in a community location accessible to the attendees and included both students and neighborhood stakeholders (Smith, 1972). The goal was to collect and complete an analysis of the data until no additional themes were found from the data in the semistructured interviews and facilitated conversation. The researcher then used thematic analysis to pull themes from the data. Qualitative thematic analysis involves the identification of themes in the stories of the participants by reading and re-reading the data (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Thematic analysis is essential to determine how themes become categories for analysis; thematic analysis is conducted deductively and attributes themes to a specific template of codes. The deductive approach will be discussed in detail in the next section.

In the facilitated conversation and interview responses, the researcher attributed responses to codes from the literature, categorized the data according to the research questions, and determined the frequency of the concepts the data produced. The researchers recruited 14 participants in the facilitated conversation to allow for additional perspectives to come through the conversation (see Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). After the participants enrolled, the researcher provided the information to the participants and assigned them to the facilitated conversation date and time. The researcher reviewed the discussion format, confidentiality, and anonymization procedures with each participant noted in the explanation of the research (see Appendix A). Participants were offered the chance to ask any procedural questions before the facilitated conversation began and were provided the opportunity to leave or decline to participate in the discussion.
Table 2 List of questions asked during the facilitated conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question category</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place attachment, community engagement</td>
<td>Are you familiar with the [Park Name]? (Provided Overview of Park)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative governance, community engagement</td>
<td>What questions do you believe need to be asked about the conversation around [Park Name] and your sense of belonging?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>A sense of belonging is defined as “the subjective feeling of deep connection with social groups, physical places, and individual and collective experiences” (Allen et al., 2021). Based on the provided definitions, What does sense of belonging mean to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>What do you see as your role in your community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational space, spatial justice, studentification</td>
<td>Can we talk about the [Park Name]—What do you notice about the [Park Name]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational space, community engagement, sense of belonging</td>
<td>How often do you or do not use the [Park Name]? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>Do you feel that you belong in the [Park Name]—Why or Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studentification, spatial justice</td>
<td>Looking back on the [Park Name] construction, what was your experience like during its creation—what comes to mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Justice, studentification</td>
<td>Do you see the [Park Name] being a popular space for people like you—Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended</td>
<td>Is there anything else you would like to share that I have not asked today?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facilitated conversation was recorded via audio recorder and stored via OneDrive in a password-protected folder. From each recording, a transcript was created primarily utilizing manual transcription and, subsequently, via Trint transcription software that detailed all information in-vivo and contained conversations between the research participants (see Kitzinger, 1994). The transcript of the facilitated conversation, categorical demographic data, and notes were analyzed for data that answered the research questions. The final transcript was shared with the enabled conversation participants for member-checking no later than four weeks after the facilitated conversations (Brotherson, 1994). Due to the group size, participants were asked via email if they had additional information to add to the
conversation surrounding their sense of belonging. No participants elected to respond and provide further details.

**Data Analysis**

Results from the individual interview and facilitated conversation were anonymized with all participants, and location-specific data were redacted or issued pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. From the transcript, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis and subsequently completed deductive coding in the form of templating (see Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Thematic analysis as a method for enriching the participants’ experiences is considered helpful, especially in describing phenomena within groups (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). It allows for the recognition of patterns—especially in emerging themes. By categorizing the data into the codebook (found in the results section), the researcher staged the coding and connected themes in the literature. Afterward, the process allowed for themes not represented in the data to be determined inductively. The analysis process was as follows:

![Figure 3. Steps for deductive and inductive coding process.](image)

The researcher used manual coding on the first round of coding and subsequently used AtlasTi to complete the coding and analysis process. Overall, these analysis methods explored the themes of all participants and used their stories to answer the research questions. The facilitated conversation
protocol, found in Appendix C, was created utilizing the example from the *Practical Guide for Applied Research* from Krueger (2014). The protocol for the study focuses on including strategies for including a wide range of perspectives on social issues (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 1995; Kieffer et al., 2005; Krueger et al., 1998). It is essential to use an accurate facilitated conversation methodology that uses the researcher as a facilitator of an organized discussion rather than as an investigator. The concept of the researcher as a facilitator in the literature is a method whereby the researcher takes a more relaxed approach to conducting the facilitated conversation. Instead of asking multiple questions and directing the conversation like an investigator, the researcher will ask fewer questions and allow participants to engage with each other as co-producers of the facilitated conversation data. This method allows for richer content and more in-depth conversations (Krueger, 2014). An example template is below of this coding process for the theme that was inductively derived based on Creswell’s.

![Diagram of coding process](image-url)

Figure 4. Example multi case inductive coding template based on Creswell (2000).
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter shares the results of the study for each group in the comparison—students and neighborhood stakeholders—and shares results for individuals in both groups. Two data collection methods were used: (a) individual interviews and (b) group-facilitated conversations. Both research questions are answered below, including excerpts from each interview and facilitated group conversation. First, the codes found from the individual interviews for each group are presented and compared for frequency and occurrence.

Demographic Characteristics

This process requires tedious and detailed attention from the “bottom-up” of a data set (Saldaña, 2021). “Depending on the data we use, some category piles are arranged in a single column from top to bottom according to numeric frequency of their codes (Saldana, 2021 p. 205). On the final iteration of analyzing the data, the analysis will draw from the participants’ language in vivo utilizing the Park. To organize the research, the researcher included coding that reflects the theoretical frames and sense of belonging literature. This organization method allowed for themes present in prior literature to be applied to this new data set.

The following descriptive statistics breakdown the demographic characteristics of the participants and their relationship to the recreational space in the study. The plan was to find a group of participants representative of the characteristics of the city downtown, as well as interview individuals who have close relationships to the case in this study. The researcher recruited 35 participants who responded to recruitment strategies (n=35). Of the 35 participants who responded to the initial research and enrolled, 16 completed a facilitated conversation, and 12 conducted an individual interview. Of the 28 participants, 26 completed demographic surveys. Two individuals in the facilitated conversation did not complete demographic surveys. Initially, the researchers recruited two comparison groups: (a)
students and (b) neighborhood stakeholders according to the inclusion criteria. However, as recruitment went on, a third group of participants emerged who fit both inclusion criteria, yielding a third comparison group.

The total participants were displayed in the Table 3.

Table 3 Demographics of participants and neighborhood relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Individual interview</th>
<th>Group facilitated conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value, n%</td>
<td>Value, n%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comparative group</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood stakeholder</td>
<td>5 (42)</td>
<td>11 (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>4 (33)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>3 (25)</td>
<td>5 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>12 (75)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>2 (13)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>14 (88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity-Hispanic/Latino</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>1 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9 (75)</td>
<td>13 (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>18–22</td>
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<td>50–64</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood affiliation</strong></td>
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<td>Neighborhood 1</td>
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<td>12 (75)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood 4</td>
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<td>Neighborhood 5¹</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of neighborhood relationship</strong></td>
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<td>3 years or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>21–25 years</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 years +</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood relationship</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Neighborhood 5 was not an original neighborhood in the inclusion criteria in the study however, participants added the neighborhood to their affiliations via the demographic survey- therefore it was included.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Count 1</th>
<th>Percentage 1</th>
<th>Count 2</th>
<th>Percentage 2</th>
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<td>9 (56)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Work</td>
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<td>5 (31)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family connection</td>
<td>4 (33)</td>
<td>10 (63)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>1 (8)</td>
<td>9 (56)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>2 (17)</td>
<td>7 (44)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes

Each comparative group response was coded separately. As the transcripts were reviewed and coded, the data revealed that different factors impacted the sense of belonging of campus stakeholders using newly developed campus adjacent recreational space in their neighborhood based on their group of comparison. Each analyzed theme was discovered per comparative group- students, neighborhood stakeholders, and student and neighborhood stakeholders. The following themes were validated from the literature: (a) community engagement, (b) place attachment, (c) recreational space, (d) sense of belonging, (e) spatial justice, and (f) studentification. To answer the research questions, the themes and subthemes from each group were explored. The themes and subthemes are described in greater detail in the following section with direct quotes supporting the analysis of the research questions.

Students

A total of four students participated in the study and all completed semi structured interviews. Four themes emerged from the interviews with these students. Students indicated that they had a positive sense of belonging within the park, even recommending the space to other students and using the space as an informal mediator for the isolation and stress of the student lifestyle. The research highlighted many themes, but, this section will focus on four themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews and facilitated conversation.

Theme 1: Recreational Space Literature- Subtheme: Wellness

In this case, the participants indicated that wellness significantly impacted the sense of belonging for students utilizing the park. When asked, students suggested that the park in question was a space that facilitated the improvement of facilitation of wellness activities. These participants believed that using recreational space is a part of good health and indicated that their sense of belonging was
positively impacted. The presence of the park and its proximity to students’ living spaces was attributed to a positive impact on their sense of belonging.

