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Elements of Cohesion:

The Role of Business Improvement Districts in Sense of Community

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Abstract

The current research examines the relationship between sense of community and business improvement districts (BIDs) in urban neighborhoods. Study 1 employed the method of imagined scenarios to distinguish sense of community ratings between hypothetical neighborhoods with and without BIDs. This study found that participants in the imagined BID neighborhood scenario reported higher sense of community than those in the imagined non-BID neighborhood scenario. In Study 2, residents of two neighborhoods in Brooklyn, New York, one with a BID and one without a BID, were surveyed on their neighborhood experience and sense of community. This study found no difference in sense of community between neighborhoods. The overall findings suggest that resources of BIDs, held in isolation, can relate to sense of community, but in a neighborhood with many additional characteristics, such as susceptibility to social change or natural disaster, the presence of a BID does not necessarily contribute directly to sense of community.

Elements of Cohesion:

The Role of Business Improvement Districts in Sense of Community

As someone who grew up in a large city, I have always been fascinated by the range of neighborhood types that exist, although the differences between them are not always immediately clear from a surface-level view. One might see differences in the physical environment or the types of buildings in an area, and notice diverse populations in each neighborhood. However, one of the most defining features of a neighborhood, which you cannot necessarily see just from walking through it, is the social network that does (or does not) exist among people in the neighborhood. This is why Psychology is so important for understanding physical space, the study of which is usually in the discipline of Geography; much of what defines a community is its residents' actual experience of living in it.

There are many different types of communities: geographical, familial, economical, emotional, and so on. Feeling a strong cohesion with one's community members, also known as a sense of community, contributes greatly to high ratings of quality of life (Coleman, 1988; Helwig, Yang, Liu, & Lao, 2011; Putnam, 2000). It is, therefore, vital to determine what factors of an environment contribute to sense of community in order to promote well-being among members of that community. The factors that could contribute include broadly the physical environment such as natural spaces, density of buildings, and transportation between areas, public or private institutions such as community organizations and neighborhood associations, or individual interactions such as physical proximity and emotional connectedness. Here we will examine all of these factors, focusing specifically on one type of public institution intended to contribute specifically to community cohesion, Business Improvement Districts.

I. Sense of Community

There are many different methods that researchers have used to measure sense of community. Examining some examples of them and the situations in which they have been used can give insight into the applications of the concept of sense of community. Traditional definitions of sense of community have included a range of factors, all measured on a scale of how current community members experience them to be present. McMillan and Chavis (1986) determined four factors, which are membership (that includes localism or participation in the community), influence, needs reinforcement, and shared emotional connection. Shared emotional connection is the focus here and includes informal interaction, safety, neighboring preferences (more or less frequent interaction), and pro-urbanism (privacy). These factors can manifest as different types of interactions between community members depending on the structure of the environment and individual social distances. For instance, localism can be achieved through formal organizations, like neighborhood associations, or through informal interactions such as community bake sales, etc. Pro-urbanism, or privacy, can come about as a result of local laws, such as those put in place by homeowners' associations, which limit the amount of space in which one can have interactions. However, pro-urbanism can also be an individual choice, such as the decision whether or not to keep your door open or to sit out on your stoop, porch, or the like. Almost every facet of sense of community is subject to larger organizational decision-making, but also to individual choice.

There is research that observes levels of sense of community and its role in factors ranging from sharing immediate physical space to comparing across different geographic spaces and cultures. For instance, on a very local scale, Janowsky found a positive relationship between participation in a community health project and sense of community among vendors in small

markets in Honduras (Janowsky, 2003). Another study found a positive relationship between participation in outdoor recreation and sense of community among American college students (Breunig, O'Connell, Todd, Anderson, & Young, 2010). These studies focus mostly on the factors of interaction and participation in measuring sense of community. Some studies also compare sense of community across cultures. For instance, one study found that an individual's personal sense of community was more strongly related to stress reactions than the average of a whole group's sense of community, constant across three different cultural groups (Braun-Lewensohn & Sagy, 2011). Studies have also measured sense of community among virtual communities, especially among students. One study found that the use of instant messaging, coupled with participation in activities like school sports, was positively related to sense of community among students (Thomas, 2009). Some of this research reveals supportive qualities of sense of community, while some do not indicate such a relationship. Several of the methods used to study sense of community will be useful in this research as they show facets of sense of community not given by a basic definition and can reveal ways that sense of community specifically relates to the current study of BIDs.

Cognitive Map Analysis: One method is cognitive mapping, which allows for analysis of salient features of an environment as well as physical relationships between those features. The process of cognitive mapping allows an individual to show his use of or importance given to certain features in an environment without having to report actively on the meaning or importance of those spaces (Lynch, 1960). Downs and Stea (1973) suggest that the process of reading cognitive maps is twofold, composed of coding individual features followed by analysis of their overall structure and relationships between them. Much of cognitive mapping research has worked on comparing the physical layout of an area (including size, direction, ordinal

relationships and distances between features) with the perceived layout on the cognitive map within an individual environment (Shouela, Steinberg, Leveton, & Wapner, 1980). The outcome of this comparison between the perceived and actual distance is often referred to as distance distortion and is accepted as a method of determining the perceived connection between features to the person creating the cognitive map. Perceived distances that are closer signify more emotional salience, whereas further perceived distances signify less emotional salience in relation to the given features (Kitchin, 2002). This method, therefore, works on an implicit level to determine sense of community through perceived connections rather than explicit statements of connectedness.

Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument: Buckner's Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument (1988) is a scale that asks directly about relationships among neighbors, and specifically seeks to understand participants' personal experiences rather than a perception of the neighborhood sentiment overall, which makes it more explicit than cognitive map analysis.

Researchers have used this scale to examine connectedness of communities in both urban and rural settings, and have found that there is not a consistent difference in cohesion between the two environments (Helwig, Yang, Liu, & Yao, 2011). The Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument has also compared connectedness among individuals to whole households. This line of research found differences in cohesion between whole communities but no significant differences between individuals and households within each community (Wilkinson, 2007). Researchers have also found the scale to be appropriate and useful to measure cohesion cross-culturally, such as in East Asia (Chun-Hao, Ping-Hsiang, & Shu-Yao, 2011). This method is, therefore, a more explicit way to examine perceived connections between members of a community that is applicable across community types, environments, and cultures.

II. Social Capital

Another measure of connectedness in a community is social capital, a term coined by sociologists such as Blau (1964) and brought back into the common lexicon more recently by scholars such as Coleman (1988). Social capital is defined as “those features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993, p. 67). It is also made up of categories of qualities, similar to sense of community, including, as outlined by Putnam (2000), community organizational life (such as clubs or committees), engagement in public affairs (such as local elections or community meetings), community volunteerism, informal sociability, and social trust. According to Putnam, there are two types of social capital: bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital manifests as more exclusive, denser in-group networks, which is good for individual well-being, but may lead to negative exclusionary effects. Bridging social capital is seen in inclusive, wider whole-group networks, which is good for whole-group progress (Putnam, 2000). Woolcock and Narayan (2000) attribute differences between “bridging” and “bonding” social capital to socioeconomic levels: the lower classes rely on bonding-type networks as part of basic survival, whereas higher classes use bridging-type networks to progress even further. Another distinction between the types lies in the institutions that form them. Bonding networks include small groups such as churches or individual neighborhood associations. Bridging networks include larger agglomerations of groups, such as citywide boards or business associations.

There are other specific measures used to find levels of social capital among community members, as there are for sense of community. Below, some examples highlight the varied methods for measuring social capital.

Social Capital Assessment Tool: One common tool to measure social capital is the Social Capital Assessment Tool (from Krishna & Shrader, 1999). This measure has three parts. First there is a community profile consisting of group surveys to determine community make-up, assets, and institutions. This survey includes demographics of the population as well as types of institutions and access to natural resources in the given area. Then there is an individual household survey in two parts: thirty-nine questions related to structural social capital access (i.e. access to institutions or organizations that promote community interactions) and twenty-one questions related to cognitive social capital access (i.e. feelings of connectedness). Finally there is an organizational profile, made up of semi-structured interviews, which examines formal and informal institutions for characteristics that could contribute to building social capital.

This scale has been used to assess community cohesion cross-culturally and in communities in flux, such as migratory or immigrant communities (Smith-Morris, 2007), or communities at risk in terms of poverty or health. In many cases, the SCAT helps researchers to identify specific needs of a given community. In some at-risk communities, like urban low-income communities in Chile, for instance, researchers examined connections between social capital and health and found that higher ratings of trust and reciprocity among neighbors contributed to higher ratings of physical health (Sapag et al., 2008). Similarly, in a study of several communities in India, there was a stronger connection between community participation and access to clean drinking water in smaller, closer communities than among large districts (Motiram & Osberg, 2010).

Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods Scale of Bonding Social Capital: A scale used by one Chicago organization specifically to measure bonding social capital is the Scale of Bonding Social Capital (Brisson & Usher, 2005). The scale is administered

to individuals in a neighborhood to determine feelings of bonding social capital perceived among community members, rather than in the institutions intended to produce that feeling. All the questions in this measure ask about the overall perception of relationships in a community (i.e. the overall bonding) rather than about individuals' personal experiences. This Bonding Social Capital scale has been used to measure individuals' and families' experiences of social capital, usually in low-income urban neighborhoods. One study found strong positive relationships between participation in the community, homeownership, neighborhood stability and bonding social capital (Brisson & Usher, 2005). The scale has helped predict possible improvements for school districts based on research in Chicago neighborhoods (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010). Studies have also used this scale to find that social bonds among elderly urban populations become vital when these populations lose mobility (Oh, 2003). In similar urban neighborhoods, the Chicago Bonding Social Capital Scale found that areas with higher ratings of social networks and collective action report lower levels of violence and crime (Browning, Feinberg, & Dietz, 2004).

III. Urban Environment

In the current era, cities are known for their attractions, their architecture, and their cultural diversity. In the past there has been a sentiment that urban space is a platform for pollution and crime through overcrowding and social anonymity. Early research found that urban conditions lead to undesirable communities and poor psychological health (Milgram, 1970). However, more recent research has found equal quality of life ratings among urban and rural residents (Helwig, Yang, Liu, & Shao, 2011), though perhaps for different reasons, as outlined here. One remarkable aspect of urban life is the density of interactions. The close proximity of one's neighbors, friends, and family, as well as business transactions and co-workers, could all

contribute to creating a cohesive community. Some urban networks, such as social networks, have already been proven to contribute to a strong sense of community (Putnam, 2000).

However, many other types of networks exist in cities as a result of density and diversity of individuals, such as neighborhood associations, transportation networks, and business associations.

Unlike a suburban or rural area, it has been argued that it is the diversity among such a high concentration of people in an urban area that directly stimulates the creation of community groups based on differentiation. Louis Wirth (1938) wrote, “Although the city, through the recruitment of variant types to perform its diverse tasks and the accentuation of their uniqueness through competition and the premium upon eccentricity, novelty, efficient performance, and inventiveness, produces a highly differentiated population, it also exercises a leveling influence [across categories]” (p. 17). Given the existence of such differentiated groups, which Wirth (1938) argues are in all cities, the question becomes to what degree this diversity contributes to the specifically *urban* sense of community. Orleans (1973) argues that the characteristics that differentiate urban spaces from rural or suburban ones are the large scale of the space and the particular “personality” of a city’s cultural amenities. Many studies of urban communities focus on the specific uses people have of such urban amenities, which have cultural or social significance (Bonaiuto, Bonnes, & Continisio, 2004). If it is this diversity that sets urban spaces apart from rural ones, how do the resources of a city respond to build on the potential strengths that diversity? How do connections within groups create communities, either exclusionary or inclusive with the use of institutions such as BIDs?

IV. Principles of Social Space

According to Durkheim, the city is a symbol of social evolution; the density of cities represents the move to social order lacking in previous agricultural societies (1947). This social order manifests in both formal and informal interactions. Max Weber points out an aspect of formal interaction created through the density and diversity of urban populations. Weber (1958) writes that the city is a place where inhabitants rely on the local market and on products created within or directly surrounding that urban space. The density of capable individuals, coupled with the diversity possible through specialization that Durkheim describes, is what gives urban dwellers unique access to all of their interactions, both in production and consumption, within the same localized space. As pointed out by Wirth, the types of interactions that arise based on social class or industry type are what differentiate inhabitants into groups. Such groups can build community among members in an inclusionary or exclusionary fashion.

People also form groups based on informal connections or commonalities. Wirth (1938) calls these types of categories “informal kinship groups” because they mimic the close relations of family but come about, as aforementioned, as a result of dense and diverse interactions rather than by actual blood connections. Guest and Lee (1984) point out one way in which urban inhabitants form informal groups: through conceiving of the neighborhood in terms of spatial and social relations rather than as individual institutions, such as through positioning oneself in a public space or transportation choices. LaGory and Pipkin write about the complexities of urban social interactions, within neighborhoods as well as throughout the entire social fabric of a city. In terms of spatial relationships, they point out that physical distances between people have different connotations depending on culture (or, as the case may be, depending on individual city). Closeness in some societies may indicate connectedness, while in others it may be confrontational (LaGory & Pipkin, 1981). They analyze more specifically physical distances

between individuals during given interactions. Short physical distances represent emotional closeness, while further distances indicate formality or emotional distance.

This close analysis of physical distances between individuals is also known as Proxemics (Hall, 1966). Even more specific than LaGory and Pipkin's differentiation, Hall breaks down interactions into four major categories of distance: intimate, personal, social, and public. Hall does make cultural generalizations about acceptable distances, but he also makes connections between physical distances and specific social relationships those distances may suggest. For instance, intimate and personal distances are conceived of in limited contexts, usually appropriate only for close relationships. However, there is more variation among different social distances, often social and public distances, among close relations or strangers, in formal or informal settings (Hall, 1966). The various distances at which people can interact will become important later in examining the types of spaces that urban residents inhabit, and the distances that those spaces allow. Hall (1966) points out the dangers of imposing inappropriate distances, namely, of overcrowding in urban areas, and gives suggestions as to design solutions based on the preferences of the given area (e.g. in which neighborhoods to build high-rise apartment buildings).

V. The Neighborhood

In Burgess's classic urban theory, cities can be divided into areas based on different possible structural patterns (Burgess, 1925). The traditional city is divided into concentric zones, with the Central Business District at the very center (the oldest part of the city where the majority of business transactions take place), and residential areas developing in a ring pattern out from the center. In another pattern, areas are divided into sectors, which typically still have a central area that is the Central Business District, and the other neighborhoods develop outward

from there in vertical slices. Another typical pattern of neighborhoods is multiple nuclei, in which several different business districts, each with their own related commercial and residential areas, are spread throughout the city area (LaGory & Pipkin, 1981).

All of these neighborhood patterns develop on the basis of socioeconomic differences among areas, especially in American cities (Dwyer, 2010). Other aspects of the population's demographics in a given area can create divisions among areas into neighborhood. Proximity among residents, as mentioned in relation to physical and social distance, levels of social conformity, and the amount and types of institutional support in the area can affect the overall character of a neighborhood, which will also contribute to geographic divides between neighborhoods (LaGory & Pipkin, 1981; Putnam, 2000). Examples of these effects of demographics and social structure on actual interactions can be seen through studies of levels of neighboring, or amount of interaction among neighbors. According to Putnam (2000), levels of neighboring have declined in recent years alongside a reduction in mobility and formal social services and also increases in virtual networks, and the prevalence of the nuclear family as a household unit rather than networks of extended families. His research suggests that features such as mobility through transportation or service-providing organizations can contribute to the rising levels of interactions among neighbors. Additionally, areas where the majority of the households are families tend to report higher levels of interaction (LaGory & Pipkin, 1981), which can probably be attributed to the higher likelihood of children to interact, leading to overall higher interaction among all members of families. In all of these instances, an aspect of the urban resident's social opportunity contributes to his level of interaction with others in the same neighborhood.

VI. Public Space

An aspect of the built environment within the neighborhood that is crucial to analyzing community relations is public space. The amount, structure, and uses of public spaces in an area can have significant effects on the interactions people will have with one another in that space. William Whyte conducted a case study of public space in New York City (and compared it to other cities), giving a very detailed account of the levels and styles of social interactions within those spaces through his use of video recording. Some of the principles Whyte discovers include an overall proclivity toward public spaces, but also tendency toward areas of those spaces that other people are already occupying, causing most people to congregate in groups (Whyte, 1980). From a planning or design perspective he points out the importance of building public space around certain environmental features in order to attract visitors — sunlight and other natural features as well as the inclusion of art or performance. He encourages the inclusion of these features in public space construction to promote higher participation in those spaces. In terms of social choices, people tend to congregate more in areas where there is pre-existing pedestrian flow, such as on street corners, or steps or benches directly off the street. Therefore, people are apt to interact most with their neighbors or community members when they are in an environment that is aesthetically pleasing and well populated even before they arrive.

Although Whyte analyzes primarily public spaces in commercial areas such as office building plazas, he examines basic behaviors and principles of interaction that exist regardless of the exact nature of the environment. Therefore, the patterns he observes can be applied to different environments throughout the cityscape. In analyses of residential spaces, for example, salient interaction features also include aspects of the built environment, such as semi-private spaces that exist between private residential areas, like alleys or driveways (LaGory & Pipkin,

1981). A shared residential space, such as an alley, has the same properties as a street corner in terms of shared use, so it shows the same patterns of social interaction in relation to it. Because the current study examines business districts, many of the principles of interaction Whyte highlights in relation to commercial urban spaces should be very close to the patterns observed in the commercial environments studied here. For example, access to the street, to open congregation spaces, and to designated seating or leaning spaces should be present in business districts just as is in the public spaces Whyte describes.

The types of environmental features mentioned above that are related to interaction styles within a given space can be broken down into three major categories, defined by LaGory and Pipkin (1981) as fixed features, semi-fixed features, and individual space. Fixed features, which can usually be added or changed by urban designers or planners but not by individual inhabitants, include natural features and built features, such as walls, buildings, steps, or plazas. Interaction in relation to these features depends on their layout and comfort of movement through or around them. Semi-fixed features, which can be added by planners or by individual users, include features that users interact with directly, such as chairs or benches, art or vendors. Interactions with these features depend on where individuals choose to place them and how many people choose to use them at a given time. Finally, individual space, like social distance, is an individual's choice about proximity to others (LaGory and Pipkin, 1981). As these researchers write, "Proximity is relative and never absolute. Nearness is situational" (LaGory & Pipkin, 1981, p. 27). This is especially true in the case of public space, in which everyone brings his or her own interaction level and style. Such categorization of features into fixed, semi-fixed, and individual, are helpful in comparing neighborhoods across factors of community experience such as the relationships between physical structures,

VII. Health Benefits and Hazards of the Urban Environment

Another contribution to quality of life, and therefore to community experience, is the health impact of the natural environment. Basic attributes of the natural environment, such as air quality or proximity to natural areas, to hazardous sites, or brownfields (previous industrial sites), which can either positively or negatively impact physical health, also affect styles and levels of interaction in urban areas. As Joseph Fisher writes, "...the ways in which people perceive the natural environment of their city and develop and use it tell much about the quality of life" (1967, p. 483). Use of parks leads directly to physical activity, which has been shown to contribute to benefits to physical and psychological health, alongside facilitating social interactions (Stodolska, Shinew, Acevedo, & Izenstark, 2011). Even the shade from trees can be enough to draw a congregation of people who might interact (Whyte, 1980). In fact, according to Whyte, access to parks and other natural areas is associated with higher reports of sense of community, social capital, and increase interactions overall. Proximity to parks can also define the socioeconomic status of certain neighborhoods (Stodolska et al., 2011). Livable and usable natural environmental features are, then, important positive contributions to sense of community in an urban neighborhood.

Conversely, the presence of hazardous sites contributes greatly to deterioration of community and investment in a neighborhood. According to Greenberg, Lee, and Powers (1998), brownfields in particular detract from community experience because, as unsupervised space, they encourage illicit behavior, which then leads to lower property values and more abandonment of property, making for a cycle of degeneration. These sites most often exist to begin with in neighborhoods with low property values, and therefore with low-income and minority residents (Greenberg, Lee, & Powers, 1998). This contributes to urban segregation by

race and socioeconomic status and further delineates urban neighborhoods based on their physical attributes, both in terms of health risks and physical appearance. As we already know from Whyte (1980), aesthetic appeal contributes to congregation and therefore to interaction. Because brownfields and other unused urban spaces are the opposite— aesthetically unappealing, breeding grounds of undesirable behavior, and harbingers of segregation between neighborhoods— they negatively impact any type of community cohesion.

In some cases, though, brownfields or other deteriorating sites can serve as a springboard for developing new community projects. Working on the principle that the appearance of brownfields detracts from community experience, the redevelopment of them can do the opposite and contribute to higher quality community experience. The goals of many brownfields cleanup programs include adding affordable housing and jobs, educational and community facilities, waterfront access and other natural spaces (DePass, 2006). These features, especially in one mixed-use development area, are intended to contribute directly to the growth of community cohesion because they include more residents of the neighborhood in one space. Converting a previous brownfield into a green space is another ideal development to increase quality of life in a neighborhood. Environmental scholars agree that in order to maintain high levels of quality of life, “some equilibrium among environmental, social and economic factors must be achieved and failing such equilibrium a community cannot reach or maintain an optimal level of sustainability or quality of life” (De Sousa, 2006, p. 580). Therefore, improving the economic state of an area, in this case by redeveloping a brownfield, should also include social developments, as aforementioned, as well as environmental features to truly improve the quality of life in that area. Abandoned or unused urban land can, then, be a factor affecting community cohesion, either positively or negatively depending on the use or development of that space.

VIII. Transportation

Urban neighborhoods can also be differentiated based on aspects of the built environment itself, such as the degree of physical mobility into and out of the neighborhood, the distance from the center, and the amount of commercial as opposed to residential land use. Transportation systems contribute significantly to racial and socioeconomic segregation in cities due to the physical limitations set on residents in certain areas (Ross & Leigh, 2000). For example, certain transportation systems do not extend to outlying minority neighborhoods, or extend only certain limited transportation services. For example, in Detroit, the ghettoized inner-city has retained its original transportation system, while the upper-class suburbs have built a new, unconnected transportation system, which disallows mobilization between these neighborhoods. Therefore, access to transportation can affect the makeup of an entire neighborhood or area (Ross & Leigh, 2000). Transportation access also affects the use of certain urban spaces. As Wirth (1938) points out, “The heightened mobility of the individual... brings him within the range of stimulation by a great number of diverse individuals and subjects him to fluctuating status in the differentiated social groups that compose the social structure of the city” (p. 16). For instance, historically, almost all interactions occurred in the Central Business District, but since the improvement of public transportation and the use of cars, business interactions, among others, now occur in all neighborhoods of the city (Blumenfeld, 1961). In fact, many of the business interactions (especially related to manufacturing and wholesale) have moved out of the center, leaving more room for personal interactions in offices and shops (Blumenfeld, 1961; Whyte, 1980). Especially the expansion of railroad, starting with the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 (Weeks, 1969) and modern commuter rails, have led to further outward expansion of industry (Pred, 1964).

This means both that in general residents tend to travel further to and from their workplaces, and beyond them, than they did in previous years, but also that the workplace may be less vital to an individual's overall interactions, given the prevalence of such decentralization of business (Pred, 1964). The structure of the transportation system in a city can, therefore, contribute to the factors of spatial use and personal interactions, in terms of which spaces individuals can inhabit and how far from their own communities they travel to their destinations. It can also affect interactions within one area, depending on how much people tend to or are able to stay in or leave that area. Remaining in one area can limit opportunities for growth, but it can also strengthen community bonds in that area.

IX. Structured Urban Networks

There are several types of urban organizations and networks that exist to attempt to facilitate the positive interactions described in the above sections. These organizations can create connections among commercial entities, among individuals, or promote interaction between these two groups through some combination of the two. The effectiveness of such networks is debatable, but many of their goals point to cohesion among members of the given community. Some examples of different types of connective urban networks follow in this section, some of which promote community and some of which do not.

Industry Clusters

One kind of network occurring in an urban setting is the economic network, connections that occur purely in the commercial realm. Economic networks are typically divided by three different factors - by individual firm, by location, or by industry. Karaska (1969) defines these as large-scale economies (one firm growing to a networked corporation), urbanization economies (connections among all related firms in an area), and localization economies (connections among

geographically linked firms). Therefore, some of these networks are created based on a firm's impetus to expand economically, which is not a community effort and therefore will not be discussed here. Others, though, are created based on their similarities in industry type, or by their geographical proximity, some examples of which are described below.

One type of economic network that does promote community and forms based on industry type in an urban environment is an industry cluster. The firms in these clusters also often group together based on close proximity. According to Waite and Williams (2009), "Industry clusters are defined as geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field" (p. 500). Industry clusters are also often differentiated based on the size of the participating firms. For instance small to medium enterprises (SMEs) tend to cluster together since they require resources on approximately the same scales. Large corporations, on the other hand, might form clusters together, or would not need to because of their scale (Waite & Williams, 2009). For this reason, and because SMEs are typically the kind of firms found in urban neighborhoods, they will be the focus of discussion on economic networks here. Waite and Williams (2009) also posit that not only is a cluster made up of firms that are in close proximity, but also those that share resources or have similar goals, which means that they communicate often.

The feature of shared resources makes industry clusters, for firms, similar to social networks for residents in that individuals involved in the same social network also share resources such as public space, structural features of that space, and organizational resources. It is necessary, therefore, to have direct interpersonal relationships among members of different firms within the industry cluster facilitating the exchange of goods or information (Waite & Williams, 2009). Due to this fact, it has been shown that close social networks are related to the

growth of successful industry clusters, in terms of the profits and expansions of the businesses involved (Sacchetti & Sugden, 2009). Industry clusters are one important mode for thinking about the ways in which businesses, and the people who run them, interact as part of the urban social space, alongside the interactions among individuals inhabiting that space.