Participant 4 shared,

    I also think it’s a great outlet, like sometimes being secluded in your room all the time is not very good. It can be sometimes detrimental to your mental health. So going out there, getting that fresh air can help you explore your horizons - to help you think better it can help you feel better.

Participants noted that their peers and community’s observed use of wellness activities in the park influenced their use of the park—the culture of the value of wellness-inspired changes among the student comparison group. Students were genuinely excited regarding the opportunities for wellness in the park and explained that they intentionally supported wellness activities there.

Participant 34 stated,

    But for the most part it’s very quiet and I think it’s a nice place to just sit, soak in the sun and get some fresh air and take a breather. Just taking ten minutes to yourself and just sitting there you let your stresses like, wash away. I just think it’s a beautiful place to do it.

The student participants held aspirational wellness goals for themselves and their community. Students had that the community they envisioned and the park they expected was one where everyone centered wellness and wellbeing.

Participant 8 disclosed, “I feel like it is important for not only as a student, but as a person in this community to go outside and release the stress or anything that may hinder you.”

Students indicated that they are actively working to make the parking space a place where students can feel stress-free through peer-to-peer relationships and a part of their student experience downtown. Students believe the park has a wellness culture that influences their surrounding community.
Participant 6 stated,

Normally I use it as a space just to kind of take a breather, like debrief from my daily student life and just kind of have a moment to be a human again. So, I feel like I just use it to kind of walk around, kind of see the different sites around [City], maybe just to sit down and enjoy, you know, viewing what other people might be doing. So, it’s I kind of use it in that way just to kind of relax.

**Theme 2: Recreational Space Literature- Subtheme: Social Development**

The social development students experienced using the park was described as impacting the students’ sense of belonging utilizing the space. Regardless of the students’ longevity in living close to the park, their affiliation to either institution of higher education, and their experiences during the park construction, students indicated that their social development was impacted by their use or nonuse of the park due to its centrality to their social lives. One student stated that they used the park as an affinity space and a space outside of the building.

Participant 4 stated,

I think it creates that sense of belonging where you’re meeting new people who may have not connected with and then therefore learned that you guys may have a lot of stuff in common that can create that sense of belonging together.

Students signaled that there was a difference in their use of the park in this case, as compared to other parks in the neighboring areas. The primary influence of using this park resulted in an awareness of its proximity and the development of each other socially.

Participant 6 shared,

I feel like it’s a space that we can use just the walking distance to kind of do whatever we wish to do with the park regulations. You know, we have [Neighboring Park], for example, but for us
that’s like a 20-minute walk and we would like to have something that’s much closer to home.

So, I feel like that is what the [Park Name] Park brings, is, you know, everybody can just come out of walking distance to gather.

Students could see the park as a mobile for their social development, even if they did not use the park or see their peers using it. Students in this study articulated that they believed the park was for them and their participation in their community. This perception led to the overall impression of students in the space that even though they may not always see the community in the park, the park is an integral part of their campus culture—despite the park technically not being a part of their campus, they see it as such. They question how much more they can receive from the park to stimulate their sense of belonging and improve their social culture. Students believed their use of the park helped improve their surrounding community.

Participant 4 stated,

And in regard to like the [Park], what resources could this park provide us to create that sense of belonging? Because there’s only so much to do downtown that, I would say in the vicinity, it can affect how you feel in a group.

Participant 34 shared,

My sense of belonging has been impacted by the [Park name]. When it first opened up. I didn’t use it as much. But over the past summer, a lot of us got together, primarily, you know, the African-Americans that were in the building. That wasn’t the goal, it just so happened that way.

**Theme 3: Sense of Belonging Literature- Subtheme: Fit**

Students participating in this study believed they fit into the park’s culture and purpose. The students felt they could see themselves as a crucial part of the park’s culture. This study defined fit as
the perception that their characteristics complement the system or the environment. As such, students in each interview repeatedly indicated a level of fit within the park in this case. They believed themselves to be the demographic that the park was intended for.

Participant 6 stated,

I noticed that oftentimes you see different types of people going around the park, even if it might just be newcomers or different people from the buildings around. Sometimes you even see people that often go to the park. So, you know, you can explore and see people that fit the demographic that you’re a part of. And also, you can see all the new features that they’re currently renovating or trying to add in place. And it also brings you to other stretches of [City]. So, when you’re walking around, you start seeing different areas of [City] you haven’t seen maybe from a distance or even up close.

Participants informed the researcher that they felt comfortable and supported in the park, in this case, given their identities and the surrounding community, especially when utilizing the park with like-minded individuals. Participant 4 stated, “There is a comfortability and being able to express that comfortability within a group of people that either look like me or can relate to things that I’ve done.“

Participant 34 shared, “Because we’re young, there’s certain music that we like to listen to that the older generation may not. So, it just felt nice to just be authentically ourselves.” Participants indicated that their social groups also contributed to this fit within this circumstance, and they felt alike with those who also use the park and participate in similar activities. Activities and sports were a recurrent subtheme that impacted students' sense of belonging and played an integral role, making it subtheme four.
Theme 4: Recreational Space Literature- Subtheme: Activities and Sport

Many of the interviewed students indicated that the activities and sports they have participated in or witnessed have influenced mainly their positive sense of belonging. The researcher defined activities and sports as a subtheme of the physical activities and sports in the park. Students expressed that if there were no activities or sports in the park, they would feel like there was nothing for them.

Participant 4 stated,

Some of my, my fitness junkie friends will go and do yoga or like, well, you know, we’ll walk around the park a couple times and just talk and catch up or it’s a great place to just meet up with your friends and just debrief about what has happened during the day and just to get that fresh air and get out of the apartment or like when you’re when you’re out of class.

Some quotes relevant to the park’s proximity to campus inspired students to want to be out of their dwellings and in the park space. Student participants indicated that they felt the physical space lent itself to fostering an active lifestyle for them and their peers. Participant 34 stated, “So I just love that it’s a multi-purpose space. It just makes it easier to get things in there and introduce the community to different things.”

Despite students’ busy schedules, they felt that the space’s openness and attractiveness meant that they would be able to enjoy themselves. Over time, students who had been at the park since its construction deemed its addition a positive contribution to the Neighborhood 4 community.

Participant 34 shared,

Sometimes from the sixth floor, you can see people playing soccer out there and I’m like, man, I wish I had some friends out there, like free time to just go out there and just play sports with my
friends. That’s been a long time. So being able to use it, [Park name] over the summer to play kickball and football and just hang out and just have a good time.

Participant 6 stated,

I feel that my sense of belonging would be impacted [if I had time to use the park more]. I feel like I would feel more at home in [City] since before it was built. I was there in the dorms, so it was kind of like a little enclosed space. But now that it’s been introduced, I’ve been able to go outside more, kind of see other people around the community just doing everyday activities like walking their dog. Maybe you see people playing soccer and you can even join in on those people, maybe have a conversation. So, I feel like it makes me feel like [City] is a place that I can call home.

Neighborhood Stakeholders

The researcher interviewed five neighborhood stakeholders individually and completed a facilitated conversation with 11 neighborhood stakeholders about their sense of belonging utilizing the recreational space in this study. The park in this study was established as a community engagement space to tie in Neighborhood 4, the institutions of higher education, and the city stakeholders. The research highlighted many themes, but, this section will focus on four themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews and facilitated conversation.
**Theme 1: Community Engagement- Subtheme: Community Commitment**

Participants in the neighborhood stakeholder group were engaged through community stakeholders and organizations. As such, the researcher began the interviews by soliciting insight regarding their sense of belonging by utilizing the park as a neighborhood stakeholder to the neighborhoods in this case. Neighborhood stakeholders immediately associated the park with the institution of higher education despite there being little provided information about the institutional involvement in the park in this case. Many of the neighborhood stakeholders expressed their perceived commitment to the community from the park operators, neighborhood 4, and higher education institutions, which largely impacted their sense of belonging utilizing the park and how they felt the park culture had changed in their experiences.

Participant 26 shared,

> I personally haven’t seen anything come out in the community to tell their members about this new space and welcome to the next space or invite them to the new space. It would be nice to see maybe a community event in that space, letting the people that live there know that this is their space too, and they are welcome to use it as they want. But right now, it’s just not giving that it is for them.

Participants expressed that they were missing a level of commitment to the community and purpose of the recreational space in the park operation and opening and that they, as stakeholders, wanted to work together to commit to making the space into one that was welcoming for this community.

Participant 30 stated,

> I think it’s, uh, it’s a way of building commitment. a lot of times we don’t have something to own and when you do, you start to create, if the right people are involved, you start to build the
commitments. Like one of those things, right? It’s like a marriage, right? And initially, you know, you go through these rough patches of a relationship and that’s us building. That’s part of what you’re doing. That relationship starts to get, you know, has some ups and downs and that’s clarity and understanding. That’s where you are, right? and then once that involvement gets close enough and that niche gets strong enough, it then builds a commitment like no other.