Homeowners' Associations

One urban network that is not connected to economic networks but relates only to residents is the homeowners' association (HOA). These groups are organized by developers upon creating a new residential site or occasionally by residents who want to enforce homogeneity and high standards of care in the appearance of their neighborhood. Typically, the most important goal is maintaining property values in the given area through appearance preservation, but there are also more specific goals laid out by individual associations ("How to Handle..." 2008). Some of these goals include home repairs, weather protection and maintenance, and meetings and newsletters about activities and to encourage participation. These goals are more related to the outward appearance and maintenance of the area and less to the actions or interactions of the residents in that area. While not necessarily stated explicitly, often the rules of homeowners' associations extend to the manner and extent of interactions within the neighborhood. For instance, many homeowners' associations have ordinances about which door of the house can be used or where one can greet guests, although most of these associations exist in suburban rather than urban areas (McKenzie, 1994).

Therefore, although the explicit goals of HOAs may be fairly limited to surface-level features, they often have more implications for the community experience, in terms of acceptance into or agreement with the community group, the types of interactions that members feel comfortable engaging in, and the levels of participation residents have in decision-making

about their community. Often, the observed experience is of decreased agreement with the organization's decisions and decreased participation in that decision-making as the governing body is typically a money-driven developer rather than a community-conscious elected official (McKenzie, 1994). For this reason, although HOAs sound theoretically like they might promote community cohesion by encouraging common goals, they can serve to undermine goals held by community members themselves, favoring externally-driven goals instead.

Business Improvement Districts

One type of network that functions to connect commercial and residential endeavors within neighborhoods is the Business Improvement District (BID). BIDs connect firms and individuals as a function of their location within the given district. The question at hand is how the existence of a BID in a given neighborhood relates to the sense of community among the residents and participants in that area.

Business improvement districts function to connect businesses and other institutions in a certain area to find collective goals and promote progress in that area as well as to combine or catalog resources. The New York City Business Improvement District Managers Association defines a BID as,

A formal organization made up of property owners and commercial tenants who are dedicated to promoting business development and improving an area's quality of life. BIDs deliver supplemental services such as sanitation and maintenance, public safety and visitor services, marketing and promotional programs, capital improvements, and beautification for the area - all funded by a special assessment paid by property owners within the district (NYC Business Improvement District Managers Association, 2012).

The New York City BID Association is the largest network of BIDs in the country, and therefore has become a model for other cities' networks of BIDs. The principles governing the New York City BIDs have also, then, become the norms for BIDs across the country. However, there is also

a large amount of flexibility in the types or extent of services BIDs offer depending on the organization's resources. For instance, BIDs can be set up by the businesses themselves who form a collective, or by an external government or other public agency that oversees the collective (Morçöl & Wolf, 2010). Initially, the goals of BIDs were basic maintenance and physical improvements in major commercial areas. However, as more neighborhoods, especially smaller ones, have adopted BIDs, they have come to extend their goals to include projects such as economic development among members, transportation improvement, and even social organizations or events (Bradley, 2001). Some of the specific features that BIDs can also offer, Bradley (2001) argues, include: security services, coordination among businesses and workers, developing public markets or other street-based commercial uses, neighborhood social needs (such as daycare and employment assistance), and coordinating larger scale social events.

Business Improvement Districts in New York City

As the most populous city in the United States, New York also has the largest association of BIDs. In fact, according to a map on the NYC BID Association website, almost every neighborhood in the five boroughs includes a commercial area with a BID. The Association was formed in 1995 and community organizations continue to work with the New York City Department of Small Business Services to form new BIDs (www.nycbidassociation.org). The BID of focus in this research is the Fulton Area Business Alliance, a member of the NYC BID Association. This BID is in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, shown in Map 1 in Appendix A. The Fort Greene neighborhood has historically been home to lower-income residents, but in recent years, starting as early as 2005, there have been waves of new middle-class people moving in, purportedly being pushed out of Manhattan by rising prices, that have begun to change the makeup of the neighborhood (Rux, 2006). Recent additions to the

neighborhood, such as the creation of the Metro Tech Center office complex and the rejuvenation of the Brooklyn Navy Yard in recent years, are still contributing to the influx of new residents. As far back as the 1970s, Fort Greene residents have banded together against possible negative changes to the neighborhood because of development projects and residents moving in from Manhattan (Rosenberg, 1998). Because of this, community associations have long been a presence in the area and many are still around today.

The other neighborhood of focus in this paper is Red Hook, Brooklyn, which does not have a BID, shown in Map 2 in Appendix B. This neighborhood has also historically housed lower-income residents, but there has not been as much development in the area as there has been in Fort Greene. Red Hook has always been a shipping and manufacturing district, the decline of which has led to lower incomes and unemployment in the neighborhood. The area is known for its block of New York City Public Housing buildings (Red Hook Houses) that are characterized by high unemployment, poverty, and crime. While there has been some gentrification in certain areas of Red Hook (most prominently right along the waterfront), there are many parts, such as the area around the Red Hook Houses, which remain in their historically underdeveloped states (“Red Hook Justice,” n.d.). Because of its relative distance from Manhattan, difficulty reaching it as it is a peninsula, and no subway lines that cross directly to it, Red Hook has not seen the same growth effects as other parts of the city, such as Fort Greene, which means less change in the overall makeup of the neighborhood. The lack of investment in this area may be part of the reason that Red Hook is one of the only parts of Brooklyn that does not have a BID and was therefore chosen as the study area in this research.

Sense of Community and Social Capital in BIDs

If a BID is to be considered successful, one would expect members of it to report

qualities associated with a high sense of community, such as safety, participation, and high levels of neighbor interaction. For instance, if residents of a given area feel that the public spaces for commercial activity are aesthetically pleasing and offer services the residents require for economic well-being, which are some goals of BIDs, they will be likely to congregate there (Whyte, 1980). If people are congregating in a space more often, they are likely to interact more and therefore report higher levels of sense of community. One study, for instance, found that people living in neighborhoods with commercial areas resembling “Main Streets” reported higher levels of sense of community than those living in neighborhoods without Main Street-like areas (Pendola & Gen, 2008). Measures of successful achievement of the goals of BIDs, therefore, should include high levels of social capital, because of qualities such as willingness to help and trust among members. The current study will assess and compare the levels of community cohesion and social capital in a neighborhood with active BIDs that offer different types of services, to a neighborhood without a BID. This comparison will occur in two different ways. In the first part of the study, participants will rate sense of community based on a hypothetical neighborhood scenario. In the second part, participants will rate sense of community based on the neighborhoods they actually reside in, with one group from a neighborhood with a BID and one group from a neighborhood without a BID.

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is any correlation between the existence of these institutions and levels of connectedness among the members of the community in which they function. Both imagined and real scenarios will be used to test this relationship. The imagined situation study (Study 1) will determine if there is any correlation between BIDs and sense of community in a controlled setting with most confounding variables eliminated (see Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz, & Darley, 2002 and Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007 for examples

of the use of imagined scenarios in intergroup relations). The real resident study (Study 2) will determine if there is a correlation in a setting where many uncontrolled variables exist, among people who actually live in neighborhoods with and without BIDs. I hypothesize that in both the hypothetical and the real situations, there will be reports of stronger sense of community among participants in the BID conditions than in the non-BID conditions.

Study 1

Method

Participants

Sixty-five Macalester College undergraduate students participated in the current study, recruited either through Facebook, email, or through word-of-mouth. Twenty-nine participants were assigned the BID condition and thirty-six the non-BID condition.

Procedure

All parts of the study were conducted on a computer through Survey Monkey. Participants first read a consent form and agreed to participate. For the first part of the experiment, participants were randomly assigned to read one of two paragraphs describing hypothetical neighborhoods. In the BID condition, the passage was as follows:

Imagine that you live in an urban neighborhood. Your house is on a residential block, but just around the corner is a commercial strip, with a corner grocery and deli, a Tex Mex and Chinese food restaurant, a pizza parlor, a nail salon, a contractor, a café, and a pharmacy. All these business are small and local-owned. Because you live nearby, you run most of your errands on this street, as do many of your neighbors. You often pick up a neighborhood newsletter, which is distributed at all of the businesses, and sit on the benches that are spaced along the sidewalk while you wait for a prescription at the pharmacy or have a coffee. The newsletter, put out by the local business association, announces events in or near the neighborhood and community council meetings or other open forums. This information is also often posted in windows or fliers around the neighborhood that you pass on your walk to the bus to work.

For the non-BID condition, the passage was modified slightly, as follows:

Imagine that you live in an urban neighborhood. Your house is on a residential block, but just around the corner is a commercial strip, with a corner grocery and deli, a Tex Mex and Chinese food restaurant, a pizza parlor, a nail salon, a contractor, a café and a pharmacy. Because you live nearby, you run most of your errands on this street, as do many of your neighbors. You also wait for the bus to get to work on this same street. From where you stand waiting for the bus, you can see, down the street to your left, the edge of the park where you often go on weekends. If you look to your right down the street you can see the entrance to the mall that marks the beginning of the downtown area.

This type of written description has proved successful in accurately mirroring social interactions, such as bystander effect (Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz, & Darley, 2002) and reducing out-group bias (Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007). There were two conditions of descriptions in the current study— one that described a neighborhood with resources of a BID and one without those resources.

After reading the description, participants in each condition responded to a sense of community assessment and a social capital assessment.

Measures

Sense of community: Sense of community was measured using Buckner's Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument (1988), an 18-item scale (see Appendix C). This scale proved internally reliable in this study ($\alpha = .915$). In this test participants rated statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Statements included "I would visit with my neighbors in their homes" and "I would think of myself as similar to the people who live in this neighborhood." Participants were instructed as follows: "Keep in mind the passage you just read. Try to imagine that you live in the neighborhood described in the passage and answer the following questions based on that, rather than on your own lived experience," in order to rate the statements on an imagined experience. Sense of community means were computed for this scale across participants.

Social capital: Social capital was measured using 10 items from the Household Questionnaire portion of the Social Capital Assessment Tool. This scale proved internally reliable in this study ($\alpha = .65$). Participants rated statements in this test on the same 5-point Likert scale as for the Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument. Statements in this portion included, “Most people in this neighborhood would be willing to help if I needed it,” and, “I would feel accepted as a member of this neighborhood.” The same instruction was also used for rating these statements based on the imagined experience. Social capital means for all participants were also computed for this scale.

Results

An independent samples t-test found significantly higher ratings of sense of community for the BID condition ($M = 3.91, SD = .5$) than for the non-BID condition ($M = 3.49, SD = .47$), $t(63) = 3.43, p = .001$. There were also significantly higher ratings of social capital in the BID condition ($M = 3.57, SD = .34$) than in the non-BID condition ($M = 3.371, SD = .32$), $t(62) = 2.36, p = .021$. These differences are shown in Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendices D and E. Follow-up analyses found that there was a significant correlation between sense of community and social capital in the BID condition ($r = .508, p < .001$) as well as the non-BID condition ($r = .571, p = .002$).

Discussion

The findings of Study 1 supported the hypothesis that people living in neighborhoods with the resources offered by a business improvement district, which tend to be oriented around community activity or involvement, would report higher levels of sense of community than people in neighborhoods without those resources. As outlined in the introduction, many of the features associated with BIDs, such as the maintenance of physical appearance, economic

services, and organization of community events, are also associated with high ratings of sense of community (Bradley, 2001; Morçöl & Wolf, 2010; Whyte, 1980). Based on the characteristics of the hypothetical neighborhood described in the prompt, the expected association between such resources and high sense of community was confirmed. Because of the accurate applicability of this hypothetical situation model in previous studies (Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz, & Darley, 2002; Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007), the results of Study 1 were used as a basis for comparison in Study 2. In Study 2, actual residents of two neighborhoods (one with a BID and one without) rated their sense of community, to determine if there was a connection between BID resources and sense of community among people who had actual lived experiences of different neighborhoods.

Study 2

Method

Participants

Twenty-one residents of the Fort Greene/ Clinton Hill, Brooklyn neighborhood participated in the current study. Participants ranged in age from around 20 to 65 years. Consistent with the demographics of the whole neighborhood, the majority of the participants were African-American. The study area, which was within the area serviced by the Fulton Area Business Alliance, is identified on Map 1 in Appendix A. The area of interest is a commercial street with a wide array of business types, several small parks (some with just a few trees and one with a whole playground), a heavily trafficked bus line, and also benches in various locations and a street-cleaning team both provided by the BID. Participants were recruited through on-street solicitation. Participants were selected on the basis of being idle on the street—sitting on benches, waiting for the bus, having a cigarette, etc. as those who were in transit would

not stop to complete the survey. It does not appear that this led to any selection bias as the demographics of the participants were diverse. Demographics were not recorded, however, as they were not vital to the study and would have added unnecessarily to the length of the survey.

Nineteen residents of the neighborhood Red Hook, living beyond the bounds of any BID, also participated in the study. These participants had about the same range in age as in Fort Greene, but the majority of them were Caucasian. The study area for this neighborhood is shown on Map 2 in Appendix B. This area is also a commercial street with a wide variety of businesses and a well-used bus line. There is also a school with a large yard on one block. Participants were again recruited through on-street solicitation based on idleness on the street. On one day of data collection it was too cold to solicit participants on the street, so store patrons and employees also participated. Participants in both conditions indicated whether or not they lived in the selected neighborhood by circling yes or no on the survey.

One member of the staff at the Fulton Area Businesses (FAB) also consented to participate in this study.

Procedure

All participants signed a consent form before beginning the study. All participants confirmed that they resided in the neighborhood, and were told only that they would complete a survey about their experience living in the neighborhood. Participants filled out a very brief questionnaire created for this study.

The board member at FAB also participated in an extended semi-formal interview containing specific questions about goals and resources offered by the Business Alliance, as well as adapted questions from the SCAT and the NCI, based on the expectations of community impact. The goal of this interview was to determine if there was a connection between the aims

of the organization and the actual responses of those community members. Some of the questions asked to determine this connection included, “What are your most used resources or most successful projects?” and “How would you characterize your organization’s relationship with other community organizations within or outside the neighborhood?” The responses about the overall community given in this interview were compared to survey responses from participants. See Appendix F for the full write-up. All responses to community cohesion questions were analyzed for comparison to residents’ responses. All other responses were used for a qualitative analysis of neighborhood resources.

The Fulton Area Business Alliance was chosen as the BID of interest based partly on the resources and goals listed on its website. According to faballiance.org, “The FAB Alliance goals include keeping the streets clean and improving public safety; promoting Fulton Street as a destination; helping existing merchants and filling vacant spaces; enhancing the street-scape and shopper experience.” Additionally, the BID’s more long-term goals are to “...benefit all of the community through beautification, safety, cleanliness and ultimately increased business to its members” (faballiance.org, n.d.).

Measures

The survey created for this study included one question about use of neighborhood resources, indicating whether the participant attends community council meetings or public events, reads a neighborhood newsletter, or spends time in public spaces. There was one question about social capital, adapted from the Household Questionnaire portion of the Social Capital Assessment Tool (Krishna, 1999), indicating whether the participant votes in local elections, participates in a community association, contacts local representatives, talks with neighbors about problems, or volunteers in the neighborhood. The responses to all of these questions were

scored by count— a sum of the number of items each participant reported using or participating in, such that social capital scores could have ranged from 0 - 9. Finally there were four items from the Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument (Buckner, 1988) such as “I feel like I belong in my neighborhood.” See Appendix G for the full neighborhood survey.

Survey Results

The four items selected to measure sense of community in the Neighborhood Survey were internally reliable ($\alpha = .699$). There were no significant differences in ratings of sense of community between residents of the BID neighborhood ($M = 3.89, SD = .58$) and the non-BID neighborhood ($M = 3.93, SD = .91$), $t(38) = -.188, p = \text{n.s.}$ Similarly, for social capital, ratings did not differ between residents of the BID neighborhood ($M = 4.62, SD = 2.58$) and non-BID neighborhood ($M = 4.47, SD = 2.24$), $t(38) = .173, p = \text{n.s.}$ Follow-up correlations found no relationships between participation in individual community resources (aspects of social capital) and overall ratings of sense of community in either neighborhood. The correlation between social capital count and mean sense of community in the BID condition was $r = -.207$, and in the non-BID condition was $r = .203$.

Case Study Interview Results

Based on the interview with Phillip Kellogg, Manager at Fulton Area Business Alliance, it was determined that the organization has a strong focus on community input, from its creation to the implementation of particular projects. This input comes in many forms, from public information sessions that encourage questions to suggestions to public meetings centered around hearing public opinions. There is generally high attendance at events or input sessions, although FAB always works to increase the number of people involved with the organization. FAB uses this community input not only to build their project plans but also to continuously improve

existing programs or services. FAB also works extensively with other local organizations as well as governmental agencies in order to trade resources as well as information about needs in various aspects of community life and strategies to address those needs.

General Discussion

The findings of Study 2, examining individuals who actually reside in neighborhoods either with or without business improvement districts, did not confirm the results of Study 1 in that there was no difference in ratings of sense of community between residents of each neighborhood. The fact that this difference did not show up among the residents of actual neighborhoods with and without these resources can mean several things.