Neighborhood stakeholder participants indicated that the lack of promotion and awareness that the community has regarding the park and its purpose is a direct result of a lack of commitment by the park and institutional authorities. Participants believed that there must be a commitment to the community for their sense of belonging to be supported and that park management seems more committed to bringing in new people than engaging neighborhood stakeholders.

Participant 27 shared,

I feel like some of the things that I’ve seen that before, they might be... the events, to me, if they were directly for the community- it didn’t they didn’t do a good job of promoting it to the community. I want to say they had like, was it a farmer’s market or something there? It was like something that they had where people were set up, but even in that set up, it didn’t look like something that people from [Neighborhood 2] are going to. It looked like something you might see in [predominately White neighborhood] or something.

In this case, participants in the neighborhood stakeholder group have been entrenched in the community and have close relationships with neighborhood 4 and the park. Because of this involvement, they have indicated a level of commitment that has affected their desire to participate in the park culture.

Participant 26 disclosed,
There are a lot of groups and organizations that mean well and want to help, but a lot of times it ends up being information sessions. They’re getting all this data; they’re talking about it and stuff. But what is actually going to come of it? What is going to be what’s going to be done? Is this just something to get people riled up and then we just leave it alone, You know, is there going to be a change made in the future? …I’ve sat on boards and things and have seen it for myself. You know, people mean well, but they may not necessarily follow through.

**Theme 2: Recreational Space- Subtheme: Park Construction**

Many participants in the study mentioned the park construction and its impact on their sense of belonging and whether they would feel comfortable utilizing the park in this study. Most of the neighborhood stakeholders indicated an appreciation for the construction of the memorials to those who were essential to the history of Neighborhoods 1, 2, and 3. This honorific was a necessary step for the community as they processed the changes in their community. Participant 26 stated, “You see, they tried to pay homage to the people who helped the Neighborhood become the Neighborhood.” The memorials in the park were a mixed subject amongst participants, primarily related to the construction of the remainder of the park. Many felt that the memorials were an afterthought, with more visibility brought to the City Name in lights than the memorials.

Participant 28 stated,

It’s possibly for a reason that is not noticeably- that was not ready. It’s not noticeable without being pointed out that, maybe, it is not something that’s of importance. Because if something is important, like a stop sign, you’re going to see a stop sign because it’s big and it says “stop”- it’s it’s very noticeable. Now you have to go and find what these things actually signify, the history of [Neighborhood 1] on these [honorees]. But you have to really seek it out, and if you’re not seeking it out, you never going to know.
Participant 14 shared, “If it’s dedicated to the community, why didn’t you put [Neighborhood 1]? Name it [Neighborhood 1] Park!”

Participant 9 stated, “If you can’t see the names, or the memorials when you pass by it, who’s going to stop and look with a flashlight on their phone at names on the [tributes] that night... In that area.“

It was essential to the participants that they felt as if their families and the individuals they spent time with could feel comfortable in the park. Most participants thought that youth perspectives and needs were missing in creating and constructing the space despite the park’s proximity to schools and youth recreation centers. Most participants felt that the park’s construction was intentionally “uncomfortable” (as stated by Participant 19), deliberately devoid of community culture, and purposely did not serve children and families by not having a playground or comfortable seating.

Participant 27 shared,

The bigger picture. I mean, since we being redacted-the bigger picture is gentrification, Right. So I feel like it fits right into what they’re doing. Like I said- it’s providing a safe space for the people who they want to be there and it’s putting an affront to the people that they don’t want to be there. Like, I feel like it’s doing exactly what the developers and them want it to do. If you wanted to engage the community, it would have even more of a community style park. Rather than a park that you would see in a business district or whatnot, where people just go out for a walk on their lunch break-because that’s what it looks like, is not inviting the residents.

The sign in the park for the city was a topic of consensus in the park construction. The participants indicated that the park sign was a place to attract tourists to the area. Participant 22 stated, “I’m like, it’s touristy. If you think about [City]- touristy.” Participants in the neighborhood stakeholder
group did not believe nor accept that the park’s construction was indeed for their enjoyment, nor as a space for them to connect with their community. They thought that their proximity to the park did not mean they had access or felt a positive sense of belonging to the park despite their inherent right to use the space.

**Theme 3: Place Attachment Literature- Subtheme: Neighborhood Affiliation**

All but one of the neighborhood stakeholders in this study have been closely associated with the neighborhoods for more than 4 years. Although all of the participants in the neighborhood stakeholder group were familiar with the neighborhoods in this study, one of the primary impacts on the sense of belonging of these stakeholders and their behavior towards the park was due to their affiliation with the neighborhoods in the study. All stakeholders indicated a positive feeling towards their neighborhood and felt they were supposed to represent it. Each participant held themselves to be a product of and for their community.

Participant 26 shared,

> My role is to help the people that originated in this community, that live in this community, do not feel like they’re pushed out to succeed and to make sure that they have whatever they need in life. I push for academic excellence for them. Just them learning and gaining knowledge so that they can stay in their community if they want to or have more for themselves and the ability to move out and, you know, progress in life.

Participant 30 stated,

> I actually went back to where I felt like I had a place somewhat, which is the [Neighborhood 1]...So watching myself develop these kids and watching myself help these kids get to another level of thinking and bring some clarity to their thinking at their position right now in their lives.
Participant 28 disclosed,

Even though you have parks like [Neighboring Park]. You know, I frequented that when I was younger, so I feel a little bit more sense of belonging and connection to that park because it is historical and it is somewhere that we that we went to since we were little and you would see people from all different walks of life there. So....

The neighborhood affiliation sub-theme came into play with participants lamented that their neighborhoods had been re-arranged through the addition of the park and Neighborhood 4.

**Theme 4: Spatial Justice- Subtheme: Feelings of Exclusion**

The participants’ identity with their neighborhood produced additional information from the spatial justice theoretical frames. Feelings of exclusion are defined as participants’ feeling as if they have been denied access to a space. Participants indicated that they experienced feelings of exclusion in Neighborhood 4, primarily due to their race and economic status. In those feelings, they demonstrated ambivalence about whether this park did anything to combat that. Participant 26 stated, “I’m used to being in spaces where you may not necessarily always see people like me... But it was like if you wandered, you know, into the university-college space, it was kind of a no-no.”

Participant 27 stated,

I think that’s a safe space for those students. They made an area for the students to feel safe once they come out of their dorms and things to do. Like I say, even though it’s just a street over from [Neighborhood 1]-parallel to [Neighborhood 1]. They’ve made it in a way that it makes them more comfortable and makes the community not feel so comfortable.

The neighborhood stakeholders who indicated their feelings of exclusion related to the park all spoke of ways they have been excluded from their neighborhoods as the park was constructed and the
campus was opening. One participant stated that the children they worked with had been instructed that they could not play with the interactive installations for fear that they would break it.

Participant 27 stated,

They’re just playing, they’re not trying to break into anything. They’re playing with the space that they have. They pushed out residents and businesses in order to build to build on top of those spaces. So I’m sure that’s exactly what it [the park] signifies. I don’t have a deep connection to that, but I’m sure others do. But I feel as though, that it, that it’s exactly that that it does feel like- that it does represent. Okay, “this is what they pushed us out for”. So if you push us out for that- then you might not even want us here.

Both Students and Stakeholders

Both students and neighborhood stakeholders group emerged as a third group in the research. The researcher did not anticipate the formation of the third group, and its exploration is something not currently represented in the research literature. The results from this group highlighted many themes, but, this section will focus on four themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews and facilitated conversation.

Theme 1: Recreational Space Subtheme: Social Development

Participants who were fit both inclusion criteria of this study were placed into a third group- the “both Student and Stakeholder” group. Individuals in this group indicated a close stakeholder relationship with neighborhoods 1,2,3, 4, and 5, but were also solely enrolled at the downtown campus and living in neighborhood 4 within the last two years. Individuals expressed their desire to develop socially, and facilitate the social development of others, as an impact to their sense of belonging utilizing the case park.
Participant 3 stated,

I see a role in my communities to kind of, like, spread the word almost because, you know, students, there are sometimes activities here that students are not aware of. And so kind of like saying to a friend, hey, you, you know, there's the, an event here at the park here, do you want to go? So it's kind of like spreading the word because it's not you putting a flier in the in the wall is not suffices enough. But so just me spread the word about the different type of events that they have.

Participant 31 stated,

So, you know, if you go there and you're able to connect and build relationships with- you're able to go there and build connections with other people that you might not have seen on a day to day basis or someone that you might have not been able to see in your classes or in the community or something like that.

Participants shared that they have an expectation to develop socially through community interaction, and when asked to detail why they feel that individuals don’t use the park more often, most couldn’t pinpoint why they don’t. Participant 29 stated, “I know there's a lot of, all of the apartments around even like [Student Housing] with the student living and for it to have that many apartments and that many people that stay around, it's honestly shocking that not many people that I don't see a lot of people out there.”

Theme 2: Recreational Space Subtheme: Activities and Sport

Participants in both stakeholder and student group indicated that the groups of people that were in the park were inherently welcoming for them. They utilized sports and recreation as a negotiating tactic that
worked for them to support their neighborhood stakeholders along with themselves personally. They indicated that the access to recreational activity or sport is a support in the park.

Participant 3 stated,

I know that every time I go there, there's always like a group of boys trying to play soccer. I don't play soccer, but, I'll watch and I'll make jokes and whatnot and then, you know, people walking their dogs, they're just friendly. So there's no there's no bad vibe. I guess I like that. So, yeah, the people there are great, just great- I wish there were more of us... Like sometimes like the soccer players I was telling you earlier, sometimes they'll invite me to play like, Oh, you want to play, You know, like, Nah, I think I'm a sit here and watch you. But. But I know just because that initial like you want to play that means like, Oh, they want me involved. Mm hmm. Even though I'm kind of the scaredy cat. But I already know that people are including me in the activities that helped in the park. Right. So it's a security.

This negotiating tactic is one that comes up as a significant outcome of this study, which imparts that the access to recreation is a hallmark of the sense of belonging for these types of engagement spaces and has a great opportunity to mobilize a type of community seamlessness. There will be more discussion around these experiences in Chapter 5.

Participant 31 stated,

As far as me like reading in the park or I know that this green area right between where the student housing is like smack dab in the middle where the [ACADEMIC BUILDING] is. The [ACADEMIC BUILDING] building is it's right across that area could be used for like reading in a park. I know one time they had like a [UNIVERSITY] tailgate there recently. So it just seems as if there's always something there revolving around [UNIVERSITY]. So if the goal is to get community engagement, I would suggest opening up for activities as far as like kids, because a
lot of kids use that area. As you know, the downtown rec center is right there, but it’s currently closed so that everything is be used to draw in more kids as well as pull kids from the school that's right There- [SCHOOL NAME]. The K-8 school.

**Theme 3: Community Engagement Subtheme: Understanding of Personal Role in Community**

One of the differences between both student and stakeholder group and the student group is there is a communicated understanding of their personal role in their community by the both group. All the participants in this group communicated a decision to represent their community in ambassador form.

Participant 31 stated,

I try to meet them where they're at. So if they're students, I try to, you know, give them insight from both perspectives, but I try to tie in with them to where they're at. So if they're a student, I try to keep it there, but I also give them insight on, you know, other people may not feel as if they- so I try to get them to use it as an advantage. I feel like it's just an open space and I feel like they did a really good job by making it pretty, but I feel like it could be more. But it does allow it can allow for people to get together and fellowship there to communicate and give people just another place to feel safe space as well, to communicate and be free of who they are.

**Theme 4: Studentification & Community Engagement Subtheme: Disconnection with Community**

Participants detailed that they feel as if they are translating their experiences with the park between students and their fellow neighborhood stakeholders. The participants tended to merge both the park into their whole experiences with neighborhood 4 in general, and often used the park experience and neighborhood 4 experience interchangeably. However, primarily, these participants had fully integrated themselves into the campus environment while using the park and identified themselves
as students first looking after and supporting other students, Participant 29 stated, “I see myself as a student- as a resident”. One participant indicated that youth in her neighborhood that she grew up in, she saw as future students to the campus so she wanted to keep her role as a student mentor, Participant 31 stated, “I will look at myself as a mentor or as someone that the kids feel safe with, communicating with someone that can advocate for them.” Because of this, participants indicated that they identified fully with their student identity, but, not necessarily that of their neighborhood that marks their stakeholder status.

Participant 29 stated,

   I feel like that because the students, they- I'm trying to think because I know I feel like there's a difference between, like, the students there and the community-like non students. The students, because students, they may not be there like as often as the lot of the people I see in the apartments nearby. So, they don't really some of them just commute to school and then go back home. And probably pass it every day going to work or just on their everyday commutes.
Table 4 Themes per group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Theme- subtheme 1</th>
<th>Theme- subtheme 2</th>
<th>Theme- subtheme 3</th>
<th>Theme- subtheme 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Recreational space - wellness</td>
<td>Recreational space - social development</td>
<td>Sense of belonging - fit</td>
<td>Recreational space - activities and sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood stakeholders</td>
<td>Community engagement - community commitment</td>
<td>Recreational space - park construction</td>
<td>Place attachment - neighborhood affiliation</td>
<td>Spatial justice - feelings of exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Recreational space - Social Development</td>
<td>Recreational space - Activities and Sport</td>
<td>Community engagement - Understanding of Personal Role in Community</td>
<td>Studentification &amp; Community engagement - Disconnection with Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions and co-occurrences

Overall, participants in the student comparison group demonstrated a higher communicated sense of belonging regarding the park compared to the neighborhood stakeholders. Participants who belonged to both groups had a more negative sense of belonging than neighborhood stakeholders but higher than neighborhood stakeholders with no student relationship to the campus. Yet, for each of these themes, there were additional considerations for the co-occurrence, or presence or absence of each themes for each of the comparative groups (Blanchet, Cazelles, &Gravel, 2020). By examining the presence and absence of the themes among the comparative groups, there can be some inferences made about the relationships between these groups. For example, according to the outcomes of the literature, the neighborhood stakeholders in this group did not specifically reference about the “right to the city”, a tenet of spatial justice literature, whereby all residents have a right to the city and its resources. In practice, the stakeholders indicated that they believed that they have a right to their neighborhoods because they lived there, but largely due to their domain and attachment. It’s interesting...
that the stakeholders do not view this as a result of their inherent rights, but, one of ownership and proximity to the recreational space in this case. By contrast, all three groups valued safety as a necessary part of their sense of belonging, and this factor co-occurred in all groups as an impact to their sense of belonging. In Table 5, you will find information related to each theme and subtheme and how they are defined in the research in the codebook. That codebook provided the answers to the research questions via the recommendations in Table 6. In the final chapter of the dissertation, I will begin discussion on the relevance of these limitations, future research opportunities, and recommendations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Code definition</th>
<th>Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>Disconnection with community</td>
<td>Participant feels no connection with place or community.</td>
<td>Crisp (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant spends significant time by themselves.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Siloing</td>
<td>The belief that the college should be open to the community</td>
<td>Rodin (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>The expansion of the college campus into the community.</td>
<td>Lawrence-Hughes (2014); Smith (2009); Wiewel et al. (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campus expansion</td>
<td>The belief that there must be a commitment to the community</td>
<td>Patterson et al. (2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community commitment</td>
<td>Belief that the city and campus leadership are mal-intentioned.</td>
<td>Martin et al. (2005); Fitzgerald et al. (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distrust</td>
<td>The feeling of surveillance and targeting by police and others</td>
<td>Hancock (2016); Jenkins (2021); Sloan et al. (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over-policing</td>
<td>Knows who they are and what they contribute</td>
<td>Bernardo et al. (2012); Chavis &amp; Wandersman (1990); Jones (2002); Manzo and Perkins (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding of personal role in community</td>
<td>Remembrance of a place</td>
<td>Altman and Low (2012); Pan and Ryan (2007); Gómez-Baggethun and Barton (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place attachment</td>
<td>Memories of a place</td>
<td>Affiliation to specific subgroups within the neighborhood</td>
<td>Altman and Low (2012); Manzo and Perkins (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighborhood affiliation</td>
<td>Participant notices the presence of animals in the park and attribute it to its construction and centering of those with dogs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational space</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>The physical activities and sport in the park.</td>
<td>Derived In-Vivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities and sport</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gomez (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Subtheme</td>
<td>Code definition</td>
<td>Citations</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreational space</td>
<td>Collaborative Governance</td>
<td>A relationship whereby those supervising the park are in a relationship with those who use the park. Belief that the space erases the community presence through the construction of the space*</td>
<td>Besenyi et al. (2015); Cheng and Sturtevant (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erasure</td>
<td>Physical characteristics of the park i.e.: construction and components. Park policies and construction.</td>
<td>Hill (2022); Perry and Wiewel (2015); Scott (2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park construction</td>
<td>Park Management</td>
<td>Supervision by the City, not from community. The park acts as a social connector to others.</td>
<td>Arni and Khairil (2013). Cranz and Boland (2004); Solecki and Welch (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social development</td>
<td>Wellness</td>
<td>To believe that using recreational space is a part of good health The act of resisting exclusionary environments. The perception that their characteristics articulate with or complement the system or environment.</td>
<td>Fabos (2004); Gomez et al. (2015); Walker (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>Counter-resilience</td>
<td>The act of resisting exclusionary environments. The perception that their characteristics articulate with or complement the system or environment. The belief that how someone feels can change due to their circumstances</td>
<td>S. Marsh and Wilkerson (2021); Soja (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hagerty et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fluidity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carter (2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative sense of belonging</td>
<td>To feel that they do not belong in the park The participant feels as a bystander or non-participant.</td>
<td>Hagerty and Patusky (1995); Ma (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant as observer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Derived In-Vivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive sense of belonging</td>
<td>To feel that they belong in the park</td>
<td>Hagerty and Patusky (1995); Ma (2003) Jørgensen (2010); Painter (2013); Pipitone and Jović (2022); Strayhorn (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racial identity</td>
<td>Knowing ones racial identity and how it appears to others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Subtheme</td>
<td>Code definition</td>
<td>Citations</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury</td>
<td>Hagerty and Patusky (1995); Powers et al. (2022)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hatcher and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self- acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant relies on acceptance of others</td>
<td>Stubbersfield (2013); O’Keeffe (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self esteem</td>
<td></td>
<td>How someone feels about themselves</td>
<td>Lee and Robbins (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us vs. Them</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict of community versus non-community</td>
<td>Mahar et al. (2013); Painter (2013); Pipitone and Jović (2022); Wiewel and Perry (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valued involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>the experience of feeling valued, needed, accepted</td>
<td>Hagerty et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial justice</td>
<td>Respectability</td>
<td>Participants feel that they must act a certain way in order to be recognized as valuable.</td>
<td>Grundy (2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to the city</td>
<td>The belief that everyone has a right to be anywhere in their community.</td>
<td>Soja (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of exclusion</td>
<td>Feeling as if they have been denied access to a space</td>
<td>Soja (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racial disparity</td>
<td>The difference in treatment and feelings based on race. The belief that everyone should have equal access to the park space for what they want to do in the park.</td>
<td>Fainstein (2014); Soja (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social equity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loukaitou-Sideris (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studentification</td>
<td>Centering the student need</td>
<td>The belief that student needs are prioritized over the community's The park culture is different than the community prior to its construction</td>
<td>Ehlenz and Mawhorter (2022); Moos et al. (2019); Pickren (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in park culture</td>
<td>The park culture is different than the community prior to its construction.</td>
<td>Hubbard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family flight</td>
<td>The departure of families from the community.</td>
<td>Sage et al. (2012b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Subtheme</td>
<td>Code definition</td>
<td>Citations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial incentivization</td>
<td>Changes in the financial demographic of the community</td>
<td>Moos et al. (2019)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>The construction of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing changes</td>
<td>Garmendia et al. (2012)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-Unit, more expensive Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students moving in and out of the community according to the academic calendar.</td>
<td>Hubbard (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration of students</td>
<td>The mix of different identities in the area</td>
<td>Sage et al. (2012a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social mix</td>
<td>View of the university as the developer and owner of physical space</td>
<td>Magdaniel (2013); Oh (2017); Perry and Wiewel (2015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Significance of Findings

The problem addressed in this study reflects the sense of belonging of campus stakeholders in public recreational space. Whereby diverse groups of stakeholders converge to engage in knowledge centers and engage with each other in the pursuit of holistic live, work, and play. In addition to the four themes selected for each comparison group, there were additional topics presented in the results that lend themselves to the conversation surrounding campus adjacent public-recreational space and the sense of belonging of the stakeholder groups. The research questions were addressed in several ways and provided answers to questions about modern concepts within the conceptual framework. Primarily, there are differences between the results between comparison groups. Students found that they had an immediate positive sense of belonging utilizing the park in this study. Neighborhood Stakeholders indicated a negative sense of belonging utilizing the park, so much so, that they did not use the park, nor feel a place attachment to the park. Individuals in the both-student and neighborhood stakeholder group had a positive sense of belonging, yet, felt that they were responsible for influencing the social culture surrounding the park through use of the park. This study is one of few looking at the sense of belonging of participants in the conceptual framework in the United States in an urbanized context as early in the cycle of studentification. Therefore, it is important to explore implications of future research in this case. This chapter shares the conclusions of this study, policy and practice recommendations, and future study opportunities.

Implications of recreational Space

One of the key differences in the results was the relationship of recreational space concepts to the sense of belonging of students. Students in both groups of comparison indicated access to recreational space as a large impactor of their sense of belonging. This result indicates that students may
continue to utilize the park as long as they believe they will continue to have access to recreation, specifically, as long as they feel they can spend time with their friends in the park space. This implication could mean that as institutions and localities explore utilizing campus adjacent recreational spaces, they consider incorporating recreation, sport, and wellness into future engagement opportunities. It is key to note, that students did not indicate evidence of this same impacts of with place attachment or community engagement. Likewise, neighborhood stakeholders, while indicating that they did in fact use recreational space, they did so in spaces other than the park in this study which held more traditional uses in their neighborhood of affiliation. Most participants in the neighborhood stakeholder group had not used or spent significant time in the park because they were finding their needs met elsewhere.

Implications of race

Due to the history of the park area and its relationship to the hope of economic rejuvenation, it is important to discuss blackness as it relates to prior definitions of studentification, place attachment, community engagement, and recreational space in urbanized areas. The area surrounding the campus is predominately Black. Chapter 1 discussed how this area in this city was historically redlined, marginalized, and subject to financial disenfranchisement- yet, the construction of this college and university campus, park, and neighborhood 4 all bring with it the attraction of economic incentivization for specific groups. The neighborhood stakeholders in this study do not feel they are beneficiaries of this economic incentivization due to their race. Participant 25 stated, “we are, the black, the blackest of downtown [City], where we were pushed into because, you know, we couldn't crossover [Interstate]. That that is now been stripped out. And they’ve done a phenomenal job because [Nearby park] is now pretty much where it's acceptable for black [City] to start because all up through the [Sports Arena 1] it has been gentrified; it's currently being gentrified.”

The belief that the park is a hollow reminder of this history is described with the results of this study. While, prior studies on studentification in the literature review focused on areas with deeply
evident studentification, much older college campuses, and white middle-upper class students. Most of the students in the student and both student and stakeholder groups in this study were black making it one of few studies where the student population is as diverse. Therefore, it was interesting that the perception of the students from the neighborhood stakeholders was one of whiteness and gentrification, yet, the students in the study did not view themselves as such. For all groups, Blackness is discussed by the participants as a core identity, and they believed that their blackness affected how they interacted not only with the park in question, but also with the institutions of higher education. Blackness and how race interplays with Neighborhood 4, in contrast to the older neighborhoods in this study is one of a different world from where they come from.

Participant 27 disclosed,

I don't know if it's just coming from a black man or my thought process being in the neighborhood. It's just that I have to turn it on regardless when I'm in that space.” The view is that the park in this study and neighborhood 4 is largely white and uninviting to them as black people. Participant 9 stated, “The [Park Name] is white. It isn’t our cultured enough. But you know it will get there- I hope. Like I said, it seems like this... It's new, but it's not. It's been around for a while now. I just... We didn't expect this to roll out the way that- I at least didn’t.

The presence of race in the views of the park and the campus have many implications for fulfilling the aims of neighborhood 4 and to their sense of belonging in the park. Of the participants who had a student relationship to the park, racial disparity was coded twice, whereby racial disparity was coded 14 times in the both student and stakeholder, and, neighborhood stakeholder groups. This fact could be attributed to a level of acclimation that students have to the park environment that neighborhood stakeholders have not yet experienced. Participant 28 stated, “I don't think I necessarily feel like I belong there. It'll just be like, oh, this fancy park. It's just this fancy park to me where a lot of,
you know, other races frequent that are new to the area, it wouldn't really mean anything for me or impacts me in any way.”

Studentification traditionally focuses on the relationship between white students and diverse neighborhoods. Yet, community engagement literature does explore ideas related to race and the need for institutions of higher education to facilitate access for diverse groups (Kuh, 2012). This study is unique because of its examination of students who are utilizing connector spaces who are just as diverse as their neighbors. Yet, neighborhood stakeholders still held the perception that their blackness is erased from the park and hidden from view because of the agenda of the developers and neighborhood stakeholders.

Participant 25 stated,

“|I'm listening to the conversation about how outsiders have brought in money, resources, whatever, and they have consolidated all the individual neighborhoods into one [Neighborhood 1], when in actuality, the people who live in these neighborhoods, it's not one [Neighborhood 1], and the one [Neighborhood 1] that outsiders have constructed is not even in this space. That really was [Neighborhood 1] in the first place. And that does I speak to the point of gentrification. Because the other thing regarding this particular park, I pulled up the park and you would think that if it has [Statues], they would have images of the... I think someone just earlier said the "paper pushers". The acceptable people that outsiders wanted to deal with. You would think that they would at least have images of these people there”.

While this erasure did not appear as a predominant theme in the participants narratives across groups, it was interesting that this theme did not appear in the student and both student and stakeholder group data. Students felt that they themselves fit, whereby they could see themselves in the park. This is a key difference. The participants mentioned consistently that they did not know the park
had memorials. In fact, most participants did not know about the statues in the park until the researcher pointed out the park information. Participants indicated a lack of knowledge around the race of the honorees is deliberate, in an effort to attract white students, faculty, and employees to the area. Acceptability politics was a factor that they believed erased their position in their community. The neighborhood stakeholders believed that the individuals chosen for these monuments were people who held idealized boot-strapped stories, rather than the ones who were on the ground building their neighborhoods. The choices of the institution, developers, and park managers participants viewed as deliberate and tied to their goals of change their neighborhoods.

**Implications of trust**

Trust as a factor to participants sense of belonging was a common theme within the study. The differences between groups and their trust of the institution even affected the success of the recruitment strategy. The research recruitment began in June of 2023 and did not conclude until December 2023. The reason for this delay can be attributed to distrust of the recruiter and hesitation to engage in formal research. Participants in the study indicated that there is a lack of follow through when they do commit their time to supporting research and community development initiatives, therefore, they do not feel inclined to participate in research. There are several instances that detail evidence of mistrust of outside entities and of the park itself-

- In one instance, the researcher was told directly that they were Googled to confirm they were Black prior to inviting her to a meeting.
- One individual indicated that the study compensation was too low and that they would complete the study requirements for $100.
- One individual stated that the study looked like the police- so they would not be participating.
• Another individual stated that they don’t trust [University], next thing they knew their information would be used to kick them out their house.

• Participant 17 stated, “I’m banned from over there, high key. I couldn’t go if I wanted to...my friends and I have never had a good time.”- This participant felt that after an encounter with the campus police, he felt that he could no longer visit the park.

The overall sentiment is that there is a lack of trust between neighborhood stakeholders and the institutional stakeholders, and that can prove troubling for future relationships between campus, community, and local government. Chapter 2 discussed that in other cases where there was a level of distrust expressed early on, it led to a lack of openness and nervousness in government, families leaving the campus neighborhood community, and disorder in the campus adjacent environment. The literature showed that trust is crucial to building a psychological sense of community, and high levels of social capital is present when neighbors know and trust each other and neighboring institutions (Gomez et.al, 2015, Harnik, 2006, Siegfried, 2007). The results of this study support the assertion that this recreational space could play a key role in maintaining this trust and supporting all participants’ sense of belonging and the development of a holistic community.

There are key takeaways from the study related to trust as an influence on participants’ sense of belonging and how it impacts community behavior. The results suggest that most students held an aspirational view of the park in this study, as a space that transformed and could transform their neighborhood. While most of the neighborhood stakeholders held a pessimistic view of the park, lacking the feelings of inclusion that most students felt. Those who held feelings of exclusion indicated that over policing, disorder, & physical exclusion have all contributed to their feelings. Participant 26 disclosed, “Going over there and seeing a police officer or, you know, security over there, it’s going to intimidate you because it already looks like a space that isn’t for you”. Neighborhood stakeholders stated that there
is a barrier that they believe exists between the campus and points of recreation, for example, “we had the police come several times to the building and say, hey, kind of keep them over here, you know, so you don't get that sense of belonging when you are made to feel like you have to leave a space that you may have grown up your whole life being able to use.”

Participant 27 shared,

I'm telling you, a lot of times we've been talked to, "Hey, can you help with the kids?" Or can we get campus police to help with it? And they'll say like, the kids are causing trouble. But I'm like, they could be causing trouble, at the same time, I'm like, I think that they're uncomfortable with kids just playing randomly, you know, they just ride their bikes. They may be racing or stuff and the kids and they're not causing trouble. That's literally what they do... They're just playing, they're not trying to break into anything. They're playing with the space that they have.

**Implications of Park Construction**

The results related to the construction of the park provided insight to the construction of a park and how it could support participants’ sense of belonging. While the research clearly supported this hypothesis, the results shared that the types of spaces needed in spaces like the park in this study, i.e. campus-adjacent, newly developed, public recreational space. It could be that the participants’ sense of belonging is a symptom of the creation of neighborhood 4 itself. The results of the study appear to highlight key differences in the outlook of participants towards the recreational space and their neighborhoods proximity to their lives and livelihood.

One of the students in the study discussed how they moved from their home state to the area, and in that transition appreciated how beautiful and clean the park was. This beauty attracted them to the park and connected them to the community because they had never had a clean park with green grass before. Consistent with the literature (Lund, 2003) students indicated that the proximity to the
park provided a beautiful space for them to practice wellness, develop socially, and connect with their peers. Students believed the park construction served their needs— for now. The park had lawn chairs, lights, and was a great place to landmark downtown. For example, participant 4 stated, “It’s very beautiful at night. And then they have that that new light shows by the letters that just started a couple a few weeks ago. It's also a great photography spot. I've seen lots of photographers and models take pictures by the [City] sign, and it's kind of like a landmark, in my opinion, to the downtown area because it's just so captivating.” This study highlights the importance of creating visually dynamic spaces that attracts new people to connector spaces, this however could be in direct conflict with the maintenance of existing spaces that have a high level of place attachment. The park also has a lot of wide-open green space so for students the park created opportunity for personal space. This wide-open space allows for the connection of large groups, sports and activities, and public events. The city in this case uses the park as a venue for events, where organizations may reserve the space for private events. However, participants indicated that the events are physically exclusive, requiring them to purchase tickets to events and there is no shaded area that would inspire them to remain at events. Literature indicates that the play, park maintenance, and park design is defined differently for different people based on needs, class, and identity. It is interesting to note that those around the park may not belong to organizations who rent the park, but the park contains memorials to those individuals from the neighborhood. Participants indicated across subgroups in their conversations that they noticed the events that happened in the park space, but, often did not have access to those events and therefore wanted more events to happen. It should be noted that the construction of the park space could be reimagined to allow for multiple types of events to occur without excluding stakeholders to this park.

The dog park came up in the research as a point of indignation for neighborhood stakeholders and admiration for students. Dog parks in recreation offer opportunities for living spaces to blend into recreation but is highly depending on individual perception and identity (Urbanik & Morgan, 2013). One
point of note in the results is the awareness of dogs versus the awareness of the memorial statues in the park. The results of this study indicate that most participants had an awareness of the dog park and presence of dogs in the space, yet most participants in the individual interviews were not aware of the memorials to the neighborhood in the park. The presence of animals in urban spaces is sometimes symbolic. Prior literature states that individuals, specifically black and unhoused people, may draw comparison between dog owners and white people (Tissot, 2011). In urban spaces, dog owners must walk their dogs and are often in public spaces. For this park, with the multiple unit dwellings, it makes sense that there is a dog park, but the participants would rather recreational opportunities, i.e: a playground for youth, pool, or organized recreation and events. Construction of a park at this stage in the development of the area in the case may or may not be feasible, so the next section of this study will explore realistic recommendations given this phase of the park’s construction and future studies.

**Theoretical implications**

In terms of the themes present in the literature, there are many theoretical implications. These results build on existing evidence of studentification and community engagement literature. This study found that despite similar racial backgrounds between students and neighborhood stakeholders, there are differences between the sense of belonging of the groups based on their origin. Primarily, the result regarding the both students and neighborhood stakeholders group This result suggests that students with ties outside of the college or university setting to the community are more aware of their positionality in campus adjacent space, and therefore do not participate in the disorder that traditional students enact in studentified spaces (Woldoff & Weiss, 2018). This is a significant theoretical implication as it turns on its head the premise that students are the cause of disorder in studentified spaces, and, indicates that students desire to be community engagement can be a positive role model for those in the space. Additionally, the theoretical implication regarding the sense of belonging in newly created recreational space is largely helpful in explaining how quickly the sense of belonging can be developed or
impacted especially over time. Existing theory paints a picture of recreational space as a welcoming communal space in urbanized spaces (Thibault et al., 2004), and while that is the goal, this study proves that this is not automatic. New theory in this regard must direct localities to commit to providing not only beautiful spaces, but relevant and diverse spaces to individual community origin and need.

**Policy & Practice Recommendations**

The participants in this study proposed several recommendations during interviews and group facilitated conversation for addressing their sense of belonging and achieving community cohesion in the park. The researcher asked participants if there was anything that could be done to affect their sense of belonging using the park in this case, and, what were the primary impacts to their sense of belonging using the park. This section will highlight those recommendations along with those of the researcher. This study recommends a progressive three-step solution to addressing its results and ensuring an approach that mitigates the issues of community commitment, recreational engagement, the abandonment of youth and families, and re-imagining the park to be one that supports all stakeholders.

**Step One: Representation**

The results of this study indicate that a need for representation from the local community could improve community outlook regarding the park. However, most neighborhood stakeholder participants held a negative outlook on the park and students weren’t aware of the place significance of the park. Therefore, the third group or both neighborhood stakeholders and students would be an ideal bridge builder coalition to co-create the space through leadership positions and/or service as an advisory group for the park. This research supports the creation of a Park Advisory Board for park activities comprised of members of this group. This board would be responsible for approving and maintaining oversight and engagement of the park. This board’s mission would be to balance of private events and public access, maintain the park activity level, and support awareness of the park’s history and purpose. The board
would be comprised of individuals who have both a relationship to the institution and relationship to the neighborhoods surrounding the park. A combination of the various types of place attachment that exist in the space could be helpful to mitigating the issues presented and capitalizing on this group’s feelings of leaders in their communities. Funding for this board should come from the varied permitting and reservation fees that individual organizations pay to reserve the space and amenities. This type of funding is like that which exists in other parks in this city, whereby fees are used to subsidize park activities. In this example, fees and taxes paid by non-native organizations to the neighborhoods would go towards a fund which supports these activities. Organizations and Stakeholder groups from the neighborhoods would have preferential access to these funds to offset rental, permitting, and fees required by the city.

**Step Two: Recreation**

It is clear that both groups in this study value recreation as a means for engaging in their communities. Participants recommended implementing a formalized recreational zone to increase the sense of belonging and positively influence community behavior. The park space has an unutilized section of park that would do well as a secure playground space that would invite youth to fit in the park culture. Additionally, the formation of activity hours, like fitness or wellness classes could support a diffusion of the wellness attachments among the community. The recreational space could be enhanced by specific physical enhancements as recommended by the by adding a fenced play space, modifying flat space to include permanent tables and chairs for congregating together, and providing some level of shade to support individual leisure activities outside. The results indicate that it is imperative to make the park space somewhere where individuals feel they are welcomed, belong, and connected to their community. The parks and recreation department should endeavor to replicate existing offerings at other parks to those at this park to ensure equitable application of city resources. Participants shared that other parks in the area offered a specific need fulfilled- whether it was soccer for themselves and
their friends, or, an opportunity to commune with others, therefore structuring these opportunities makes sense to jumpstart the attachments to the space.

**Step Three: Resolution**

In the endeavor to renew the commitment to this park and its importance to the neighborhood development, this study recommends implementing an annual awareness event for the park honorees and their families. This recognition would encourage those who may be unaware, i.e.: students, residents of neighborhood 4, and those who work in the district, of the park’s purpose to learn and engage with all stakeholders. Additionally, the campus should invest in this event as an annual sponsor and support student involvement in its support to address the perception that the institution does not care nor invest in the community it is surrounded by. A similar recommendation derived from this study is to focus on education or students new to the campus through a land and labor acknowledgement. Land and labor acknowledgements serve as a unique reminder for individuals visiting, learning, and working on ancestral land to acknowledge the loss that occurs on a space. For institutions of higher education, it is crucial to not venture into a performance of this acknowledgment, but to signal to everyone in a space how this land was used and taken from communities (Wilson and Carlson, 2024). Although traditionally reserved for native and slave lands, according to this study, the expansion of the campus in this context has marked a seizure of ancestral lands and stories of the neighborhood stakeholders in this study, a land acknowledgment integrated into the discourse surrounding the institutional work in this park could improve relations. Acknowledging (via plaque, student orientation, or through events held in the park) the land and labor contributions of participants in the neighborhoods could affect positive sense of belonging in the space. Lastly, it’s important not to diminish the work and attachments that have existed in surrounding recreational spaces. The final recommendation is to invest financially in community organizations providing recreation activities to the neighborhoods to incentivize
their participation and utilization of the park in this study. This recommendation will provide opportunity for all participants to continue to see themselves as valued members of the park space.

The table below outlines all of the recommendations derived from the participants and analysis of the data.

Table 6. Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation Type: *- Participant recommendation</th>
<th>Step One: Representation</th>
<th>Step Two: Recreation</th>
<th>Step Three: Resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park Advisory Board*</td>
<td>Re-design the park with families, neighborhoods, youth, and aging population in mind*</td>
<td>Annual awareness event for park honorees*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Activity and Events Fund</td>
<td>Create structured activities and events*</td>
<td>Land and Labor Acknowledgment in Student orientation and park events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target and recruit individuals through both student and stakeholder group for ambassadorship</td>
<td></td>
<td>Invest in community recreation organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opportunities for Future Research**

The last step in the resolution of this to capitalize on the opportunities for future research surrounding the park and conceptual framework. Most studies in the prior literature are of white students, in a college-town context, outside of the United States and little is known about the themes presented in this research in the urban, ethnically diverse, and newly developed institutional context. Future research would allow the opportunity to mark the changes over time in this space give clear opportunities to
correct course or share additional narratives. Research on this subject has been limited due to the frequency of institutions establishing campus sites and the systemic erasure of historically black neighborhoods and districts (Soja, 2009). Nevertheless, this study suggests that much can be learned from institutional expansion and the collaborative governance of urban recreational spaces. Especially due to the pressure higher education institutions face to financialize and engage their community. It would be beneficial to replicate this study with other institutions and neighborhoods to discover additional trends. There are also potential additions to this paper that focus on the concept of mattering for individuals in public campus adjacent recreational spaces—“mattering is a motive: the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension exercises a powerful influence on our actions” (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Schlossberg, 1989). All individuals feel as if they matter and their presence or absence can impact their experience in community. This is a prime opportunity to determine mattering and how institutions and localities can demonstrate that their residents matter through campus adjacent urban space—specifically, how does the construction and management of the space support this mattering for individuals. Future researchers could answer the questions of when do these feelings of belonging start, end, or begin for various students and neighborhood stakeholders.

Although this study focused on proximity and place attachment, it did not focus on the unhoused population. Like students, the unhoused population do have migration patterns and are resource driven, therefore, it could be an entirely self-sustaining, longitudinal study that could address the how the recreational space impacts the sense of belonging of this group. A study that compared how this population views the park filled with students, neighborhood stakeholders, and those in the both student and neighborhood stakeholder group could be beneficial to determine the effectiveness of the recommendations. Additionally, the park construction does not have comfortable spaces, like benches,
shade, and seating, so exploration of how the park welcomes or deters the unhoused population could be supporting in the conceptual framework.

**Limitations**

The case study method has potential limitations as a research method. There is concern over the case study approach’s reliability, generalizability, and validity. However, research shows that these limitations can be addressed in many ways. The limitations in this study are impacted by the investigators’ specificity related to the protocol before collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Findings from the data were drawn from specific participant narratives relevant to the case of the [Park Name] (Yin, 2012). While these findings provide key insights into the ways that the sense of belonging is defined by participants, it does leave out a key type of applicability to any other locality outside of an urban context and with any other higher education institutional type. In this research, there is a limitation by specific bias that could occur in the research. Specifically, confirmation bias can limit this research due to the single researcher evaluating the data and the face that professionals in government and research tend to look for facts, arguments, and experiences that support their existing hypotheses, specifically in relationship to peoples’ behavior (Koriat, Lichtenstein, & Fischoff, 1980; Snyder and Cantor, 1978). This study attempted to mitigate the confirmation bias through several ways.

The researcher encouraged a critical review in the research questions. If participants were unsure how to define information, the researcher refrained from inserting personal definitions to clarify participants’ understanding. Despite the inclination of the researcher to educate and support stakeholders in this study, there was a need to focus on the meaning taken by the participants themselves in vivo. Additionally, the structured thematic analysis allowed for the participants’ thoughts to be described through the themes, therefore reducing subjectivity, and improving consistency in analysis. Throughout the research process, there was a need to understand the participants and support their knowledge production (Mkruck & Breuer, 2003).
In addition to the previously mentioned limitations, accessible literature and content surrounding the park was difficult to find in the literature review. It would have been helpful in data triangulation, to access what exists in newspapers, published content, and even student newsletters about the park in this study. However, there was not much information published that told the story of the park outside of institutional and city websites. The lack of information about the park limits the opportunity of this study to answer the research questions.

Additionally, one of the ways this study is limited is in its exploration of class, education, and income. Regrettably, the researcher did not ask participants about their education level or income and this information could have assisted in developing a more intersectional class analysis that is consistent with the existing limitations to studentification literature.

**Conclusion**

This qualitative study focuses on two major questions. Firstly, how is campus stakeholders’ sense of belonging impacted by using newly developed campus adjacent recreational space in their neighborhood? Second, to what extent does utilization of campus-adjacent public recreational space and its culture influence the surrounding community’s behavior? This study enlists two data sources including individual interviews and facilitated conversation. The study uses deductive coding and thematic analysis to determine the presence of themes through the data that was collected to provide insight into how these stakeholder groups compare in their sense of belonging in the urban context. We must continue to investigate how institutions of higher education and cities collaborate to create connector spaces, specifically around institutions of higher education and investigate how people continue to prosper throughout their changing neighborhoods. It is critical to continue to lean into the opportunities that lay ahead in solving these problems and ask critical questions.
APPENDIX A: EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH
Title of Study: A comparative case of the sense of belonging of students and neighborhood stakeholders utilizing public recreational space near an urban college campus
Principal Investigator: Briyanna Jenkins
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Thomas Bryer, PhD.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to determine an individuals’ sense of belonging in the [park name], a park in downtown [city].

What Will I Be Asked to Do?
You are being asked to participate in either a focus group or an interview. In both the focus group and the interview, you will be asked questions about your sense of belonging and experiences in the [park name]. After the focus group or interview, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic survey and review the transcript of your focus group or interview. The researcher may contact you to ask questions about the transcript. If you chose to do the focus group, you may also be invited to participate in the interview. The total estimated time for participation in this study is 3 hours.

• The focus group will take place in person at an accessible and private community location or via Zoom (you may decide which one), and it will take approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.
• The interview will take place in person or via Zoom and will take approximately one hour.
• The demographic survey will take place online after the interview or focus group and last about 5 minutes.
• After the focus group and/or interview, the deidentified transcript will be emailed for you to review. I will contact you for clarifications. This process will take between 30-45 minutes.

Data Confidentiality
The focus groups and interviews will be audio recorded by an external audio recorder or Zoom. If you do not want to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in the study. The audio recordings will be transcribed by Trint. Your audio recordings will be used by Trint based on their privacy policy. Any identifiable information that may come up during recording (names, locations, etc.) will be removed from the transcript (a typed version of the interview). All data will be kept in a secure folder via OneDrive to which only the researcher has access. To ensure confidentiality, the de-identified data will be stored separately from all identifiable data on UCF OneDrive. Per Florida law, the data, which includes the identifiable data which includes the audio recording will be stored for a minimum of five years after study closure. Each de-identified transcript will be kept indefinitely, but only the research team will have access to it.

Data Use for Future Studies
Deidentified transcripts could be used for future research studies without your additional informed consent.

Voluntary Participation
You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time without prejudice or penalty. For UCF Students: Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your relationship with UCF, including continued enrollment, grades, employment, or your relationship with the individuals who may have an interest in this study.
Participants must: Be 18 years or older. You must also either be:
1. A stakeholder in the neighborhood 1, neighborhood 2, neighborhood 3, or neighborhood 4, neighborhoods for 2 or more years
2. Or be a Downtown Campus student enrolled solely at the Downtown campus living in the neighborhood 1, neighborhood 2, neighborhood 3, or neighborhood 4 after May 2022.

Compensation: If you complete a demographic survey and either a focus group or an interview, then you will receive a $25 Amazon E-Gift Card. You will receive this via email no later than two weeks after you complete the study. If you are invited to a post-focus group interview, then you will receive an additional $25 Amazon E-Gift Card for completing this interview. You will receive this compensation two weeks after the interview.
• Please note that if you chose to do the interview first, then you will not be eligible to participate in the focus group for an additional gift card.
• To qualify for compensation, you must complete the focus group and/or interview for the entire period as well as the demographic survey.
• For participants who enroll, completion of the member checking is not required to receive compensation.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints please contact Briyanna Jenkins, Principal Investigator, PhD. Student, Public Affairs, College of Community Innovation and Education, br284450@ucf.edu, (407) 569-8153. Dr. Thomas Bryer, PhD. Faculty Supervisor, Department of Public Administration, thomas.bryer@ucf.edu (407-823-0410).

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.
EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

June 21, 2023

Dear Briyanna Jenkins:

On 6/21/2023, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Review</th>
<th>Initial Study, Initial Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>A COMPARATIVE CASE OF THE SENSE OF BELONGING OF STUDENTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPANTS UTILIZING PUBLIC RECREATIONAL SPACE NEAR AN URBAN COLLEGE CAMPUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator</td>
<td>Briyanna Jenkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB ID</td>
<td>STUDY00005310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant ID</td>
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Documents Reviewed:

- HRP-251 - FORM - Faculty Advisor Scientific Scholarly Review - SENSE OF BELONGING _ Jenkins, B.pdf, Category: Faculty Research Approval;
- HRP-254-FORM- Explanation of Research V7.pdf, Category: Consent Form;
- The Sense Of Belonging__ COMMUNICATION TEMPLATES AND SCRIPTS V6 Jenkins, B. 2023(1).docx, Category: Recruitment Materials;
- The Sense of Belonging _SOCIALMEDIA Jenkins, B V3.png, Category: Recruitment Materials;
- The Sense of Belonging- Demographic Survey.pdf, Category: Survey / Questionnaire;
- The Sense of Belonging- STUDY PROTOCOLS Jenkins, B. 2023.docx, Category: Interview / Focus Questions

Page 1 of 2   This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Coker
Designated Reviewer
APPENDIX C: SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Setting: As participants arrive, they will receive the information sheet, signed consent form, and a flyer with photos of the park in the study. For participants in Zoom, the information was provided in the chatbox, for additional participant review.

Introduction: Good Afternoon, thank you for agreeing to come to your interview today. This interview is for a research study that will attempt to describe participants sense of belonging in the [Park name]. We will discuss your thoughts and experiences on the matter. Are there any questions that I can answer for you at this time?

Format: Today, we will have a transparent, discussion of your experiences as a [student/campus stakeholder] surrounding the topic of the [Park Name]. I will be asking individual questions that can guide our talks. Due to the nature of this interview and its potential close relationship with your work, home, place of business, there may be times where you would like to censor your responses- please do not do so, because it’s important to me that we gain your perspective and lived experience. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Moreover, there are opportunities that I will take to clarify my own understanding of your responses.

Confidentiality: This interview will be recorded for preliminary analysis purposes, however, in the study, all personalized information will be redacted. In your answers, you can mention specific events or examples. I will be changing names, locations, and other identifiable details for the purposes of the study. After our interview, I will send you a copy of the transcript so that you may review for accuracy of the information. Do you have any questions before we get started?

1. I am going to ask you about the definition of sense of belonging. So the sense of belonging is- “the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment. A “system” can be a relationship or organization, and an environment can be natural or cultural.” So based on this provided definition, what does the sense of belonging mean to you? What questions do you believe need to be asked about the conversation around [park name] and your sense of belonging?
a. If provided [Ask the participant what their answer would be]
2. How do you think your sense of belonging would be impacted by using the [park name]?
3. What do you see as your role in your community?
4. How does [park name] make you want to interact with others in the campus community?
5. How do you think the [park name] fits into the bigger picture of the Neighborhood 4?
6. What do you notice about the [park name]?
7. Are there any changes to the [park name] that you feel would impact how you or your community feel about or use the park?
APPENDIX D: FACILITATED CONVERSATION PROTOCOL
Facilitated conversation Setting: As participants arrive, they will receive the information sheet, signed consent form, and a flyer with photos of the park in the study.

Introduction: Good Afternoon, thank you for agreeing to come to the facilitated conversation today. This facilitated conversation is for a research study that will attempt to describe participants sense of belonging in the [Park name]. We will discuss your thoughts and experiences on the matter. Are there any questions that I can answer for you at this time?

Format: Today, we will have a transparent, discussion of your experiences as a campus stakeholder surrounding the topic of the [Park Name]. I will be asking individual questions that can guide our talks. Due to the nature of this interview and its potential close relationship with your work, home, place of business, there may be times where you would like to censor your responses- please do not do so, because it’s important to me that we gain your perspective and lived experience. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Moreover, there are opportunities that I will take to clarify my own understanding of your responses.

Confidentiality: This group will be recorded for preliminary analysis purposes, however, in the study, all personalized information will be redacted. In your answers, you can mention specific events or examples. I will be changing names, locations, and other identifiable details for the purposes of the study.

Facilitated conversation Questions:

1. What does sense of belonging mean to you?
2. Can we talk about the [Park Name]?
3. What do you notice about the [Park Name]?
4. Looking back on the [Park Name] construction, what was your experience like during its creation?
5. How often do you or do you not use the [Park Name]? Why or why not?
6. When you think of your experiences the [Park Name], what comes to mind?
7. Do you see the [Park Name] being a popular space for your community? Why or why not?
8. How do you think the [Park Name] fits into the bigger picture of the “Neighborhood 4”? 
9. Are there any changes to the [Park Name] that you feel would impact how you feel about or use the park?

10. Has there been anything else that you feel is relevant to our conversation that I have missed?

Wrap Up- Is there anything that you would like to add to our discussion or is there anything you wish I would have asked that I didn’t ask?

Conclusion


Bryer, T., Budrytė, P., Būtkevičienė, E., Rauleckas, R., Vaičiūnienė, J., & Vaidelytė, E.. (2023). Classifying Lithuania’s active citizens and their emigration intentions. [Manuscript submitted for publication]. School of Public Administration, University of Central Florida & Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities, Kaunas University of Technology.


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