First, in terms of the methodology, the hypothetical neighborhood passages left out any confounding variables of community life such as the makeup of neighborhood demographics, socioeconomic levels, involvement by other community groups, and so on. Ratings of sense of community among actual residents, therefore, were based on much more than just the presence or absence of BID resources. Another explanation for the lack of different ratings between conditions is an indication that the data collection itself was flawed. The low correlations in Study 2 between mean ratings for sense of community and social capital within conditions, for instance, was a surprising finding because in Study 1 there was a much higher correlation. Follow-up analyses of scatterplots showed that these low correlations were not due to particular outliers or clustering in certain ranges but rather that there was in fact considerable variance in levels of sense of community and social capital across individuals in Study 2. This can probably be explained by the specificity of the questions selected to represent measures of both social capital and sense of community. The activities and characteristics chosen to represent social capital were very abridged from the Social Capital Assessment Tool. Likewise, only four of the

items from the Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument were selected to represent sense of community in Study 2. In fact, if these four items had been isolated for analysis in the data from Study 1, the mean sense of community rating for the BID condition would drop to 3.78 from 3.91. Therefore, it appears that these four items were not an accurate representation of sense of community and this misrepresentation could have led to such high reports of sense of community in both conditions.

Despite these methodological concerns, the qualitative findings from this research, as well as external information about the study areas at the time of research, provide insight into the important contributors to community cohesion. For instance, specific unanticipated characteristics of the neighborhoods selected in Study 2 to represent the non-BID and BID conditions seem to have contributed to ratings of sense of community and social capital. As shown in Map 2 in Appendix B, Red Hook, Brooklyn, the non-BID neighborhood, is a low-lying area right along the eastern shore of Brooklyn, which makes it particularly vulnerable to weather patterns. The recent Superstorm Sandy, in November of 2012, left considerable damage in Red Hook, which has since spurred a remarkable effort among its residents to rebuild as a community. As one *Time Magazine* reporter describes, "...what's evident in abundance in Red Hook is that perhaps the most resilient element of New York's disaster response is the infrastructure of solidarity" (Karon, 2012). This article highlights the groups and activities in Red Hook post-Sandy that are bringing community members and organizers together to rebuild physical infrastructure as well as morale in the area. This unforeseen disaster has led to such an influx of community efforts that ratings on statements about community cohesion would easily have been raised as compared to before Hurricane Sandy.

It has already been demonstrated in past research that there is often an influx of support following a destructive disaster. Kaniasty and Norris (1995) studied the relationship between natural disasters and social support specifically. They found that for a time immediately after disasters, there were much higher levels of support and helping among those affected, but that after some time passed the weight of the effects set in and the support decreased below its baseline levels (Kaniasty & Norris, 1995). This research suggests that in the case of Red Hook, the residents might soon be reaching the end of their supportive time and, if surveyed again in another couple months, they would report lower sense of community. However, there is other research that has found that when a group, such as a neighborhood, is forced to overcome some struggle together, its participants are more likely to build resilience and therefore later collaboration in the future (Rudkin, 2003). This would suggest that, if the residents of Red Hook do collaborate successfully now to rebuild after Hurricane Sandy, they could become an even stronger, more resilient group than they were to begin with. This suggestion helps explain the high reports of sense of community in Red Hook in the current study. In fact, sense of community ratings in this non-BID condition were not only as high as those in the BID condition, but were even higher than those in the imagined BID condition. This means that the sense of community rating in the real non-BID condition was far higher than in the imagined non-BID condition, further supporting the idea that something about the Red Hook neighborhood, perhaps spurred by Hurricane Sandy or otherwise, gives its residents especially strong sense of community.

Conversely, several areas near to the Fort Greene neighborhood, which represented the BID condition in Study 2, have seen recent changes, but rather than natural disaster they were due to development of higher-income residential and commercial sites that have led to

gentrification of the area, as noted above in the introduction. While this kind of change could positively affect community perceptions, the opinion I gathered anecdotally pointed in the opposite direction. For instance, an older community member who completed a survey commented, “This neighborhood isn’t what it used to be. Look at these restaurants. It looks nice but people are being displaced.” Another older resident commented more directly on the positive impact of resources offered by the BID, but qualified that with other changes to the area. He said, “The neighborhood benefits from resources, especially the youth. People come out to events. It can’t fix the changing of the neighborhood, though, as new people move in.” Although these sentiments may not be representative of all individuals who participated in the study, much less of all residents of the neighborhood, they do give a sense of the general tone of the neighborhood. These changes or opinions, however, were not significant enough to lower sense of community ratings in the Fort Greene Neighborhood to below the ratings in Red Hook. The high ratings of sense of community here are not necessarily directly attributable to the work of the BID either, but there is some aspect of the community that makes its residents rate sense of community highly despite negative opinions about gentrification.

Previous research supports the argument that new developments and changes in the demographic makeup of a neighborhood, otherwise known as gentrification, can in fact contribute directly to changes in sense of community. These secondary changes are not due simply to external change, such as new buildings or stores, but to rifts created between old and new residents. For instance, one study of another neighborhood in Brooklyn, Greenpoint, found that with gentrification came a divide in groups of neighborhood residents that had previously not existed (DeSena, 2006). Another study found that there was some kind of threshold of change up to which residents were willing to remain united as members of the same

neighborhood, but with enough change from the outside, they began to lose attachment and sense of community in that place (Rajagopal, 1999). Perhaps, then, in Fort Greene, the residents notice and are displeased with changes in the neighborhood, but these changes have thus far not been drastic enough to negatively impact the overall strong sense of community residents feel due to the remaining positive resources in the neighborhood.

Other factors contributing to the overall community of Fort Greene, Brooklyn, became apparent during my interview with Phillip Kellogg, staff member at Fulton Area Business Alliance. He spoke of many of the positive changes in the neighborhood, such as the beautification, the higher turnout to community events, and the decrease in crime since the foundation of the BID. Overall, his sentiment, as well as that of residents in informal conversations, was of positive change and collaboration among multiple groups working to serve the needs of community members. However, the implication in these statements was that there was and still is change taking place in the neighborhood that is to some degree uncontrollable and can be detrimental to the community identity. There were also comments from individual community members that did not express the same level of engagement with the resources offered by the BID. One young community member noted, for instance, “I don’t think people notice these signs [marking the presence of the BID]. It’s a good idea but I don’t think people know about it.” While the staff of the BID, and some of the community members, experience positive changes arising from the work of the BID and anticipate even more participation in the future, this was not a unanimous sentiment, which could help explain the lack of difference between these two neighborhoods.

Future Research

Going forward with this line of research, there should be changes to the structure of the hypothetical scenarios used to model real neighborhood experiences. These descriptions could include, for instance, more of the external environmental variables that exist in neighborhoods regardless of the existence of a BID. For instance, the descriptions could have contained information about changes in the neighborhoods due to movement in or out of the area by residents or businesses, or structural changes from development or deterioration. These characteristics are not necessarily associated directly with the responsibilities of a BID or with the usual descriptors of sense of community. In order to determine the difference these external variables make, it would be best to use four conditions— one BID condition with positive neighborhood changes and one BID condition with negative neighborhood changes, and the same two for the non-BID scenario. In this way, the study could account for possible external factors without associating one type of change with either the existence or nonexistence of a BID.

In the real neighborhood scenario, there should also be more questions included in the neighborhood survey, especially related to sense of community. Not only were the limited set of questions used in Study 2 here not a quantitatively valid set to measure SOC, but they were also not qualitatively as comprehensive in subject matter. For instance, questions such as “I visit with my neighbors in their homes,” “I think I agree with most people in my neighborhood about what is important in life,” or “There is a feeling of camaraderie between me and other people in my neighborhood,” from the Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument that were included in Study 1 were not included in Study 2, for brevity’s sake. It now appears that participants would have been willing to fill out a longer survey if it had been provided. Therefore, in future versions of this

study, the neighborhood survey should include more, if not all, of the questions from the Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument.

Conclusion

Although Study 2 did not confirm the hypothesis that there would be stronger sense of community in a neighborhood with a BID, the process of this research did reveal many important aspects of the role and impact of BIDs. Based on qualitative information, I confirmed the importance of *participation* to make a community effort successful, stressed by the BID's manager as well as in casual conversation with participants. It is not enough to have resources available—there has to be a system and initiative for getting people involved. In the case of Fort Greene, the BID conducted assessments of their projects and had specific goals of raising attendance and awareness, and in Red Hook, the impetus of Hurricane Sandy caused people to participate in community work more than they previously had. Another important theme was *access*: not only creating resources, but providing them in spaces where they would be accessible to the largest number of people and to those on whom they would have the most substantial impact. For instance, FAB not only holds large events like music festivals outside in plazas, but they also bring meetings and information settings onto the street so people who would otherwise not know or feel motivated to find out about the workings of the organization will have the opportunity to do so. Based on my interview and informal conversations, these tactics were successful in getting people involved with the organization's programs.

Finally, this research has led to the recognition that even with the most concerted and formulated efforts to create and maintain a bonding community experience, there are always external factors that can improve or deteriorate the connectedness among community members. Sense of community is not as simple as a checklist of resources that relate directly to the strength

of the community bond felt by people who have access to them. Uncontrollable factors like the range of demographics, changes in the physical and social environment, or the greater political or social atmosphere can affect individuals' experiences of their neighborhoods, regardless of any particular efforts on the local level. The work of BIDs attempts to take advantage of multiple factors of urban life, from social gatherings to economic growth to particular physical structures, which is what makes them a unique type of institution. As this research has revealed, it is the intersection of so many existing factors, coupled with the institutions people create to channel resources, such as BIDs or neighborhood associations, are what combine to create the overall sense of community of a neighborhood.

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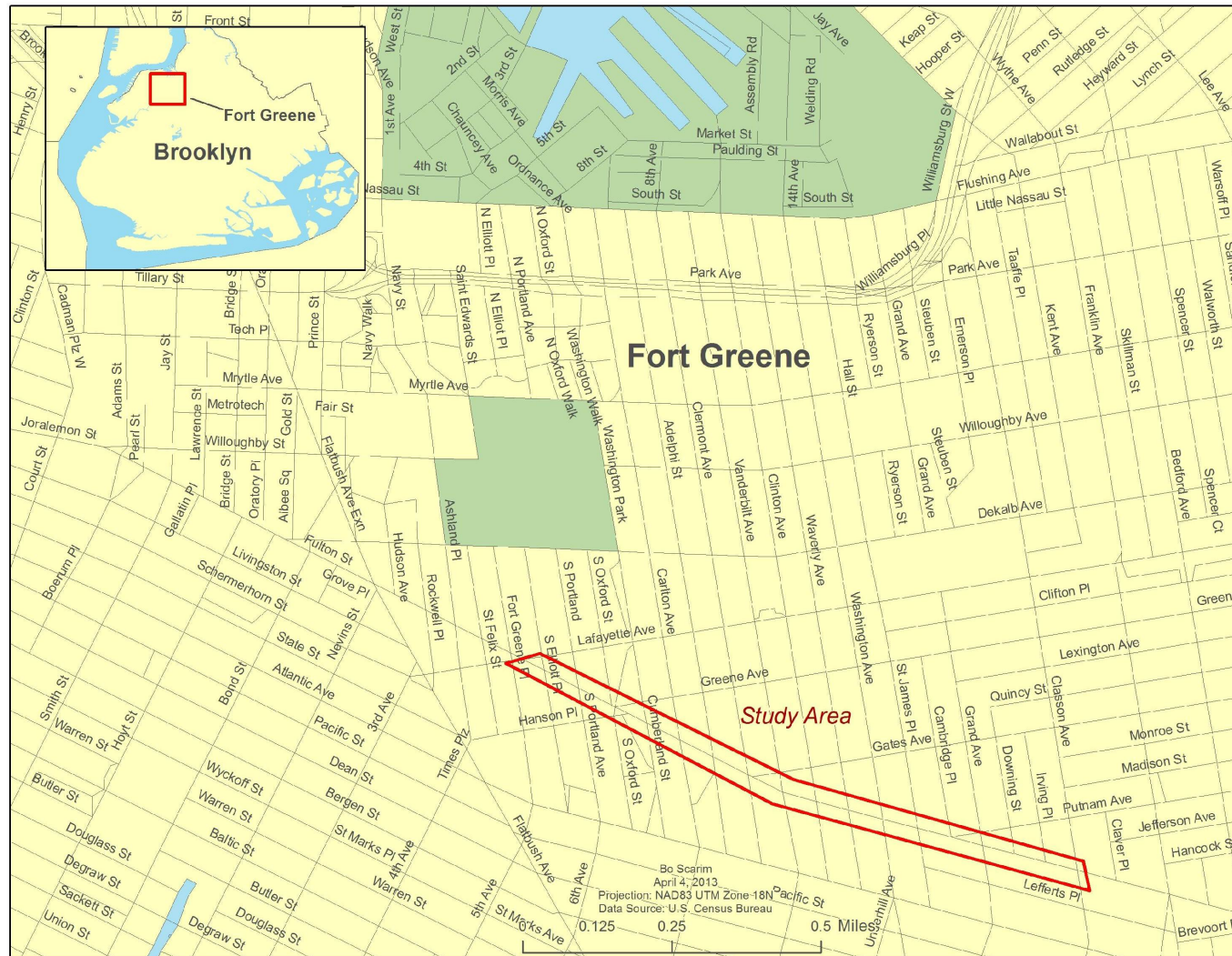
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Appendix A



Map 1. Fort Greene, Brooklyn, and area of Fulton Area Business Alliance.

Map 2. Red Hook, Brooklyn with area of survey administration.



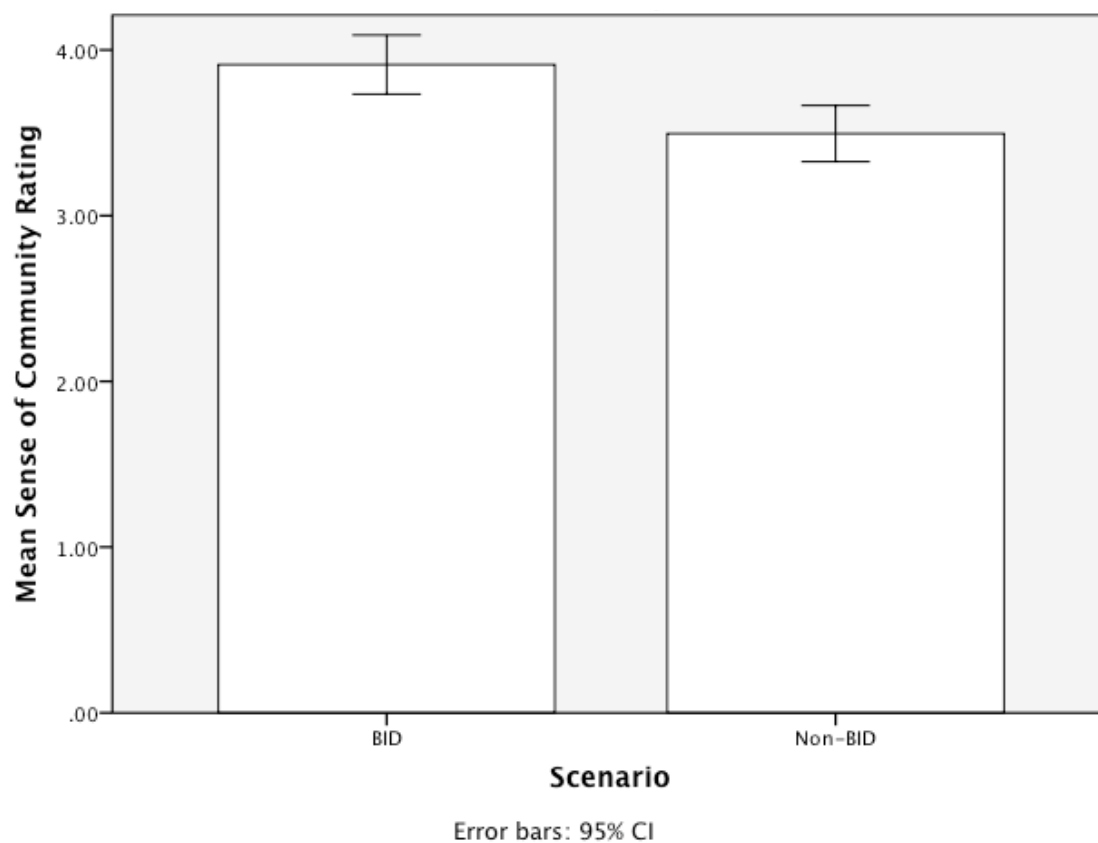
Appendix C

Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument (adapted from Buckner 1988)

Keep in mind the passage you just read. Try to imagine yourself in the situation from the passage and not to compare it to your own lived experience.

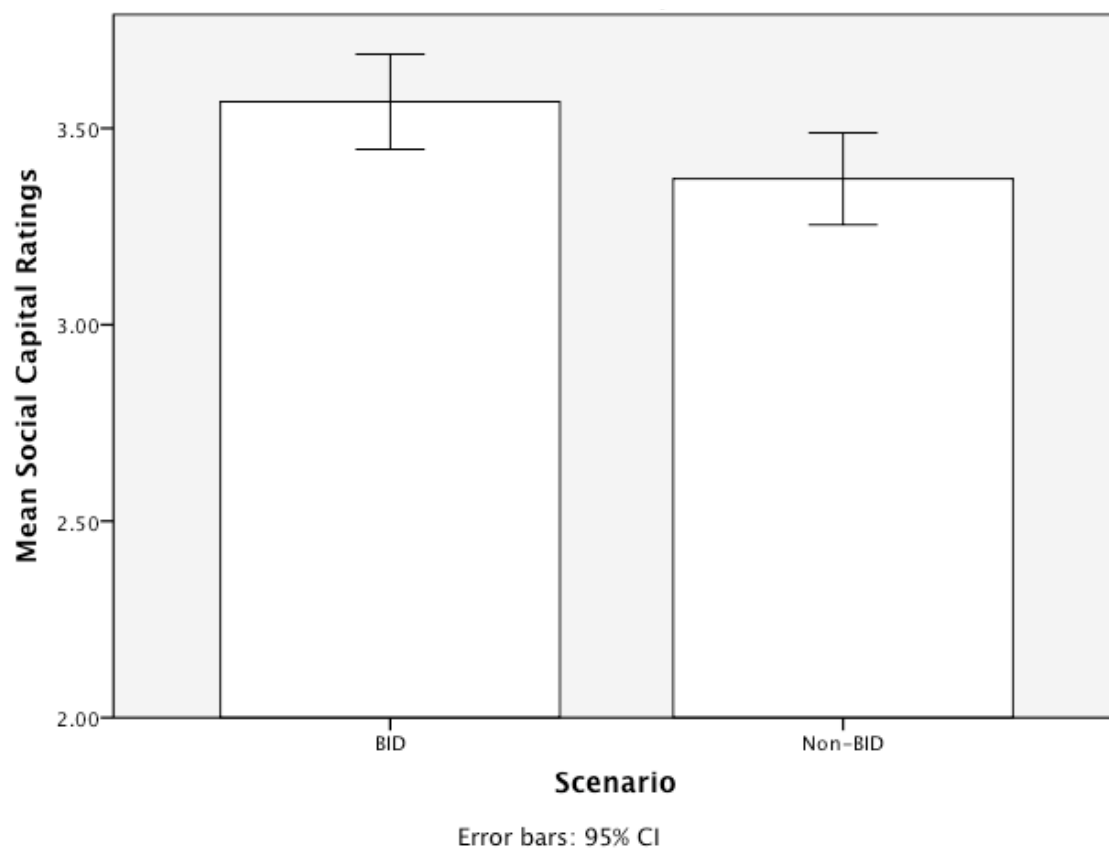
Rate following statements from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree):

1. Overall I am very happy living in my neighborhood.
2. I feel like I belong to my neighborhood.
3. I visit with my neighbors in their homes.
4. The friendships and associations I have with other people in my neighborhood means a lot to me.
5. Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of my neighborhood.
6. If the people in my neighborhood were planning something I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing.
7. If I need advice about something I can go to someone in my neighborhood.
8. I think I agree with most people in my neighborhood about what is important in life.
9. I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency.
10. I feel loyal to the people in my neighborhood.
11. I borrow things and exchange favors with my neighbors.
12. If asked, I would be willing to work with my neighbors on a community project or event.
13. I think about continuing to live in my neighborhood in the future.
14. I like to think of myself as similar to the people who live in my neighborhood.
15. I rarely have neighborhood friends over to my house to visit.
16. There is a feeling of camaraderie between me and other people in my neighborhood.
17. When I run into neighbors I often stop to talk.
18. Living in this neighborhood gives me a sense of community.

Appendix D

Graph 1. Mean ratings of sense of community across scenario conditions.

Appendix E



Graph 2. Mean ratings of social capital across scenario conditions.

Appendix F

Fulton Area Business Alliance Interview Write-up

Some of the information in the following responses was culled from the Fulton Area Business Alliance website (faballiance.org), as noted. Otherwise, all information is from an interview with Phillip Kellogg, Manager at FAB, on January 11, 2013.

1. How was your organization created? Who was most responsible for its creation (e.g., government mandate, community decision, suggestion of outside NGO)?

According to faballiance.org, twenty-five property owners, residents, and stakeholders first came together in 2004 to form a steering committee interested in forming a BID for the Fulton Street commercial area. This steering committee put together a project plan, which they formulated through a needs assessment survey to residents and business owners, and which they brought to the community in multiple public hearings and meetings. This was eventually approved by the City Council of New York and finally made official by Mayor Bloomberg in 2008.

2. In what ways has the organization changed its structures and purpose since its creation? What is the main purpose of your organization today?

According to Mr. Kellogg, the FAB Alliance goes through a constant process of revision based on direct feedback from community members and observation of attendance at events or meetings. The organization's goals overall have not changed, but individual amendments have been made to events or projects. For instance, one event that FAB has continued to put on for the past three years is a music performance called FAB Fridays. Staff at FAB determined its success based on observing crowds and attendance and administering satisfaction surveys to business owners (and plan to give these surveys to attendees in the future as well). One improvement they have already made to this event is to the space used to hold the event.

Another process of revision has come out of FAB's Vision Plan for the creation of new projects. Part of the Vision Plan has included informational signage and public meetings at which the input of the community determines the trajectory of new plans.

3. What would you say are your most used resources or most successful projects?

According to Mr. Kellogg, public community events, such as the FAB Fridays concert series, or the one-time Make Music NY event, are the best attendance, with around 280 attendees. Public meetings centered around community input, such as the public presentation and meeting for the Vision Plan or the parks re-design meetings, are also generally very well attended, with up to 100 attendees. Annual administrative meetings, for new elections to the board, have lower attendance but still up to 60 attendees.

4. Are active members in this organization also members of other organizations in the community? Do people tend to be members of just one organization or join many simultaneously? Can you explain why?

In general, according to Mr. Kellogg, those who attend FAB's events or meetings are individuals who have already been involved in community board meetings or other venues for public input. FAB works to reach out to other community members through on-street information sessions, such as a poster about the Vision Plan in Fowler Square, a park on Fulton Street.

5. How would you characterize the quality of *participation* in this organization, in terms of: Attendance at meetings, both internal to the organization and externally with other organizations?

People are aware of FAB through street signs and banners delineating the boundaries of the area covered by the organization, as well as through public information sessions and the street cleaners who wear FAB uniforms.

Dissemination of new policy information?

FAB makes a concerted effort to have extensive community input in their processes of creating new policy plans, such as through their public meeting program.

6. How would you characterize your organization's relationship with other community organizations within/ outside the neighborhood? When do you feel the need to establish collaboration/links with them?

According to Mr. Kellogg, there is a lot of collaboration with other community organizations to share resources and ideas as well as to redirect questions or concerns to different organizations to give the best possible advice to clients. Some of the other organizations that FAB lists collaboration with for events on their website are the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, the Fort Greene Senior Citizens Council. Some organizations that FAB shares resources and services with include the Fort Greene Association and the Pratt Area Community Council. In fact, FAB is housed in the same office as the Pratt Area Community Council, making communication between the two groups even easier and more common.

7. Have you attempted to organize or work with other organizations to achieve a mutually beneficial goal? Is this a common strategy among organizations of this kind?

According to Mr. Kellogg, FAB joined the New York City BID Association in order to share their work with the wider organization as well as to use the resources offered by the larger community of BIDs. FAB has also worked on improving public space in collaboration with a local organization called Green Fort Greene and Clinton Hill.

8. Is your organization linked to any government program? Which? What sort of role does your organization play in the program?

In order to legally form as a BID, FAB worked with the New York City Department of Small Business Services. According to FAB's website, "The NYC Department of Small Business Services is responsible for managing the City's relationship with each BID and works to ensure BIDs carry out services efficiently by liaising with City agencies, promoting best

practices and aggregating information about the programs, services and goals of each BID” (www.faballiance.org). FAB continues to rely on SBS and NYC Business Solutions for financial services, training programs, and related resources that FAB itself does not offer to clients.

According to Mr. Kellogg, FAB has partnered with the NYC Department of Transportation for help in creating and maintaining their bike rack program. Other individual projects for which FAB collaborated with government programs, according to faballiance.org, include Community Council Boards, backing support on policy projects such as improvements to parks and trees, the Borough President’s Shopping Campaign to promote local business shopping, and the NYC Economic Development Corporation for development on vacant land in the area.

Appendix G

Neighborhood Survey

1. In my neighborhood I: (circle all that apply)

- Attend community council meetings
- Attend public events (fairs/ outdoor markets/ block parties)
- Read a neighborhood newsletter
- Spend time in public space (benches/ steps/ etc.)

2. In the last three years I have: (circle all that apply)

- Voted in local community elections
- Actively participated in a community association
- Contacted a local elected representative
- Talked with other people in my immediate neighborhood about a problem
- Volunteered for a charitable organization in my neighborhood

3. Rate the following statements on the scale provided:

| | | | | |
|--|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| I feel like I belong in my neighborhood. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| If asked, I would be willing to work with my neighbors on a community project or event. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I run into my neighbors, I often stop to talk. | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |