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Community Engagement and Diverse Representation in Planning for an Immigrant Neighborhood in a U. S. Pacific Northwest City

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Abstract

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by

Christopher Amba Ndifon

M R C P L, University of Oklahoma 1987

BA, Eastern Washington University 1982

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract

Traditional avenues of influencing planning decisions are not intuitive for diverse, historically

underrepresented community residents in many neighborhoods and many immigrant residents

come from societies where engaging in public discourse is discouraged or dangerous. The focus

of this study, the Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaison (POEL) program, was designed to

address these discrepancies, yet whether the program was successful is unknown. Using

participatory democracy as the theoretical framework, the purpose of this case study was to

explore whether the POEL program brought diverse residents together to participate in the

neighborhood planning process. Data were collected through semi structured interviews with

planners, community coordinators, public outreach and engagement liaisons, and members of

non-governmental organizations ($n = 10$) and official government records and documents. All

data were deductively coded and then analyzed using a thematic analysis procedure. Six themes

emerged from the study including (a) measures of program success, (b) outreach and

communication, (c) collaboration, (d) intimidation and fear, (e) time limitation, and (f) building

relationships. POELs identified and understood that barriers such as lack of time, lack of child

care, persistent fear of government intentions, and religious and cultural norms inhabit the

process, but found that using outreach and communication promotes interest in and participation

in neighborhood planning. When neighborhood residents are empowered and given information

about the process, they make informed choices. The study promotes positive social change by

showing that mitigating some of the barriers to participation supports greater inclusion of

underrepresented persons in the neighborhood planning process.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, Valarie Armstead-Ndifon, my wife, and my

Children: Christopher Amba Ndifon, Jr., Coremetima (Corey) Alexander Ndifon, and Laelah

Obasi Okere Ndifon. I am very grateful for the encouragement and the belief that you all had in

me to the end.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Over the past decades, urban planning practice has evolved to include residents in the decision-making process. Planners often seek input from neighborhood residents through a variety of community meetings, workshops, surveys, and discussion groups in order to facilitate implementation of a project or a neighborhood plan (Oshun, Ardoin, & Ryan, 2011). These traditional avenues of soliciting inputs work well for some neighborhood residents who are familiar with this form of public engagement. However, public engagement is not intuitive to the diverse, historically underrepresented residents of the immigrant neighborhood (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012). These residents may view the public engagement process with mistrust and often misunderstand governmental intentions. Most immigrant residents come from societies where engaging in public discourse is discouraged or dangerous (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012). Some residents consider public engagement as culturally irrelevant; lack of knowledge in planning; some have limited English proficiency as well as other barriers, such as providing childcare (Oshun et al., 2011). Despite some community outreach attempts, the representation of minority, immigrant, refugees and other underrepresented residents at public meetings has been limited or nonexistent (Oshun et al., 2011). The purpose of this dissertation was to see whether Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaison (POEL) efforts to bring diverse neighborhood residents into the neighborhood planning process could be successful over an extended period.

In 2012, the bicultural and bilingual members of the Planning Outreach Liaisons (POL) met with some of the diverse minority, immigrant and underrepresented residents

of the city neighborhood to build a broader base of civil engagement in updating the neighborhood plan (Neighborhood Plan Update, 2012, p. 5). These efforts helped build relationships with residents new to the planning discussion process and provided sufficient background information to effectively participate and stayed engaged in the neighborhood planning process after the implementation of the neighborhood plan (Brener & Phillip, 2010; Osmani, 2008).

This study relied on participatory democratic theory as a theoretical framework to explore the historical and social equity effects of planning engagement on diverse neighborhood residents. The research included the use of in-depth interviews and a review of official government documents and records to substantiate the impacts that this form of planning engagement had on these diverse populations (Matthews, 2013). This dissertation rested on the belief that, in a democratic society, new groups need to be involved in making decisions that affect them. The following discussions will focus on (a) the background; (b) research problem, questions, and purpose; (c) operational definitions; (d) significance and nature of the study; and (e) delimitations and limitations.

Background

In the 1990s, the original Neighborhood Plan articulated a vision to guide growth and plan for a sustainable future (Neighborhood Plan, 2010). Since the neighborhood plan was initiated, there have been significant changes in the neighborhood, including growth in housing; major investment in infrastructure and amenities, such as the opening of light rail network; reconstruction of the Neighborhood K-8 School with a library addition; the Walkway and Neighborhood Park improvement projects (Oshun et al.,

2011; Neighborhood Plan, 2010). The population of the neighborhood has become more diversified during this period due to an influx of immigrants, including refugees, and an increase in ethnic groups such as African Americans.

In 2008, the city's strategy to update the Neighborhood Plan involved broad and inclusive discussions on strategies for engagement and diverse representation of various ethnic groups in the community (Neighborhood Plan, 2010). Subsequently, the city created the Urban Village strategies as a central piece to plan for a sustainable future. Eventually, the neighborhood was designated as a Residential Urban Village. The Residential Urban Village, as depicted in Figure 1.1, is intended to provide the goods and services for the neighborhood residents and surrounding communities (Neighborhood Plan update, 2014).
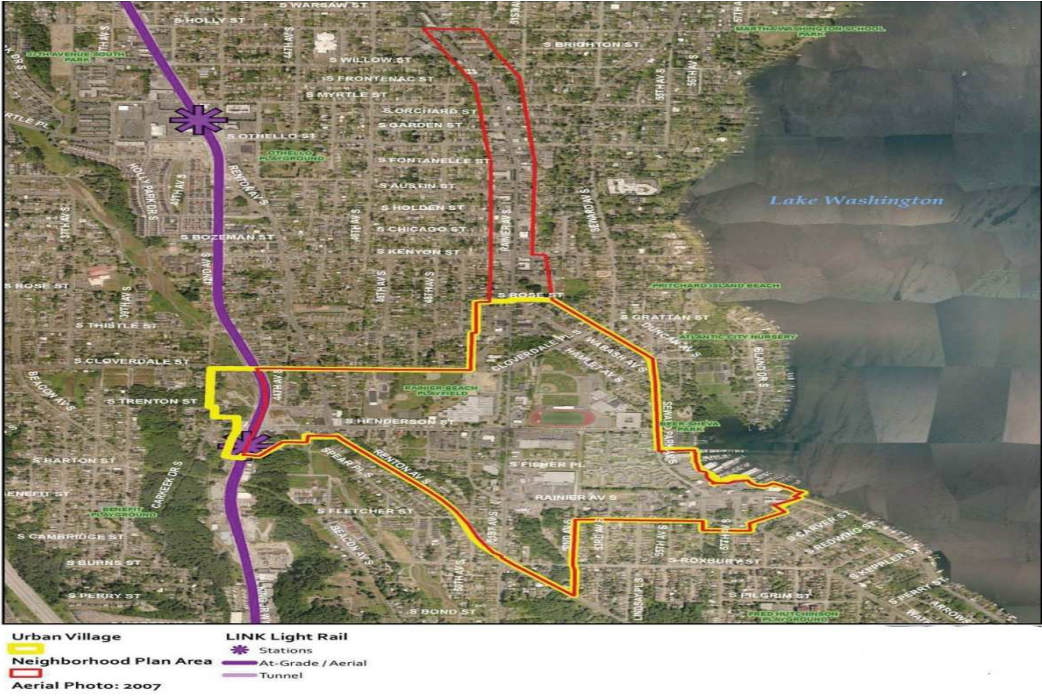
Figure 1. 1: The map of neighborhood residential urban village boundary (Retrieved from http://www.rbcoalition.org/neighborhood-information/geographic-boundaries).

Context and Brief History of the Immigrant Neighborhood

As depicted in Figure 1.1, the Neighborhood Urban Village is in the southeast section of the city. The area was first inhabited by the Coast Salish Indians, who established residence along the shores of Lake Washington (Neighborhood Report, 2010). In 1891, rail lines connected this city to another city, further to the south, opening the neighborhood area to suburban and urban development and drawing new people into the area (Neighborhood Report, 2010). During this period, prior to the Second World War, Italian and Japanese Americans immigrants settled in the young neighborhood. The period of the war was followed by a period of economic boom in the Puget Sound region (Municipal Archives, n.d.). The Boeing Company and employment at the city's shipyard attracted an influx of people into the Puget Sound region in search of good paying jobs. As a result, more people moved into the community, which led to a high demand for housing to accommodate the expanding population in this neighborhood, as well as surrounding neighborhoods and cities (Neighborhood Report, 2010). Following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, refugees from Indochina and Hispanics from Latin America, who were attracted by low-cost property, moved into this young neighborhood in search of new homes. The mixture of these diverse groups from around the world gradually transformed the neighborhood into a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual community (Neighborhood Report, 2010). Today this neighborhood is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in this northwest city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The Neighborhood Residential Urban Village boundaries, as shown in Figure 1, extend from Rose Street in the north, Fletcher Street in the south, Martin Luther King, Jr. Way in the west, and Seward Park Avenue to the east (Neighborhood Report, 2010). The Residential Urban Village occupies 227 acres and is expected to accommodate future low and moderate residential density development (Comprehensive Plan, 2010). As noted in the Neighborhood Planning report, 740 households are envisioned to be added within the next 2 decades (Neighborhood Planning report, 2014).

The population of this immigrant neighborhood is distinguished by racial and ethnic diversity. Table 1 compares the neighborhood population to the city's population in terms of racial demographics. As noted by the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), in 1960, 92% of city's residents were White. In the succeeding decades, the proportion of minority, immigrants, and non-English-speaking residents increased steadily and accelerated in the last decade (American Community Survey, 2010). This trend in population growth has continued, and as reported by Seattle's *Post Intelligencer* in 2008 "at least a 5th of Seattle's population during this period were foreign by birth or were born someplace else" (Murakam Cohan, Seattle *Post Intelligencer*, 2008).

Table 1. 1

Race, Neighborhood and the City

	Neighborhood census tracts	Population percentage	City population	Population percentage
White alone	3,775	25.9%	422,870	69.5%
African American/Black	4,630	31%	48,316	7.9%
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	124	0.8%	4,809	0.8%
Asian alone	4,325	29%	84,215	13.8%
Native Hawaiian & other Pacific Islander alone	172	1.2%	2,351	0.4%
Some other race alone	577	4.0%	14,852	2.4%
Two or more races	994	6.8%	31,247	5.1%
Hispanic/Latinos	1,263	8.7%	40,329	6.6%

Note: Reprinted from US Census Bureau (2010), Decennial Census Data. Retrieved from
http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/researchpopulationdemographyicoverview/august2011

Several factors have influenced the demographic history of the neighborhood

including; 1) the dramatic jump in the Black population shown in the 1960 census from

2,584 to 10,173, which accounted for 14% of the area's population by 1970; 2) the

passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which classified immigrants by

nationality rather than ethnicity, and enhanced the understanding of diversity, especially

among residents from Asia. This led to an increase in immigration to this city particularly

from Asia *(city Population Report*, 2010). As a result, this change revealed that in the

southeast section of the city, the Asian population had primarily been composed of ethnic

Chinese, Japanese and Filipino people. In subsequent years, while the White population

declined, the Black population maintained a minimal steady growth (Department of

Planning and Development Population Study Report, 2010). The most recent wave of immigrants was from Africa, especially from East Africa, including Eritreans, Ethiopians, and Somalis (Neighborhood Planning Report, 2014). The American Community Survey (2014) noted that the trend in population growth in this neighborhood had not slowed down because of both domestic and international migration.

The changing demographics of this neighborhood were not without its problems. In 2009, when the city updated the neighborhood plan, multiple concerns came into focus: the changing demographics and its impacts on the housing, the pressure on the existing public facilities, and the potential growth of business establishment in the neighborhood (Neighborhood Report, 2014). Evidence in the literature indicated that public planning in the city did not include enough representation of minorities, immigrants, and refugees and other historically underrepresented residents during the adoption of the original neighborhood plan (Oshun et al, 2011). The public engagement in planning in the neighborhood was confined to a small group of well-organized individuals who often exerted strong influence in the planning process (Neighborhood Plan, 2010). In order to have a broad approach that includes the diverse, underrepresented residents in the neighborhood, it was important to develop relationships with these residents. To ensure participation in the process and to be able to provide inputs, every resident should have access to information that will help them get involved in the neighborhood planning process (Oshun et al, 2011).

Figure 1. 2: Light rail station at Martin Luther King, Jr, & South Henderson St.
Retrieved from http://realchangenews.org/2015/02/18/moving

The construction of the regional light rail system along the Martin Luther King,

Jr. Way corridor (with a station at Henderson Street) provided an initial focal point to

engage all local sub-groups (see Figure 1.2). The changes occurring in the neighborhood

promoted great interest and attracted people to more into the neighborhood. Since the

process of getting residents from a diverse community to participate in planning is often

problematic, the city looked for ways to include all residents, especially the historically

underrepresented residents who had not previously been included in the planning process.

Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaison Program

In 2009, the city initiated the Planning Outreach Liaison (POL) program, which

was modeled after the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Trusted Advocates model and was

fueled by the city's commitment to racial inclusion and social justice in order to address

the condition of the underrepresented residents in the neighborhood (AECF, 2007). In

2008, Mayor Nickels created the Race and Social Justice Initiative to address issues associated with racial inequity and discrimination in city government and in city neighborhoods. The strategies of the initiative centered on future development for equitable outreach and engagement policies to promote building relationships and collaborations among city employees and among residents in the city neighborhoods. Whenever possible, POLs were used to promote transparency and flexibility, especially when working with the historically underrepresented, marginalized residents of the neighborhood (Department of Neighborhood, 2014; Oshun et al., 2011).

In order to facilitate diverse representation in the planning process, the POL model used in White Center, an urbanized area in King County not incorporated as part of a city, became an innovative tool to promote civic involvement in this immigrant neighborhood planning process (Oshun et al., 2011). The success of the POL program in White Center encouraged the introduction of this model in this neighborhood during the neighborhood plan update. The focus was to engage more diverse residents in the neighborhood, to empower new leadership, and to strengthen links between the minority, immigrant, and refugee communities and the local government (Oshun et al., 2011). The POL was modified and became known as Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaisons (POEL). In this immigrant neighborhood, the POEL program was set to accomplish the following goals: a) enhance communication between the city government and the historically underrepresented neighborhood residents; b) articulate community perspectives on physical, social and economic services and determine priorities for meeting community vision and needs; and c) increase diverse stakeholder participation in the neighborhood

plan update (Oshun et al., 2011). The POELs were independent contractors deployed to a given neighborhood when a planning issue affecting it was being considered and residents' input was desired.

Neighborhood Planning Literature

A review of literature on neighborhood planning revealed that the evolving diverse neighborhood residents in planning provides guidance and knowledge in decision making that will shape the future of their neighborhoods. However, some subgroups of residents are often underrepresented in this process. The POEL program was intended to provide residents new to the planning process with the opportunity to present their perspectives on the issues that would affect the physical, economic, and social conditions of their neighborhood (Michels & De Graaf, 2011).

According to Putnam (2000), the success of democracy in the United States relies on the civic and political engagement of every member of the community. Neighborhood planning increases public engagement and encourages people to listen to a variety of opinions that contribute to making legitimate decisions (Michels & De Graaf, 2011).

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Problem Statement

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Michels and De Graaf (2011) wrote that community participation and engagement in neighborhood planning has a positive effect on democracy. Participation encourages fairness and diversity of opinions in the decision-making process (Michels & De Graaf, 2011). However, involving a neighborhood with diverse cultural and ethnic residents in the planning process and representing their views remains challenging due to certain barriers (Oshun et al., 2011). These barriers include communicating in English about

planning information, which takes a variety of forms, ranging from public meetings to detailed technical analyses (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012). Lack of time, lack of information, persistent language and cultural bias, lack of support services (such as transportation and child care), lack of active outreach, and unfamiliarity with the planning process are additional possible barriers to participation (Oshun et al. 2011). In addition, Oshun et al. (2011) noted that some groups may lack trust or are hesitant to participate due to religious and cultural norms.

Despite some community outreach attempts, the representation of these historically underrepresented communities at public meetings in the neighborhood was limited or nonexistent in the years prior to POEL program implementation. Lack of engagement, poor communication, and lack of inclusion in the planning and decision-making process can result from these circumstances. This is important because the historically underrepresented are usually vulnerable to planning decisions due to their absence from meetings and the lack inputs before decisions are made on projects or on amendments to the neighborhood plan. Most literature about community engagement in urban planning is critical about limited involvement of residents in planning. However, little attention has been paid to the exploration of the POEL program as a tool to alleviate this problem. The research will address this gap and further explore informal and creative engagement methods and skills manifest in the role of the POEL.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine if the POEL program has been effective in encouraging the residents of the historically underrepresented communities to

participate in the neighborhood planning process. The challenge was how to remove barriers limiting these diverse residents' involvement as active participants in the democratic process. I relied on interviews as my primary source of data. I interviewed two City Planners, two community coordinators, four former POELs and one member each of two nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for information to support this qualitative case study. I also relied on government records, such as the comprehensive plan, and neighborhood area plans for information to supplement my research. I compared the POEL program and the traditional public forum process to determine if the POEL program was more inclusive in bringing diverse new voices and perspectives into the public discussion (Oshun et al., 2011).

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following four research questions:

RQ1: How does the POEL program encourage minority, immigrant, and underrepresented residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process?

RQ2: What is the common theme of the POEL program and how is this approach different from the traditional form of soliciting public input on neighborhood planning?

RQ3: How is the language barrier addressed as a way to improve communication between the diverse resident groups and the government?

RQ4: How does the POEL program meet the challenges of encouraging

participation from groups with histories of past disenfranchisement or past

cultural norms that discourage planning participation and engagement?

Theoretical Framework

The participatory democratic theory formed the theoretical foundation of this

study (Hilmer, 2010). The concept of participatory democracy refers to democratic

principles and practices that allow for the collective participation of citizens in public

decision-making processes (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). These concepts of democratic

theory were made public in the 1970s, outlined in the work of Pateman and C. B.

Macpherson, who developed ideas as a New Left model of democracy. Hilmer (2010)

explained that the central principle of participatory democracy is that people have equal

rights to liberty and that this liberty or freedom will succeed in a society that encourages

equality and fair treatment of its residents. The author also proposed that when residents

in a community participate, they nurture concerns for collective problems and work

together to find solutions by taking a sustained interest in the government process.

Participatory democracy allows minority, immigrant, and underrepresented residents the

opportunity to participate in the process (Hilmer, 2010). Participatory democracy and the

American concept of government share the same philosophy of government that

guarantees freedom of expression. It encourages diverse opinion in decision-making that

reflects the will and desires of the people (Hilmer, 2010).

Participatory planning brought about by citizen movements in the 1960s has

influenced the democratization of public decision-making in planning (Hou & Kinoshita,

2007). This citizen movement envisions a situation in which maximum participation in the community will help organize a form of self-government, especially in areas that are away from the center of traditional political activities (Levinson & Krizek, 2008). Participatory democracy lost momentum in the 1990s and was considered weak (Hilmer, 2010). More recent studies have shown a renewed public interest, which suggests that the next decade, may witness the recovery of participatory democracy (Hilmer, 2010).

The objective of participatory democracy is to encourage participation in the decision-making process, which will ultimately impact lives in the community (Hilmer, 2010). Nonetheless, several barriers have prevented these diverse neighborhood residents from participating. Eydne, Orioli, and Trombi (2009) argued that, in order to improve participatory democracy in the neighborhood, these obstacles must be eliminated. One of the goals of participatory democracy is to create new opportunities for these diverse groups to participate in the planning process.

It is worth noting that participatory democracy is not an absolute solution and is not the only political device (Eydne et al., 2009). The disadvantage of this theory is that it requires government representatives to meet neighborhood residents in government buildings, instead of in places such as their neighborhood, where the people are most comfortable (Eydne et al., 2009). This requirement will continue to create barriers to participation until new strategies are established to enhance changes in the process. This case study examined if the POEL approach was effective in bringing the historically underrepresented communities into the planning process.

Nature of the Study

This research focused on whether the POEL program was successful in bringing diverse neighborhood residents to participate in updating the neighborhood plan. A case study of neighborhood plans, and especially citizen-led neighborhood planning in the city, has far reaching consequences for the city's natural and built environment, identity, and civic capacity (Creswell, 2007; Rohe, 2009; Yin, 2009).

This study is relevant because it involves real-life contemporary context or setting (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). The immigrant neighborhood presents an ideal situation that enables an in-depth understanding of the challenge of ethnic and cultural diversity in relation to facilitating discussion about shared interest in an inclusive manner. Participation in the decision-making process is imperative for contemporary society because it has a unique social, economic, cultural, and educational history (Brenman & Sanchez, 2010; Roberts, 2004). The intent of this study was to uncover the barriers that limit these culturally diverse groups from participating in planning decisions. The overall objective was to develop strategies to mitigate identified barriers and to suggest ways to engage diverse neighborhood residents in the democratic decision-making process (Michaels, 2010).

Definition of Terms

*Barrier***:** Objects real or perceived that impede the participation of the citizens (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012)

*Citizen participation***:** A process that provides private individuals the opportunity to influence public decisions making (Michels & De Graaf, 2010).

*Culturally diverse group***:** This term is used to refer to anyone who is not a United States citizen by birth (U.S. Census, 2010). According to the United States Census (2010), this demographic group includes immigrants such Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipinos, Somali, and Ethiopian immigrants, Hispanics, some Blacks, some naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants such as foreign students, humanitarian migrants, such as refugees, and undocumented migrants.

*Historically underrepresented communities***:** This term is generally used to refer to members of a groups that are conspicuously absent from the planning process. These includes limited English proficient population, minorities such as African Americans, immigrants and refugees, persons with physical disabilities, seniors, and youths. These historically underrepresented groups often consist of people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Neighborhood Planning outreach and Engagement, 2010).

*Neighborhood***:** Definitions of neighborhood vary considerably, but what they have in common is the basic idea that they are sub-areas of towns and cities where physical or social characteristics distinguish them from each other (Oshun et al., 2011)

*Neighborhood planning***:** A process whereby members of a community participate to envision the future development in their neighborhood (Oshun et al., 2011).

Planning, also known as *urban planning* or *city and regional planning***:** This is a dynamic profession that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities. The planning profession helps to create more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient and attractive places for present and future generations. Planning enables civic leaders, business, and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich

people's lives. Proper planning helps communities to envision their future. It helps them find the right balance of new development and essential services, environmental protection, and innovative change (American Planning Association, 2015).

*Public participation***:** A tool that is used in communities to measure attainable objectives and evaluate impact of people's contribution to the community (Lindstrom & Nie, 2008).

*Participatory democracy***:** This concept refers to democratic arrangements and practices that allow for the direct individual and collective participation of citizens in public decision-making process (Michels & De Graaf, 2010).

*Participatory democratic theory***:** This theory lays out the framework of maximum participation of citizens in self-government, especially in sectors of society beyond those that are traditionally understood to be political (Hilmer, 2010).

*POELs***:** These individuals are engaged by the city to facilitate engagement of historically underrepresented groups in the neighborhood planning process (Department of Neighborhoods, 2014).

Stakeholders: These individuals, communities, groups, governments, development agencies, organizations, and partners involve in the development of plans or in support of a project that meets the goals, and aspirations of the community (Rossi et al., 2007, p. 451).

*Social change***:** Social change is any action, activity, or program that affects the social structure, institution, behavior, or attitude of a group of people or community (Giddens, 2006, p. 89). The intention is to harness new ideas, skills, knowledge, or social

infrastructure development that will lead to progress in the community (Giddens, 2006, p.

89). Social change leads to progress where new ideas are assembled to improve social

and shape human condition (Giddens, 2006, p. 89).

Assumptions

There were several fundamental assumptions regarding this study. I assumed that

neighborhood residents with diverse cultural believes and norms would be unwilling to

participate and share their experience in public discourse. There was an assumption that

participants of this study would withhold information about their experiences because of

the difficulty in navigating the neighborhood planning process. Conversely, participants

in this study were eager to participate and were eager to be involved in the decision-

making process. Another assumption was that some participant could withdraw from the

study, but no one withdrew from the study. I assumed that the IRB might not approve the

study because of the vulnerable population in the study. These assumptions were

necessary in the study to give an understanding of the vital role the POEL program would

play in bringing the diverse minority, immigrants and other underrepresented residents to

participate in the neighborhood planning process. In addition, it was assumed that the city

wanted to increase citizen involvement by making the planning decision-making process

accessible to all residents of the community. The idea is to give residents equal and

unobstructed access to the democratic decision-making process.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study focused primarily on the phenomenon of the POEL

program and its efforts to bring the historically underrepresented residents to participate

in the neighborhood planning process. I did not explore any other phenomenon within the region. Since these groups had limited access to participate in neighborhood planning, there must be some barrier to participation, whether real or perceived (Oshun et al., 2011). The underlying issues could be the inconvenience of attending meetings and giving input, or there could be a lack of knowledge of planning processes, lack of English proficiency and lack of information on where planning meetings would take place. These circumstances are examples of barriers to participation.

I recruited a diverse group of participants to interview and collect data. The participants selected for this study included, two City Planners, two Community Coordinators, four former POEL members and one member of each NGO for a total of ten participants. Since the study involved human participants, personal biases may have been introduced to the study. Moreover, introducing my own personal bias and threats may have been out of my control because of the direct contact with the participants during in person interviews. To address this, I acknowledged any expectations of the outcome or turnout of the study to be aware and cautious of becoming inclined to coming up with these conclusions based on the expectations. Subsequently, it was imperative to respect and listen actively to participants while interviewing to cultivate credibility (Creswell, 2013). Developing an interview protocol allowed me to gather detail information from participants about the POEL program.

Limitations

The study has some limitations. Creswell (2009) noted that limitations are the main shortcoming in the design of a study that makes the findings of some results

speculative. The fist limitation is that the selected neighborhood has a total population of

14,597 people (*U.S Census, 2010).* It was impossible to survey the entire population due

to sizeable volume of the data collected. The study, therefore, was limited to a small

sample of the population, which resulted in no possibility to generalization to any

population group.

The second limitation was that the views of the participants may not reflect those

of the selected neighborhood residents. The study was an exploratory method, not an

explanatory one; although some correlations may be evident, no claims can be made

about cause-and-effect relationships. A final limitation was my own bias from experience

as a City Planner. However, I took steps not to allow that bias to impact the study

The interpretation of the data was not subject to my biases at every stage of the research

process. I used written responses in addition to face-to-face interviews. At the data

coding stage, I ensured that coded the interview data was accurate and reliable.

Significance

In any democratic society, one of the essential components in the formulation of

public policy is citizen participation (Turner, 2014). One definition is to measure the

attainable objectives and to evaluate the impact of public contributions to the community

(Lindstrom & Nie, 2008). Michels and De Graaf (2010) stated that participation is

composed of direct and collective inputs by citizens in public decision-making process.

The significance of this study was to encourage diverse participation in the

planning process, public policy, and democracy as well as the promotion of social

change. The effectiveness of community outreach and engagement was to increase

awareness, develop relations, and encourage social change. Another significance to the study, was to determine if the POELs were effective in bringing the historically underrepresented neighborhood residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process. The findings of this study may serve as a guide to deal with the absence of diverse residents from neighborhood planning.

The results from these findings could provide guidance to the city on developing strategies and policies to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the POEL in the neighborhood. Furthermore, this study could reveal what factors affect the inability to participate in the planning process. Another point of significance is that it confirms the unequal treatment of ethnic and cultural minorities in the democratic decision-making process (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012).

Griffin (2009) stated that when people at the community level mobilize to advance their social status, various changes take place in the community, both individually and within each ethnic group. People develop the skills and abilities to make informed and effective decisions for the public good, which increases neighborhood residents' participation in implementing neighborhood projects and plans that are effective, efficient, and sustainable. Comprehensive understanding of these diverse residents could enhance neighborhood relationships; understanding could bring new voices into the process of resolving problems and thereby create positive social change.

Summary

The focus of this study was to explore if the POEL program was effective in bringing the historically underrepresented residents in the immigrant neighborhood to

participate in the neighborhood planning process. Community engagement and participation is not intuitive and is not irrelevant to residents due to some barriers such as lack of daycare, lack, lack knowledge of the planning process, lack English proficiency for the non-English residents, lack trust and persistent cultural religious norms. As part of the planning process, inclusion of diverse residents in the neighborhood planning is crucial.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature, which was used to design the study. Chapter 3 presents the research design. Chapter 4 will give a detailed account of the result of the research. Chapter 5 will include an interpretation of the study findings, recommendation for further research, and the implications of the work.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Community participation and engagement in neighborhood planning has a positive effect on democracy because it promotes equality and fair treatment of residents involved in making planning decisions (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). Participation encourages fairness and diversity of opinions in the decision-making process (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). However, the traditional avenues of seeking resident input and bringing them into the planning process are limited in the historically underrepresented communities (Oshun et al., 2011). One barrier may be lack of English proficiency (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012). Other potential barriers could include lack of time, lack of childcare, lack of communication, and unfamiliarity with the public processes (Oshun et al., 2011).

The purpose of this study was to determine if the POEL program was effective in encouraging minority, immigrant, and underrepresented residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process. I conducted a qualitative case study to remove these barriers, increase communication, and bring these diverse residents to become active participants in the neighborhood planning process. Waller (2010) suggested that meaningful engagement involving neighborhood residents is a precursor to successful neighborhood planning processes. This meaningful engagement process is one of the hallmarks of the American democratic process. Through a research design based on the participatory democratic theory, this study sought to understand these planning processes and to validate the POEL program through an in-depth review of the historical, political,

and social structure of the immigrant neighborhood (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012; Oshun et al., 2011).

Based on the participatory democratic theory as the theoretical framework, this literature review will draw a comparison and take a look on the involvement of minority and immigrants in indigenous neighborhood planning in some cities in the United States. The comparison will enable me to draw certain themes to define the relevance of this literature review. Furthermore, the literature review will explore the reasons for the neighborhood plan update and the impact this process will have on the growing minority and immigrant population. Thus, bringing these diverse groups into the planning fold will give them a chance to gradually gain the skill and knowledge to engage in the planning discussions. Furthermore, the involvement of these groups will make it easier to implement neighborhood plans or approve project proposals. Another important aspect is to acknowledge the impacts these decisions will have on the daily lives of individuals and the community in general. Another issue worth considering is the different aspects of building relationships within the diverse ethnic groups and how the outreach and engagement process creates an environment of inclusion in the process. The literature review will also explore the progress that has been made towards relationship building between the diverse historically underrepresented residents and the city.

Literature Review Strategy

To identify relevant literature for this study, the following databases were used: Public Policy and Administration, Political Science Complete, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, and Sage. Personal affiliations afforded access to the professional databases of

the American Planning Association, American Institute of Certified Planners, and American Association of Public Administrators. Books provided additional articles for the literature review. The literature review also relied on other sources within Walden University that cited a particular article relevant to neighborhood planning and community outreach and engagement, which did not appear in key words searches.

The following keywords were used individually and in combination: *neighborhood, outreach, engagement, liaison, participation, participatory democratic theory, diversity and inclusion, underrepresented marginalized residents, immigrant, minority, deliberation, collaboration, community-based planning, neighborhood planning process,* and *comprehensive planning.* The search included articles relevant to the study in the present decade.

Theoretical Foundation

Historical Roots of Participatory Democratic Theory

Kaufman (1996) first application of "participatory politics" was the ultimate inception of participatory democratic theory use within the political context (Hilmer, 2010, p. 42). In this new application, Kaufman was influenced by and borrowed themes from the works of John Dewey, C. Wright Mills, and Paul Goodman (Hilmer, 2010). Kaufman (1996) argued that participatory politics will contribute to the human power of thought, feelings and actions (p. 184). Furthermore, articulation of Kaufman's arguments by scholars and practitioners of the era led to creating a framework of participatory democratic theory (Hilmer, 2010). In the 1960s and 1970s, subsequent references to *participation* became increasingly a recurrent theme in American political context

(Hilmer, 2010; Miller, 1987). In 1970, Students of a Democratic Society (SDS) recognized participatory democracy as a distinct theory of democracy during their convention at Port Huron, Michigan in 1964 (Hilmer, 2010).

During the same period, Pateman (1970), influenced by the political thought of J. J. Roussen, J. S. Mills and G. D. H. Cole, contrasted participatory democratic theory with elite and pluralist theory, and concluded that active participation enables residents of a community to self-develop as well as engender positive psychological benefits, including feeling of political efficacy (Hilmer, 2010, pp. 104-105). Pateman was later joined by Macpherson to develop ideas of the New Left model of democracy (Hilmer, 2010). The tenet of this New Left maintains that the core principle of participatory democracy is that people have equal rights and liberty. Furthermore, it states that liberty can only be achieved in a society that foster a sense of political effectiveness, nurtures a concern for collective problem solving and contributes to the foundation of knowledgeable residents and/or citizens capable of taking a sustained interest in the governmental decision-making process (p. 46).

The theory of participatory democratic presents a way in which scholars and practitioners view participation in planning as a means of promoting legitimacy in the decision-making process (Huizar, 2011). This theory is premised on the notion that promoting liberty and freedom in a society encourages equal and fair treatment of its residents (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012; Hilmer, 2010; Huizar, 2011). Providing minority, immigrants, and the underrepresented residents with the opportunity to participate in the planning process is the hallmark of American democracy (Hilmer, 2010; Waller, 2010).

Participatory democracy and the American concept of government share the same philosophy, that which guarantees freedom of expression and encourages equal access and diverse of opinions in decision making that reflects the will and wants of the people (Atuizar, 2011; Hilmer, 2010; Oshun et al., 2011).

Participatory democratic theory is an appropriate framework for this study because it addresses the importance of liberty and encourages equality and fair treatment of neighborhood residents (Hilmer, 2010). The participatory democratic theory provides opportunity for neighborhood residents to be educated and get involved in planning through communication and exchange of ideas through the planning outreach program. The POEL program focuses on a similar strategy of open communication, fair treatment, building relationships, and creating opportunities for inclusion for marginalized Rainier Beach residents. The traditional methods of reaching these diverse ethnic residents are limited or nonexistent (Oshun et al., 2011; Sirianni, 2009). The POEL model created to empower and be instrumental in bringing the knowledge base of these groups to understand the importance of planning action in their neighborhood. In addition, empowering participatory planning promotes consciousness of the facilitation process and the creation and use of relational networks that provide collective power to implement plans. In this way, the residents will become aware of the complex neighborhood problems and the actions involved in the government response to these issues.

Rationale of Participatory Democratic Theory

In urban planning, participation is a process not a product (Oshun et al., 2011). This process involves various stakeholders who determine the goals and outcome of a particular program or project (Oshun et al., 2011). Also, the process in premised on the assumption that every member of the community has unobstructed access to participate in planning decisions (Auizar, 2011). Scholars and practitioners believe that participation gives residents access to decision-making which enables them to exert influence on the decisions being made regarding project facilitation or on developing and implementation of a neighborhood plan (Michels, 2011). The participatory democratic theory provides the framework that allows community residents the freedom and the ability to maintain a sustained interest in the neighborhood plan and in the decision-making process (Hilmer, 2010). As noted by Waller (2010), collaboration among neighborhood residents helped develop relationships that enable them to work together and build trusting relationships.

Another rationale of participatory democratic theory is that it has a multipurpose and multidimensional perspective because of its broad focus on inclusion, especially regarding groups such as minorities, immigrants, and the underrepresented residents. This broad policy focus has the potential of promoting social change as marginal groups are encouraged to provide input and participate in the neighborhood planning process. Apart from giving the residents a voice, participatory democratic theory also has an educational function which involves increasing the civil skills of residents in the neighborhood (Michels, 2011). Furthermore, the process enables the residents to become competent in discussions as they are able to empower and make decisions for the community (Michels,

2011). Another important quality of participatory democratic theory is its integrative function. It helps residents develop a feeling of being part of the community as they become accountable to other members of the community. It contributes in the development of civic virtues, as residents realize the feeling of being a public agent and an important part of the community (Michels, 2011). Participatory democratic theory contributes to greater legitimacy of decisions, as it has been argued that participation plays an important role of producing rules that are acceptable to everyone engaged in the process (Michels, 2011).

Criticism of Participatory Democratic Theory

The concept of democratic participation has been criticized for several reasons. Most criticism of the participatory democratic theory is centered on the decline of this theory in the 1980s (Hilmer, 2010). Scholars and practitioners such as Mansbridge (1999), Hilmer (2010), Michels (2011), and Pateman (2011), posited that participatory democratic theory became less popular in the 1980s because the grass-roots practice faded. Another reason for the decline is that this theory failed to provide citizens with the political education tools necessary to sustain and compete with other form of democratic concepts (Hilmer, 2010). Other reasons for the decline are probably due to the aggressive efforts and activities by scholars and proponents of deliberative democracy whose intentions were to overshadow the progress made by the participatory democracy in past decades. Scholars and practitioners debated to what extent deliberation constitutes participation in the sense that it is defined in participatory democratic theory. Others have maintained that deliberation tends to constitute a form of political participation that has

the potential of being democratic. The attention gained by deliberative democracy has been won in part at the expense of participatory democracy (Hilmer, 2010).

In order to overcome the political shortfall of participatory democratic theory, Pateman (2011) argued that participatory democracy is about democratization. This concept suggests the need for change that could lead to free and equitable access to planning processes. Unlike participatory democratic theory, deliberative democratic theory focuses on the process of deliberation inside the deliberation forum with no interest in the structure and features of the wider society (Pateman, 2011). Consequently, deliberative democracy is not inclusive of a wider society and the political system outside their purview. This presence a sharp contrast with the participatory democratic theory of the 1960s, when the meaning of democracy itself was realistic and resident's participation in the planning process was in the heart of the debate (Pateman, 2011). Furthermore, the rival of participatory democratic theory is eminent as emergence in participatory institutions in other countries such as Netherlands and Port Alegre, Brazil has been progressive (Avritzer, 2009; Michels, 2011). Despite the lack of interest in participatory democracy over the years, its imperium is manifest in contemporary neighborhood planning in most American cities (Pateman, 2011).

Participatory Democratic Theory in this Study

The task of applying participatory democratic theory as the theoretical framework of this study is to identify if the POEL program is effective in bringing the diverse residents of the neighborhood to participate in updating the neighborhood plan. Oshun et al. (2011) observed that engaging diverse residents and/or citizens in long term planning

is frequently problematic because these diverse residents often face barriers that limit their participation. Despite these challenges, the engagement and inclusion of these diverse stakeholders in planning may contribute to attracting wholesome groups of residents with a greater likelihood of long sustainable involvement in the process (Oshun et al., 2011). The lack of the broad inclusion of diverse stakeholders in planning was the subject of a study conducted by the American Planning Association (Farmer, 2012). The outcome of the study showed that Americans support planning and want to be involved but very few have been engaged in planning efforts in their respective communities. The authors found that while half of the Americans surveyed want to be involved in planning, only 16% actually engaged in these activities (Farmer, 2012). This survey indicates that there is a need to improve and involve community members in planning because the present and future health and prosperity of the community will provide tangible results that will benefit the wellbeing of the neighborhood (Farmer, 2012). Furthermore, the American Planning Association study illustrates the importance of planning in the following definition of community planning: thus "community planning and/or neighborhood planning, is a process that seeks to engage members of the community or neighborhood to create more prosperous, convenient, equitable, healthy and attractive places for the present and future generations" (APA, 2012, p. 13).

In the same manner, participatory democracy appears to echo the same sentiments expressed by the American Planning Association. Participatory democracy offers numerous potential benefits directed to impact government processes and operations and foster healthier communities. When members of a community work together they

develop relationships that create a bond of share values about the community.

Participatory democracy is rooted in the same values within the core of American

democracy which gives members of a community the freedom and opportunity to take

part in the debate about their collective problems (Hilmer, 2010).

A review of literature on the subject of public/civic participation and engagement

suggests that participation in planning is a valuable yet an underutilized tool for assisting

community building. The traditional outreach tool of public comments or a large public

hearing had not been a successful standard format for public participation in planning.

This traditional form of public input has proved to be ineffective, especially in diverse

neighborhood with residents from multicultural and bilingual backgrounds (Brenman &

Sanchez, 2012). Within the traditional forum, decision makers often take their cues from

planners without public or resident involvement (Oshun et al., 2011). There is this notion

of us versus them mentality coupled with the feeling of nimbyism, further excludes these

diverse groups from integrating in the planning process. This lack of resident

involvement in the decision-making process affects the level of public input and tends to

limit access to the democratic decision making in plan implementation.

Planning Outreach and Engagement Liaison Program

Planning outreach and engagement in neighborhood planning has experienced

classic setback over the past decade due to the lack of inclusion of certain groups such as

minorities, immigrants, and the underrepresented diverse residents of the community

(Sirianni, 2009). The lack of inclusion of these diverse groups in the planning process

forms the focus of this dissertation. The purpose is to examine if the use of POELs has

been effective in bringing these diverse groups to purposefully participate in the Rainier

Beach neighborhood planning process. Research shows that traditional avenues of

soliciting public inputs are often ineffective. In 2007, the city adopted a strategy designed

to be broad and inclusive based on the trusted advocate model borrowed from the public

health field (Oshun et al., 2011). Consequently, the city designed a process to be more

engaged, diverse and be representative of more voices in the community. The advantage

the city hoped to gain in this process was to strengthen and empower new leadership

within the community with the tools to create a link between the local government and

the diverse multiethnic community groups (Oshun et al., 2011).

The trusted advocate model was a product of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a

national nonprofit organization dedicated to serving children and families by building to

support communities, reforming public institutions, and gathering and evaluating data

that result in positive changes in those communities (AECF, 2007; Oshun et al., 2011).

The trusted advocates were community workers vested in promoting and providing

healthcare services to the community they served. The feedback from the community was

positive as these community members became empowered in making choices that were

solution oriented (Oshun et al., 2011). The premise of the trusted advocate model

according to Annie E. Casey Foundation (2007) is that "people working together on

projects build strong relationships" (p. 7). In the same way, the trusted advocates could

build strong relationships and facilitate collective decision-making by performing a

number of key functions notably: 1) outreach and engagement to link community

members to programs; 2) identify community needs, concerns and preferences; 3) build

social networks and connect people to community organizations; and 4) represent communities in decision-making and organizing and coordinating activities around specific issues (Oshun, et al., 2011).

The trusted advocate model was tested in White Center, Washington, an unincorporated region in King County, Washington, located south of the city. The city used the trusted advocate model to address the lack of inclusion of diverse underrepresented residents during the neighborhood plan update. This was intended to articulate the 2008 Race and Social Justice Initiatives to address the inequity and racial discrimination in government and in the neighborhood (Oshun et al., 2011). The POL model, which has been used to facilitate some level of public engagement in the neighborhood became a fitting assert to usher in the trusted advocate model. The Planning Outreach Liaison was later renamed the POEL as a way to identify with their engagement function in the planning process. The POELs were contractors and were deployed to a given neighborhood when planning issues affecting that neighborhood is being considered and residents' input desired. The POEL function was similar to the traditional way of soliciting input. The strategy was more focused on reaching the underrepresented group often marginalized in the process (Oshun et al., 2011). As noted in the literature, the POEL connected with the historically underrepresented residents in the neighborhood (Neighborhood, 2011). These groups were targeted because of their association with new comers into the neighborhood and were a source to provide enough background information that will elicit effective participation in the planning process (Oshun et al., 2011; Neighborhood Report, 2011). The POEL experienced some

successes in their engagement, which is a testament to the vital role that the trusted advocate model plays in engaging marginalized residents within the participatory process.

Comprehensive Land Use Planning

Comprehensive Land Use Plans and their corresponding regulations, such as zoning, play a vital role in determining the nature of built environment and community design. These zoning regulations control the development of land use and how individual properties are used (Ikeda & Washington, 2015). Zoning regulations might also involve restricting certain activities to specific areas, setting minimum and maximum density to portion of the city, or regulating the size and design of new buildings. In addition, these regulations can protect environmentally critical areas, such as wetlands or wildlife habitat, by limiting or prohibiting development (Ikeda & Washington, 2015). Ikeda & Washington argued that these zoning land use controls allow municipal government to protect the character of neighborhoods and property values, as well as to ensure the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) in Washington State requires that a city zoning law must be consistent with a vision of growth outlined in their comprehensive plan. The GMA stipulates that cities must show that they have enough land to accommodate future growth. In the city, in keeping with its core values and anticipating growth, urban villages have become the hubs of accommodating future growth in the city. Thus, Urban Villages were created to accommodate future growth and focus on bringing marginalized minority, immigrants and refugees into the planning process.

There is a need for inclusion and placing new emphasis on maintaining a sustainable

neighborhood planning process (Chao, 2009; Oshun et al., 2011; Sirianni, 2009)**.**

Comparison of Participatory Approaches in other Cities in the United States

Over the past decades, several cities in the United States have elected to pursue

comprehensive Land use planning in order to implement neighborhood plans to ensure

orderly development to improve health, safety and general welfare of their communities

(Dierwechter, 2013; Oshun et al., 2011; Sirianni, 2009). As this study has identified,

some programs are broad, while others are narrowly targeted. The cities of Portland,

Oregon, San Antonio, Texas; and Minneapolis, Minnesota, are identified as employing

programs focused on strong community participation and engagement due to the

multicultural constituency in these respective cities. However, one recurring theme

running through these studies is the role of planning participation and engagement in

shaping and implementing these programs. Research reveals that the basic requisites of

planning participation in these communities is the easy flow of information and access to

decision-making process, outreach to the public, and access to means of participation and

resources devoted to public participation (Magee, 2012). Although there have been some

successes, they are still some challenges regarding the participation of minorities,

immigrants and the underrepresented groups in these communities due some barriers and

lack of enthusiasm (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012; Oshun et al., 2011; Webster, 2013).

In the City of Portland, Oregon, as in the Pacific Northwest City, Washington,

community members were involved in its 35-year neighborhood association system

(Leistner, 2013). The program known as "Community Connect," assessed the

neighborhood system strengths and weaknesses and sought ways to strengthen the involvement of members of the community, create a welcoming environment for public participation and reinvigorate the partnership between the community and government (community connect, 2005). These efforts focused on how to involve groups in the community that traditionally would not be involved, notably, minorities and members of the growing immigrant and refugee groups (Leistner, 2013). The strategy to dramatically improve public involvement and participatory democracy in the City of Portland was credited to the Five Year Plan by the Office of Neighborhood in partnership with community-based organizations, the government and other local agencies (Leistner, 2013). As noted by Leistner (2013), the impact of this comprehensive involvement led to the implementation of a wide range of initiatives and programs. One program, which led to the creation of leadership training and community organizing by minorities, immigrants and refugees, became known as the Diversity Leadership Program (Leistner, 2013). In working together, relationships with each group and the government were established. Unlike the POEL program in the city, the Diversity Leadership Program in Portland provided an avenue to train local neighborhood groups to develop relationships that would enable them to network. This process offered an opportunity to improve and increase engagement, leading to strengthening participatory democracy in neighborhood planning program (Leistner, 2013).

Community engagement in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, operates under the Department of Neighborhoods and Community Relations (Minnesota Report update, 2014). The primary purpose of the community engagement program is to empower

people to influence city government decisions that shape the city and their daily lives.

The community engagement goal was to enhance community building through

community outreach and providing educational opportunities to underrepresented groups

including minorities, immigrant and members of the diverse ethnic community in the

neighborhood. One of the important innovations of the community engagement program

was the creation of the Access and Outreach Team (City of Minneapolis, 2014).

The strategy of the Access and Outreach Team was to build connections with

communities where cultural norms or practices, language or disability, limit knowledge

and access to government and planning processes (City of Minneapolis, 2014). The

communities served by this program included African Americans, Latinos, Southeast

Asian, the elderly and the disabled (City of Minneapolis, 2014). Among these groups

English language is the largest barrier to planning participation (Report, 2014). Like the

POEL program in the city, the Access and Outreach Teams consist of specialists who

speak Spanish, Somali, and Hong languages fluently and are thus able to communicate

with the diverse ethnic groups. These communication processes facilitated understanding

of the issues, by promoting interest and increasing participation in the process. In

addition, the Access and Outreach Team work with the diverse ethnic groups to limit

their English Language barrier through the city's limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP)

(Report, 2014). The community dialogue forum was the most effective form of

community engagement. In this format, the Access and Outreach Teams help to facilitate

dialogue between city staff and members of the diverse ethnic groups. Another important

aspect was that, the meetings locations were usually held within the respective immigrant

communities, which provides easy access to all interested community members. The meetings gave each community an opportunity to learn about neighborhood initiatives and concerns, as well as to develop relationships that bring more meaning to participation in the planning process. The City of Minneapolis is working to improve the community system and engagement by building support in these communities and further develop more strategies to improve on parts of the system that is not working well for many of the ethnic groups.

The City of San Antonio, Texas, employed a unique approach to planning outreach and engagement process that seems to be unrelated to the approaches discussed above. Berry, Portney and Thomson (1993) observed that the City of San Antonio had a weak public participation program because weaker and competing organizations existed in other parts of the city. San Antonio on the other hand, has supported fewer programs in the city neighborhoods than other cities in this study (Magee, 2012). However, in recent years, San Antonio has been reviving the approach to community engagement in several fronts. One of the approaches is in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, in which community engagement constitutes an important element, some policy frameworks were created that focused directly towards public outreach programs (San Antonio Comp. plan, 2020). It is anticipated that while other factors may influence policy development, community input will play a significant role as attention to community participation is on the increase (Comp. plan, 2020). Another approach was the 2015 Mayor's Task Force program that focused on preserving Dynamic and Diversity Neighborhoods in the City of San Antonio was initiated. The goal was to ensure that public participation especially in inner-city

neighborhoods is inclusive and benefits all neighborhood residents (Task Force Report, 2015). As a result of the Mayo's task force, government officials have become attuned to the neighborhood issues where a high level of community participation is eminent. Brenman and Sanchez (2012) proposed that communities with greater public participation have a strong tendency to tailor government decisions and actions to support community-identified preferences. This interaction ensures that public input is taken seriously by the government and neighborhood residents participating in making important decisions for the community was encouraged.

These two initiatives in the City of San Antonio, the Mayor Task Force and Community and Engagement Outreach program, highlighted the importance of public input in neighborhood planning and the decision-making process. In this regard, the Mayor's Task Force has a goal to identify and encourage investment into inner-city neighborhoods to minimize the problems of crime and unemployment impacting the residents and to encourage awareness and engagement in developing their communities. The Mayor's Task Force is the key in changing the dynamics and culture of the neighborhood residents from nonparticipation to being involved in the planning meetings and open forum discussions related to improving life in the neighborhoods of San Antonio.

To facilitate planning participation in neighborhood planning, cities such as the Pacific Northwest City, Portland, Minneapolis, and San Antonio have developed community engagement programs to facilitate inclusion in their participatory democratic processes. In this Pacific Northwest City, the POEL will continue to provide and assist

city departments in fostering community engagement and planning outreach. This process will enable community members to continue forging connections, foster relationships and receive rich, diverse and meaningful civic participation (Community engagement report 2013 to 2014).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine if POEL program has been effective in encouraging minority, immigrant, and underrepresented residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process. The importance of planning participation as a component of democratic governance has been a reoccurring theme in the literature. Oshun et al. (2011) asserted that participatory planning should not only seek to understand and articulate community differences but should also provide incentives and ways for interaction and negotiation among community groups (p. 2). Repeatedly, planning participation is identified as valuable in increasing the public view of government. It is also identified by its actions as being credible, trustworthy, and beneficial in policy implementation with the hope of promoting social equity in the decision-making process (Race and Social Justice Initiatives, 2012).

This study also explores the impact of continuous growth and how the current trend of population growth in impacting US cities and neighborhoods. The study results include identifying ways of evaluating government effectiveness in collaboration with the public and elements of collaboration that contribute to achieving success or failures in government programs in the three cities identified in the study. Several principles of planning participation were evident throughout the literature as was Arnstein's (1969)

contention that meaningful participation occurs where public participation could influence the decision-making process.

Summary

Planning outreach and engagement in neighborhood planning is an important tool of social change (Oden et al, 2010; Oshun et al., 2011). Although methods of planning outreach and engagement may vary in different contexts, the theme of participatory democratic governance remains the focus of the study. Planning outreach and engagement provides an opportunity for inclusion in the democratic decision-making process for residents who may not have been able to participate in the process. Researchers and practitioners have often underscored the role planning outreach and engagement plays in social change. In perspective, interpretation of this process tends to over shadow the importance of bringing diversity and inclusion in the democratic process (Brenmen & Sanchez, 2012; Oden et al, 2010; Oshun et al., 2011).

Additionally, the participation is compromised when certain members of the community are disenfranchised from the democratic process. In building a collaborative environment it is important to understand the regulatory process and its limitations. Community education forums, dialogue, and interaction amongst these diverse groups are helpful and important in building a collaborative environment. For neighborhood participation to be successful, the participation process must be reciprocal and committed toward building relations that are necessary investment for success (Oshun et al., 2011). The impact of inadequate participation in planning by residents of the neighborhood

constitutes inequity and a threat to social justice (Brener & Phillip, 2010; Oden et al., 2010).

Oshun et al. (2011) argued that language remains the principal barrier to communication between local governments and the diverse marginalized groups. Cultivating an effective neighborhood network will require the city to commit to develop relationships through openness and encourage input from residents in the neighborhood. Furthermore, the use of the POEL program to overcome barriers to participation and empower diverse cultures and interest is paramount (Oshun et al., 2011).

In this literature review, the study focused on the historic roots of the participatory democratic theory, as well as the rationale of employing participatory democratic theory in urban planning. The literature review also focused on the critiques and benefits of the participatory democratic theory in neighborhood planning process. The last section dealt with neighborhood planning and the use of the planning outreach and engagement model to facilitate inclusion of the diverse groups into the planning process. Finally, the chapter featured a comparison of planning outreach and engagement in three cities and the lessons that can help shape the discussion and influence further research. Chapter 3 includes research methodology that will be useful to the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Urban planning practice has evolved to include residents' inputs in making planning decisions. Traditional avenues of influencing planning decisions are not intuitive for diverse, historically underrepresented neighborhood residents because they are usually not involved in this form of public engagement (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012). The purpose of this study was to explore whether the POEL program was effective in bringing the residents of an immigrant neighborhood to participate in the neighborhood planning process.

In the context of this study, the POEL refers to persons engaged by the city to facilitate and encourage the inclusion of the historically underrepresented groups in the neighborhood planning process (Department of Neighborhood Report, 2014). This study used a qualitative case study approach to examine the effectiveness of the POEL program. The study relied primarily on two forms of data sources: interviews and a review of official government records, such as the comprehensive plan, neighborhood area plans and official reports documenting the past and present community engagement program in the neighborhood. These documents were obtained from an American City in the Pacific Northwest, which has authority over the various stages of the neighborhood planning processes. The interviews were semi-structured and face to face with two City Planners, two Community Coordinators, four former POELs, and one member of each local nongovernmental organization (NGOs).

This qualitative case study research was conducted in an immigrant neighborhood within an American City in the Pacific Northwest. This has the potential to introduce bias because I am employed in this city as a land use planner with duties and responsibilities to regulate land-use applications in compliance with city municipal codes, which tacitly fulfils the policies and goals of the comprehensive plan of the Pacific Northwest City. I addressed this potential bias through a variety of measures such as early disclosure, well-crafted interview questions, and explain how participation has the potential to help the neighborhood residents and the city government gain better understanding of neighborhood planning practices. In creating this neutral and straightforward process, I enabled the outcome to depend on the data collected.

Research Questions

RQ1:   How does the POEL program encourage minority, immigrant, and the underrepresented residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process?

RQ2:   What is the common theme of the POEL program and how is this approach different from the traditional form of soliciting public input on neighborhood planning?

RQ3:   How is the language barrier addressed as a way to improve communication between the diverse resident groups and the government?

RQ4:   How does the POEL program meet the challenges of encouraging participation from groups with histories of past disenfranchisement or past cultural norms that discourage planning participation and engagement?

Design of the Study

This section describes the research design used for the study. It addresses the

qualitative research method, particularly the case study approach, the role of the

researcher, the sample population, the data collection methods, the data analysis plan,

ethical consideration, and trustworthiness.

Qualitative Research Method

Creswell (2013) proposed that a researcher using any research method must be

able to determine how the research method addresses the research question in the study.

Although there are characteristics common to all forms of qualitative research, each

research method uses different concepts and approaches to emphasize the issues

depending on the qualitative approach to the inquiry (Creswell, 2013, p. 46). The

researcher therefore decides to use an approach that fulfils the objective of the research.

The selection of the research approach is based on the researcher's knowledge and ability

to use it for the intended purpose (Creswell, 2013).

In this study, a qualitative research method is appropriate because of the ability to

measure, assess, determine, and examine any human entity with rigorous processes and

procedures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative research is appropriate when the

research is exploratory in nature and where the need exists to present an in-depth account

of the topic, as well as when the researcher needs to learn in order to provide a narration

and the viewpoints of the participants (Creswell, 2013). I selected qualitative research for

this study based on its ability to provide descriptions, interpretations, and conclusions

regarding how people experiences are given such attention on a research topic (Creswell, 2013).

In a qualitative study, researchers can gather information about the human entity to address social concerns, issues, norms, needs, and problems with direct inputs from participants. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) described qualitative research as consisting of interpretive practices used to study the world through interviews, conversations, photographs, recording, and other form of representations (p. 3). One of the unique characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher is the instrument of the study. This enables the researcher to focus on addressing the meaning participants attach to the data and issues. The nature of this inquiry demands that the issues and policies relate to each other and to the environment in which these issues are present. This study will be conducted in the environment in which the events have occurred or are occurring. The research questions are focused on exploring if the POEL program is successful in bringing the diverse residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process. A qualitative approach will facilitate the depth needed to answer the research questions while providing the richness of detail to build the context in which participation in decision-making and the collective understanding of events occurs.

Case Study Qualitative Approach

The case study qualitative approach has been used to mean different things in different situations. However, in qualitative inquiry, case study research refers to an intensive study of a case within a bounded integrated system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Since case studies occur in different discipline and studies, a number of definitions have

emerged to address the nature and complexities of case study research. Yin (2014)

defined a case study as "an imperial inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon

(the case) within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between the

phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). The author also proposed

that "a case study inquiry copes with a situation having many variables, relies on multiple

sources of data, and uses theoretical propositions to guide the collection and analysis of

data" (p. 17). Creswell (2013) maintained that "a case study research is a qualitative

approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple

bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving

multiple sources of information such as, interviews, observation, documents, and reports"

(p. 97).

The immigrant neighborhood will serve as a suitable case study for the following

reasons. First, the diverse historically underrepresented residents of Immigrant

Neighborhood are culturally and ethnically diverse and some are non-English speaking

individuals. The unique combination of these groups calls for a close examination of their

history and the type of impact they will have or are having on the neighborhood planning

process.

Second, participatory democratic theory pushes the researchers to examine the

social and historic roots of planning practices within this community in order to gain an

in-depth understanding of those practices that will enable these groups to be engaged and

included in the neighborhood planning processes (Harper, 2012).

Third, the flexible nature of qualitative research will allow the use of data collection and data analysis methods to proceed through the research process (Creswell, 2013).

The immigrant neighborhood and its diverse residents are also a good choice for a case study because it may help reveal additional factors to consider when pursuing neighborhood planning in this area of city. In this neighborhood, there is a large community of the underrepresented, which consists of residents from several ethnic groups, most non-English speaking, foreign born with unique culture and norms (Rainier Beach Report, 2014). In addition, the residents of neighborhood also include white Americans, consisting of 29.9% of population to 69.5% of the city population. African Americans/Blacks consist of 31% of the neighborhood population to 7.9% of city's population. The Asian population also consists of 29% of neighborhood population to 13.8% of city's population. In comparison, while the white population remains the dominant population group in the city, in the neighborhood, the white population is becoming a minority due to the increase in African/Black, Asian and other ethnic population groups in the neighborhood. This diversity is a factor to consider when pursuing planning activities in the neighborhood.

Justification of the Case Study Approach

Although there are many kinds of qualitative research designs, Creswell identified only five as the most common in the field of social sciences: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2013). The choice of any design approach depends on what is being studied, which starts with the purpose, the

audience, and the interest of the researcher (Patton, 2012). Merriam and Tisdell (2014) observed that qualitative research tends to be more holistic than specific and a qualitative researcher is interested in understanding how people interpret their world experience and what meaning they attribute to the experience (p. 6). The holistic characteristics of qualitative research fits into a wider aim of this study given that the focus is the inclusion of minority, immigrants, and the underrepresented residents in the neighborhood planning process which leads to facilitate social change in the community (Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). I chose the qualitative research to enable individuals share their experiences and express their thoughts on participation in planning as a community development approach to neighborhood planning.

Prior to deciding to conduct a case study, I considered conducting an ethnographic study. Ethnographic study focuses on developing a complex complete description of an entire cultural group or a sub-set of a group (Creswell, 2013). This approach may have guided my research in trying to define the ethnic and racial differences between members of the different groups involved in the study. Although this approach may assist in explaining ethnic and racial attitudes about participation in planning, it may also identify some unique cultural norms which each group may have that will create distrust with government and in the planning participation process.

The participatory democratic theory framework used in this study hopes to ensure freedom of expression and encourage diverse opinions in planning decision-making. The goal is to ensure inclusion of all marginalized groups to participate in planning and provide inputs in the planning decisions being made in their neighborhood.

Qualitative research is the preferred method when the research is exploring the *how* or *why* of an issue (Creswell, 2013). The researcher does not control events, and the focus of the study is contemporary rather than studying a cultural group or sub-set of a group (Creswell, 2013).

Sampling of the Study

This research will use a data collection method that involves focusing on real types of data and procedures of gathering them. To conduct a qualitative sampling strategy, it is important to record information being gathered digitally or manually. It is also important to consider storage of this data to be collected. The crucial concerns are to ensure that proper ethical standards are maintained during the data collection process (Creswell, 2013).

In this study, I choose to use purposeful sampling because in qualitative research, is comprised of the selection of individuals and sites to inform the research study, understand the research problem and the phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2013). I needed to decide who or what to sample, what form the sample will take, and how many people or sites need to be sampled (Creswell, 2013).

Access to Participants

In order to facilitate purposeful sampling strategy, I obtained permission from one city departments, two non-governmental organizations and local churches for permission to use their offices for the study. I contacted these agencies by phone and included a brief background of the study, as well as purpose and potential significance. In addition, I expressed my intention to conduct the study in a location that will be comfortable devoid

of distractions and interruptions. I received permission before conducting the study. After obtaining permission to conduct the study, I contacted two City Planners, two Community coordinators, four former POEL members, and one member of each of the two NGOs. I emailed each of the participants a list of ten questions to review before the scheduled interview (see Appendix A). On the day of the scheduled interview, participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix B), where they were informed about their rights and responsibilities as participants in the study.

In order not to disrupt participants' schedule and activities, I offered to conduct the interviews in either the participants' place of work or at a public setting such as in conference rooms in the city hall, or in community centers or in church office. I made sure the setting for the interview is comfortable and convenient to the participants. My familiarity with the city's departments and the immigrant neighborhood enabled me to make efficient use of my time in conducting interviews and gathering the data I need for my research. My familiarity with research site helped me to understand the data I gather and in addition, helped guide my data collection from additional sources

Sample Size

The one important issue in sample strategy is determining the sample size. It is also important to use the appropriate sample size to achieve correct analysis and results from the data. Therefore, I decided to sample ten participants for the study which included, 2 City Planners, 2 community coordinators, 4 former POELs (POEL), and 2 members of two local non-governmental organizations. I choose to use diverse group of participants in the study to reflect on the diversity of the neighborhood, known to be the

most diverse neighborhood in the entire city (Comp Plan, 2015). These categories of participants will help to ensure that I gather political, practical, and current views on planning practices and the level of inclusion of marginalized groups in these planning processes. Consequently, I sampled and recruited a total of 10 participants for the study.

Role of the Researcher

In this study, I will serve as a participant observer. The role of a researcher is to secure data from unobtrusive or nondestructive means (Creswell, 2012). I will assure that performing the research does not intimidate, disrupt, intrude, or cause harm to the participants. I will gather my data from two sources: interviews, and official government documents. My role as a land use planner for the city has provided me the opportunity to familiarize myself with the neighborhood's historical data. In order to obtain these data, I will ensure that I have proper permission to use and collect the data I need for the research.

The interview portion of the data collection phase may present the appearance of conflict of interest since I will conduct the interview myself. I will be conducting the interviews within my work environment. I may have professional relationship with some of the participants due to my role as a land use planner for the city. My existing relationship with the participants is as a colleague rather than as a supervisor or manager or a person in higher authority over the participants. As a land use planner, I do not supervise or exert power over my colleagues.

Another consideration in the research is the potential of researcher bias. As an employee with this city, my role as a steward and regulator of land use and buildings is to

preserve and enhance equity, livability, safety and health of the community. This will

present the potential to insert substantial bias, especially given the topic of this research,

which involves engaging neighborhood residents in the planning decision making

process. However, my role as a Land Use Planner does not focus on drafting policies for

the neighborhood planning program. My role involves regulating land use incompliance

with the City's Municipal Code (SMC). In order to address the potential bias in the

interview portion of the research, I will identify the intent of this research and explain

how participation and engagement in the planning process will provide better

understanding of the neighborhood and current planning practices.

Instrumentation

The initial contact with the city department's representative to request permission

to use the site for interviews, I got a response without hesitation by phone granting my

request. Furthermore, additional requests from other contacts for the use of their sites at

different locations within the immigrant community were also granted. I proceeded and

submitted my application to conduct the study at the different sites that I have identified

in the IRB application. Furthermore, I submitted a formal application with documents to

IRB. The IRB approved the study on May 30th, 2018. The approval number for this study

is 05-30-0234560.The IRB approval gave me the permission to contact the participants

and start the data collection process.

Data Collection

The research questions will be exploratory in nature and I directed the interview

questions to help provide insight into the last research question, of how does the POEL

program meet the challenges of encouraging participation from groups with histories of past disenfranchisement or past cultural norms that discourage planning participation and engagement. I asked questions related to participants' perceptions about neighborhood planning and the decision-making process to find out if the interview data would provide insights into the other research questions.

I conducted the interview myself and I did audio record the interview discussions. Also, I used high quality recording equipment to increase the reliability of the data collection procedures (Creswell, 2013). I transcribed the interview discussion to be analyzed later. In the absent of video recording, I considered audio recording of the interview as a less intrusive action and l created a comfortable atmosphere for the individual participating in the interview. I anticipated each interview to take approximately one half to an hour but l allowed more time for additional discussion from the participants.

Interview

Interviews were to be the primary source of data collection for this research study. The interviews to be tied to the following research questions; (a) how does the POEL program bring the diverse Rainier Beach residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process? (b) How does the POEL program meet the challenges in encouraging participation from groups with histories of past disenfranchisement or past cultural norms with a mindset that discourages public discourse vis-à-vis, planning participation and engagement?

The interview questions for the study included the following:

1) How do you define planning outreach and engagement?

2) Neighborhood Planning is a specific planning approach aimed at creating livable and sustainable environment of for its residents. What is your view of this approach to planning?

3) What specific role do you play in Rainier Beach Neighborhood Planning?

4) How often do you meet to discuss planning related issues that affect the neighborhood?

5) What factors inhibit your involvement in planning in your neighborhood?

6) What factors influence neighborhood residents to participate in neighborhood planning?

7) How effective was the POEL program in bringing diverse neighborhood residents to participate in making planning decision?

8) What should be done to improve communication between the city government and non-English speaking residents?

9) How do you get information about neighborhood related activities and does your schedule provide enough time for you to attend events or meetings?

10) How do your cultural norms or beliefs dissuade you from participating in planning activities?

Yin (2014) proposed that interviews are the most important source of data collection in a case study research. Whether using a standardized question format or a more informal conversational format, the key to a successful interview is the ability to ask open-ended, unbiased, probing questions and to patiently allow the interviewee the

chance to respond, as well as to listen and learn throughout the interview (Patton, 2014). I

anticipated that the official government records and documents will provide additional

information that was not been captured from the interview process. The interviews

enabled city staff to share their own perspectives about the POEL program. Table 2

below, illustrates the interview protocol table for the Qualitative study.

Table 2. 1

Interview Protocols Chart for the Qualitative Study

Study Attributes	Explore if the POELs have been successful in bringing the minorities, immigrants and the underrepresented to participate in Rainier Beach neighborhood Planning process.
Duration of the Interview	30 minutes to 1 hour
Structured and unstructured	Why minorities, immigrants and the underrepresented residents
Open-ended questions	City Planners, Community Coordinator, Former POELs, and Ngo members
Inform participant about their rights to privacy	Participants' identity will not be revealed and Have the right to width draw from the study
Consent Form	Participants' Signatures

Note: Interview protocols chart for the qualitative study.

Protocol

The interview protocol can help boost credibility and dependability of a

qualitative study (Creswell, 2013). I provided the interview questions and the interview

protocol along with the invitation to participate in the study. This allowed the participants

to understand the purpose of the study and the parameters of the research in order to

decide about whether to participate. The interview protocol provided additional key

pieces of information about the study: 1) I conducted this research in my capacity as a

student and not as a Land Use Planner with an American City in the Pacific Northwest ;

2) the participant responses to the interview questions remained anonymous; 3) the

participants can stop the interview at any time; 4) the participants can invite others to the

interview; and 5) the participants can choose to submit written responses to the questions

as an alternative to participating in an interview. This protocol aims to make the

participants comfortable with the interview process. At the end of the interviews, I

debriefed the participants to ensure they remain fully informed about their participation in

the interview process. I allowed the participants to ask any questions about the research,

their role in the research, or any aspect of their participation. Also, I allowed the

participants to express any additional thoughts about the research or the interview

process.

Government Records and Documents

The official government records and documents constituted another source of

information for this study (Patton, 2014, p. 376). The official government records may

include meeting minutes, reports of neighborhood open house forum discussions,

comprehensive plan updates, Neighborhood Plan updates, minutes and reports of the

Food Innovation District, minutes of the Action Coalition meetings, interdepartmental

records of working agreements, city reports and initiatives, and newspaper clippings and

correspondence (Yin, 2014). Merriam (2014) explained that these types of documents are

ready-source of data and they can exist both in physical form and on-line (p. 162).

The collection and analysis of the official government records and documents

helped to address four research questions with an aim to find common theme regarding if

the diverse ethnic and cultural group's participation in planning has been effective and sustainable over an extended period. The interview data combined with the data from the official government records and documents helped to provide answers to the four research questions about the effectiveness of the POEL program in bringing these diverse residents to participate in Neighborhood Planning.

Data Analysis

The task of analyzing the data collected involved multiple of steps, which included reading and examining, categorizing, coding for themes, and searching for patterns, insights and connections (Yin, 2014). At the end of the data collection, the details of the data were recorded into a database file. I began by gathering all the data into a final list of codes before I begin to code the data. The initial plan was to import data into Nvivo 11 Pro computer software for data management and analysis.

However, the Nvivo 11 Pro was not available, so I decided to code the data manually. In analyzing the data, I followed the method recommended by Saldana and Tisdell (2015), allowing ideas to emerge from the data. I made preliminary notes about anticipated codes that might emerge from data analysis (Yin, 2014). Further, the data were organized into codes or meaningful segments (Creswell, 2013, p.180). I combined these codes to form categories or themes using the protocol described in Saldana and Tesdell (2015). The data were presented in two formats: Tables and charts. Yin (2014) suggested several activities to help with data analysis such as comparing data from the interviews, placing data into categories, creating chat display such as flow chat or graphics, looking at frequency of events, and constructing a time line.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research ensures that the conclusions of a research represent the data collected. The quality of qualitative research therefore depends on how the researcher ensures trustworthiness in the entire procedure and process.

To ensure credibility and internal validity, I triangulated the data collected from the government document with the interview data (Creswell, 2013). I conducted the interviews and also invited additional interview participants until no additional information was produced. I transcribed the interview data in Microsoft word and coded the data to form patterns or categories. During the coding process, l ensured an acceptance rate of reliability which increased the credibility of the data analysis process. I took these measures to ensure that I produced accurate description of the view points and perspectives of the neighborhood residents and the city government.

Transferability (External Validity)

To ensure transferability and external validity in qualitative research, I was concerned with the extent that the findings of this study can be transferred to other settings or environments, so, I choose to interview participants from the different roles in the city government (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In addition, I choose participants from the different ethnic groups considered in the study to ensure variation. In this way, the results of my research can serve as an accurate representation of the viewpoint of the individual ethnic groups and city government staff. In general, I gave readers and participants the opportunity to learn from the study, to develop further ideas and

understanding and to generate ideas that can be used to enhance or facilitate knowledge in another environment.

Credibility (Internal Validity)

To ensure credibility and internal validity in qualitative research includes finding sources that are real and supportive to research. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), internal validity is a question of "how one's finding match reality" which can be observed in different or multiple ways (p. 243). I kept a clear record of my research process, and I provided a record of where I conducted the interviews (Creswell, 2013). I kept electronic files of government documents and audio record of the interviews. I stored backup files in a secure off-site location and provide audit to ensure replication of this study by future researchers (Patton, 2014). To ensure internal validity, a researcher should search for multiple sources of data, and provide evidence, as well as to consider the views and opinions of other researchers, scholars, and writers. The credibility criteria for qualitative research includes data and results from participants' views, opinions, and thoughts that are credible and believable" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This allows participants to reflect on their expressed ideas and to determine whether a researcher is reporting credibly and accurately their contributions to the research.

Dependability (Reliability)

Dependability criterion in judging quantitative research is based on the concept of "replicability or repeatability" (Trochim, 2007, p. 42). The concept of reliability refers to whether an outcome or result of a research could be measured the same over time with same result. On the one hand, the notion of dependability means that the researcher must account for whatever changes had occurred during the research. The researcher is responsible for describing the changes and, as such, has a role to explain how these changes affect the research approach. I accounted for changes that may occur during the process in order to determine the dependability of the approach. Dependability of qualitative research requires the researcher to address issues in responsible way, and with detailed information that will enable future researchers to repeat the process and gain the same or similar results. This enables researchers or readers to develop a clear understanding of the processes used for the study and its effectiveness.

Confirmability (Objectivity)

In qualitative research, confirmability is analogous to objectivity and a researcher brings unique ideas to the study which need to be confirmed by other researchers or scholars (Patton, 2014). In order to ensure confirmability, I took necessary steps to make sure that I document and follow all the procedures for checking and rechecking of data sources and materials in an effort to reduce possible distortion or bias in the process.in order to address the issue of trustworthiness.

Ethical Considerations

I took a number of measures to ensure the ethical protections of participants for this study. A researcher undertaking a study has to respect the privacy of participants, protect participants' interest, allow participants to give their consent to participate, and make sure that participants' views and thoughts are fairly represented (Creswell, 2013). I ensured that participants had access to information about the study's purpose and objectives. Participants were asked to sign a consent form after receiving approval from IRB. Participants were contacted only after receiving approval from university IRB. In the consent form, I invited participants to participate in the research and indicated the purpose, procedure, potential benefits and risks, storage of data, confidentiality, right to withdraw, and voluntary participation. In the consent form, I gave the participants the opportunity to review the research objectives and to consent to be a part of the study. Participants were compensated for participating in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were told that they may choose to end their participation at any time without harm, risk, or punishment. Participants' identities and whether anonymous were protected. The identity of participants will be protected by changing their names, and even to the extent of changing data that could potentially identify information about a participant, who did not want to disclose. The disclosure of information under the Privacy Rule means that a researcher must obtain, create, and use information within the documented IRB approval, in order to protect the privacy of participants. I confirmed the requirements of Privacy Rule for disclosure of information

by participants. I respected the privacy of participants, behave in an ethical manner, and conducted the research in a disciplined and principled way.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I described the research method used for the study. I examined qualitative research design and the case study method that was used for the study. The justification for the use of qualitative research and case study method and its criticisms, the role of the researcher, and the ethical protection of participants were provided. In addition, the population, selection of the sample, and justification for the sample size were described. The data collection, data analysis, and interview questions for the study were discussed. Lastly, the issues of trustworthiness were mentioned. Chapter 4 includes the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In Chapter 4, I present the findings of the study and a discussion of how I produced, collected, and documented the data. I also presented my process for identifying and tracking the study's meaning, patterns, and themes. The goal was to provide answers to the research questions. The purpose of this study is to explore if the POELs (POEL) program was effective in bringing the diverse residents of the immigrant neighborhood to participate in the neighborhood planning process. The following four research questions guided the study:

RQ 1: How does the POEL program encourage minority, immigrant, and the underrepresented residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process?

RQ 2: What is the common theme of the POEL program and how is this approach different from the traditional form of soliciting public inputs in neighborhood planning?

RQ 3: How is language barrier addressed as a way to improve communication between the diverse residents' groups and the government?

RQ 4: How does the POEL program meet the challenges of encouraging participation from groups with histories of past disenfranchisement or past cultural norms that discouraged planning participation and engagement?

Setting for the Study

During the interview data collection stage, I encountered some delays in conducting some interviews due to work schedule conflicts with some of the participants. The dates scheduled for the interviews were rearranged to enable some these participants to select different dates that would accommodate their work schedules. However, my preliminary contact with the participants was by phone where the objective and purpose of the study were explained to the participants. The case study approach was the most suitable method for getting an in-depth perspective on the research topic. The research findings presented here consist of analysis from two sources of data, interviews and official government documents.

The participants for the interviews were recruited from the city because the location of the unit of analysis was in one of the city's neighborhoods. Additionally, I recruited participants who had the experience working and engaging with diverse residents of the neighborhood. Purposeful sampling was used to assure that the interviewees would have direct knowledge of activities, events, and decisions impacting policy during the period being studied. The participants' responses established their awareness of the POEL program. The office conference rooms where I interviewed participants were private rooms without distractions. Participants felt safe. After the interviews, I locked and/or secured the computer, tape recorder, notepad, and consent forms. In conformity with Walden University's Qualitative Checklist (2015), no incident occurred during the interviews that influenced the participants or their experience at any moment that could have influenced my interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

I selected participants from the current city employees, former POEL members, and from members of two NGOs). The participants included two City Planners, two current community coordinators, four former POELs, and one member from each NGOs who are active stewards of the Neighborhood Plan. The table of the participants' type is provided in Table 3 and in a pie chart in Figure 4 below.

Table 3. 1

Table of Types of Participants

Primary participant type	Numbers	Role
City planners	2	Support to implement planning updates
Current community liaisons	2	Record support of disapproval of adopted neighborhood plan
Former POELs	4	Encouraged involvement and community outreach
First local Ngo	1	Community outreach and capacity building
Second local Ngo	1	Serves as stewards of the neighborhood plan and community outreach
Total	10	

Note: Participant type and their roles.
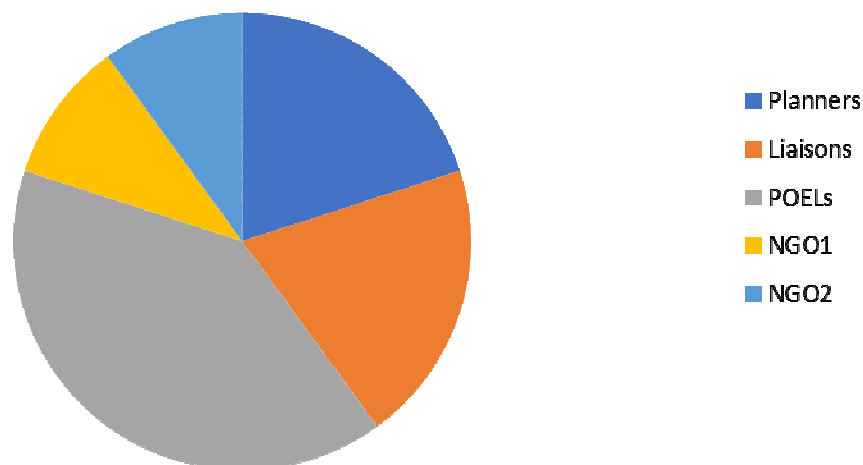
Figure 4. 1: *Participation types.*

I selected a diverse group of participants who had experience engaging with the residents of the neighborhood in order to bring together well-rounded perspectives of the case. I selected 10 participants for the interview to address 10 questions based on the four research questions for the study. The participants were interviewed individually and were assigned an identifier number and a letter based on the order of participation for the interview to ensure the participants' identity was concealed (see Figure 4.1).

Data Collection

In order to address the research questions, and to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues from various points of view, I selected a diverse group of participants some from the city and others from the immigrant neighborhood. The experience of these participants was considered essential in addressing POEL impacts on the diverse residents of the immigrant neighborhood.

I interviewed participants at the location of their choice that was free from distractions, obstructions, interruptions, and noise during the interview process. I conducted face-to-face semi structured interviews with participants and each participant was asked the same 10 questions on the list. I gave each participant an opportunity to review the consent form and the chance to ask questions that related to the study. I provided copies of the consent form to participants prior to the interview.

I took hand written notes during the interview to document the responses of each participant's interview. I transcribed the interview responses into Microsoft Word for each interview. During transcription into Word, I edited the interview responses to delete any information that tended to identify individual participants. I kept the notes and other related materials for this study in a locked facility accessible to me. These related study materials will be maintained in this facility for a period of five years.

The tone of the interview was conversational, informal and causal. The participants were engaged in a brief free talk of general issues prior to being asked the interview questions. The participants were made aware of the note taking during the interview to ensure accuracy of the data, and the participants were allowed to write notes which reflected their opinions and views on the interview questions. The data collection process and analysis of the findings were done in a professional and ethical manner in compliance with the accepted research standards by IRB.

In this process, I told the participants that their participation was voluntary. I assured the participants that they could choose to withdraw from the study without any reason or cause, but they could come back if they decide to participate. The assurance

was also given about their anonymity and confidentiality of their participation in the study and that their names, demography, occupation, would be fictitious to prevent their identities. The data collection process was set to meet the needs for the research with due consideration to the purpose, reliability and validity of the study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for the study was conducted in various stages. The first stage was to transcribe all the interviews into Microsoft Word, and then I had to examine them closely for key words which I manually highlighted. I made the effort to replicate "from the actual language of the participant" (Saldana, 2016, p. 105), a process known as In Vivo coding. I studied the transcribed interview and got familiar with the answers given by the participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) pointed out the need to read and reread the transcript closely in order to become familiar as possible with the account (p.970). Also, I used memos I took during the interviews to assure that the recorded data were properly transcribed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 670).

For the next step in the data analysis process, I identified the significant statements made to address the POEL program. As Creswell (2013) noted, that significant statements should be clustered in a chronological format. I organized the statements and/or words to help with the analysis. Furthermore, the interview texts were hand coded because I chose not to use NVivo computer software for this analysis. I assigned words and phrases to ideas, concepts, and unit of meaning that were embedded in the interview text. I did this in order to identify the underlying experience and perceptions of the participants. Saldana (2016) pointed out that "Qualitative codes are

essence capturing and essential elements of research story that when clustered together

according to similarity and regularity, a pattern is form. This actually facilitates the

development of categories and thus analysis of their connections (p.4)".

    To facilitate coding, I created two columns; column one had the interview text

and column two contained codes derived from the interview text (Saldana, 2016). The

various codes were also color coded. As I began to identify codes, I started to notice

patterns of repetitive similar codes and dissimilar codes. I then developed the categories

based on the repetitive codes which I further placed under their specific categories. At the

end of this exercise, six themes emerged from these categories. The themes were

identified reflecting the diverse opinions of the participants. I placed the appropriate

quotes derived from the interviews text to go with the themes as subthemes (see Table 4.1

below).

Table 4. 1

Themes

Success Positive Impacts of the POEL Program	Outreach and Communication	Collaboration with Community Organization	Intimidation and Fear	Time Limitation	Building Relationships
Sub-Themes					
Positives associated with the POEL Program	Increased awareness and communication	Involve one NGO involved in capacity building	Fear	POEL Program effective short term	Mostly white middle-income homeowners
Public Knowledge is enhanced	Empowerment	Involve another NGO who maintained stewardship of the neighborhood plan	Religious and cultural norm restrictions	POEL Program ineffective long term	Flexible time
Education of residents essential	Develop community vision	Members of the business community	English language barrier	Lack of continuous engagement and participation	Educated
Promote acceptance	Identify problems and opportunities	Involve members of all the ethnic communities	Passion for family	Inconsistent leadership	Have knowledge
Increase awareness	Involve Everyone		Lack of trust	Lack of vision	Increased dominant interest group
Residents' inputs			Lack of knowledge of the planning process		English language barrier
Opportunities to be involved					

In the analysis of these interviews, I discovered no information from the study that would be discrepant with information found in the literature or data gathered from other sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 249). The themes that emerged from the interviews confirmed what was learned from other sources and provided additional information that showed the success and some failures of the POEL program.

<div align="center">

Evidence of Trustworthiness

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The goal of this research study was to determine if the POEL program was successful in bringing the diverse residents of the immigrant neighborhood to participate in the neighborhood planning process. To produce authentic work, I focused on parts of the evidence that enhanced trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability

Credibility

To ensure credibility in this study, I applied academic rigor to collect and analyze data. I performed interviews and reviewed official government documents, contacted participants by phone and emails to ensure that rich data were collected. Overall, having in place a rigorous and flexible process made it possible for the interviews to proceed in a friendly manner. In addition to the use of academic rigor, I also used the bracketing technique to give meaning to the lived experiences of the participants. As Patton (2002) has noted, "one strategy involves discussing one's predispositions, making biases explicit, to the extent possible, and engaging in mental cleansing process" (p.553). To effectively use the bracketing technique, I purposely kept an open mind and recorded in a memo any personal biases that crept up as I worked on this research study.

Another method that helped me to ensure credibility in this study is member checking. This practice enables participants review interview transcripts to ensure completeness and accuracy; it was used along with the use of published data to ensure that credibility was maintained. I used the same interview protocol for all participants, to ensure that consistency was maintained throughout the study. I allowed participants to respond to questions without influence, I avoided any researcher bias. The use of additional documents to substantiate, expand, or put context around the participants' information enabled me to avoid bias in analysis and to triangulate and assure validity of the research. Overall, member checking and prolonged contact through the face-to-face interviews helped to impress upon the participants a sense of ownership in the research study and provided opportunity for them to relay vital information that may have been left out during the phone calls and emails.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, I remained cognizant of the research design, method, and the research questions guiding this study. In this study, I provided a detailed account of the research process, particularly focusing on the process that was utilized in collecting data and analyzing and attaining the results of the study in order for the process to be repeated by other researchers in the future.

Transferability

To ensure the transferability of the data, I provided thick description of the experiences of the diverse residents of the immigrant neighborhood, the barriers that limited their participation and the work of the POEL program to bringing these residents

to be participants in neighborhood planning process. Overall, I was cognizant of the fact that this study could be a resource for any scholar researching the inclusion of marginalized groups in the neighborhood planning process in other neighborhoods in the city or other cities in the county.

Confirmability

To ensure confirmability, I collected, analyzed and presented authentic data that portrayed the perspectives of the participants involved in this study. Additionally, I integrated the elements of triangulation, reflexivity and audit trail recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) as some of the key factors that ensured confirmability in a qualitative research study. Consequently, I obtained data through a research process that can be repeated by any researcher examining the POEL program in any given neighborhood in cities in the United States of American.

<div align="center">

Results

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Through interviews and review of official government documents, I collected and analyzed data that provided some answers to the research questions. However, presenting results based on research questions and themes appear challenging because these questions seemed to overlap. The four research questions were used to explore if the POEL program was effective in bringing the diverse residents of the immigrant neighborhood to participate in the neighborhood planning process, thus creating positive social change. The underlying perception had been that the POEL program had been effective and the results from this study completely adheres to that same perspective.

Therefore, the following discussion below show the result organized by themes with discussion addressing the relevant research question.

Theme 1: Success of the POEL Program

One of the major themes identified was the success of the POEL program. The majority opinion of the participants was that the POEL program was successful in bringing the diverse residents of the neighborhood to participate in the neighborhood planning process. One measure of success of the POEL program is that under the framework of participatory democracy all the diverse residents of neighborhood have a chance to participate in planning decision making process. Without identifying and understanding the barriers that limits these residents from participating, it would be difficult to have a meaningful discussion about the POEL program impacts on the behavior of the residents. The POEL program success showed that the residents' knowledge of planning process was enhanced. In addition, the POEL program provides education about neighborhood planning to the residents and engages them in an educational process that supports learning about planning. Another success of POEL is that these residents trusted the POELs because they are not strangers but member of their cultural group and this became the driving force that encouraged these residents to be involved and provide inputs in the planning discussion in their community.

Participant PN3 noted that "residents will attend or get involved if they accompany someone, they know to a meeting than with a stranger". Participant PN7, PN1, PN5 all indicated that the POEL program was effective and successful. Participant PN9 noted that the POEL program engaged over 1000 people over 18 month's process.

Many of the participants noted that the POEL success and effectiveness was important in meeting the overall goal of the outreach program, by reaching and engaging the underrepresented residents as well as, minorities, immigrants and refugees. Although the program was effective, it is also important to note that majority of the participants would have wanted the POEL program to have lasted longer than it did. As all the participants pointed out, the POELs were contractors and were often utilized by the city when there is a project or a major amendment to the neighborhood plan implementation process. The POEL program had major life changing impact on the residents because it gave these residents an opportunity to be involved making in planning decisions for their community in a manner that had never occurred before. The overall success identified the POEL Program as an enabler because it gave the residents an opportunity to participate and this helped to overcome those barriers that have limited the ability to participate in the process.

Theme 2: Outreach and Communication

Participants share their understanding and importance of the description of outreach and communication. Community Outreach and Engagement is focused on providing all residents in the neighborhood a wide range of opportunities for both accessing information and providing feedback, with the goal of increasing meaningful and authentic civic participation. Communication is a tool used to disseminate information to the neighborhood orally or by emails, journals, neighborhood newspaper and local media. Within the limited English proficient population, communication in the respective ethnic language was used by the POEL to achieve equitable outreach and

engagement. In this study, communication was a tool used effectively to facilitate the outreach and engagement process in topic presentations and provided information on city department services. Community Outreach and communication are important aspects of this discussion because of the importance attached to these statements in reference to the POEL effectiveness in the neighborhood. Communication whether in English or in the individual ethnic languages had the potential to increased awareness and better informed the diverse residents of the issues being discussed. Face-to-face meetings are important for removing this skepticism and creating personal relationships. Through the outreach and communication process, the POELs were able to reach members of the diverse underrepresented groups to convince them to be involved in the process of developing their neighborhood. The benefits of this action gave the residents a sense of empowerment, sense of pride, the ability to develop community vision, identify problems and opportunities to provide answers to these problems. As noted by the participants PN-1 to PN-10 in the interview process, the overall success of the POEL program was based on the ability to conduct the planning outreach as well as communicate to the residents in the language that they understand especially for the non-English speaking members of the community. As noted by PN1, one of the challenges encountered in community outreach is the ability to communicate with residents of the neighborhood. Some of these challenges can be overcome in doing the following; the government should slow down and listen, take time with the non-English residents to build their trust, and expect that they will improve their understanding of the plan or project through their participation. Participant PN9 pointed out that to improve communication between the city and the

non-English speaking residents; the city needs to go beyond translation and interpretation. PN9 further suggested the need to have trained community leaders that speak the language, simplify the message, and taper the communication in a way that builds relationships. These measures proved successful and effective in bringing the residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process.

Theme 3: Collaboration with Community Organizations

The POEL program worked in collaboration with other organization in the neighborhood. The effort to be inclusive also needed a form of collaboration with other member organizations in the neighborhood. Most of these organizations such as the NGOs had been involved in the neighborhood since the beginning of the neighborhood plan implementation process in the 1990ties and some of them are still involved in the neighborhood as stewards of the plan. Two participants, PN4 and PN9, noted that these organizations were effective, and their commitment is to increase awareness, educate the residents and the members of these respective groups about the importance and essence of the neighborhood plan. They help to deliver the same message as the POEL program. The collaboration between the NGOs and the POEL contributed to some of the success and effectiveness of the program. As noted by PN9, the population groups most likely to be involved in planning activities are whites, who participate because they have the passion to know how the changes in the neighborhood will impact them. PN9 also noted those other non-whites which includes 40 % Asian, 32 % African American, 7 % Latinos, 2% Pacific Islanders and 1 % American Indians show limited or no involvement in

planning process in the past. The contributions and collaboration of these organizations were some of the reasons for the effectiveness and success of the POEL program.

Theme 4: Intimidation and Fear

The neighborhood planning process was noted to be dominated by white residents, well-educated middle income and had flexible time to attend neighbor planning meetings for updated information about proposed development or programs coming to the neighborhood. These meetings were normally not attended by most of the diverse the underrepresented minorities, immigrants, and refugees, who may not have the time, the language skills, or awareness of the importance of being heard on proposed developments in the neighborhood. Since these diverse groups do not attend these meetings, their abilities to participate in decision making process were limited or hindered. These factors, which may include lack of knowledge, Childcare needs, work schedules, cultural and religious restrictions, such with the Muslim women, lack of trust of the government processes, and intimidation and fear make it difficult to participate in meetings.

Participant PN9 pointed out that another limitation for the minorities, immigrants, and refugees, is the preoccupation of getting settled in the neighborhood. Participation in neighborhood planning does not satisfy their initial and more pressing needs, so the immigrant first concern is to take care of their wellbeing and they are not particularly interested in the provisions of the neighborhood plan. The intimidation and fear displayed by these diverse participants are also related to their past experiences in other cultures where engaging in public or government discussion was greatly discouraged or not allowed. So, one of the strategies of the POEL program was to assure these residents that

engagement in planning meetings and providing inputs was a right and planning participation was a democratic process where every resident has the right to be heard.

Theme 5: Time Limitation a Reliable Resource

Most of the participants noted that the time limitation was a reliable resource and was one of the main reasons the POEL program was effective. Since the POEL were independent contractors who were experts as community navigators in historically underrepresented communities, equitable outreach and engagement was conducted in a limited time scheduled in a culturally-specific manner. The POEL provides a number of services within their limited time. These services include fair and equitable facilitation in the native language of the community, simultaneous interpretation, constituent support for city-hosted events, feedback and expertise on cultural concerns and barriers, accurate records and reports of participation feedback and concerns, community workshops and events were similar to larger city-hosted meetings where quality translations were needed for each project or development in the neighborhood. Participant PN4 noted that the POEL program was effective within the limited period of engagement with the neighborhood residents but in the long term even with no project related issues, the program was still effective because as members of the community, their initiatives in on-going development in the neighborhood presented additional questions and concerns that need to be answered. Even when a project ends, the residents are not left to wonder whether the process or program will continue and whether there is an expectation in the future.

Participant PN5 pointed out that the POEL program was 95% effective because the residents trusted their POEL members. Most of the community liaisons are members of these ethnic groups and they understand their culture and language but "without the POELs, there will be no involvement and knowledge. The POEL in the short period was effective, but even after the end of any project their presence in the neighborhood was still in demand.

Participant PN7 noted that the POEL program was effective. "The number of comments from the POEL versus the comments from the community meeting prior to the POEL showed a stark difference because with the POEL many people participated; bringing diverse views than what was usually the case." Participant PN9 commented that the POELs "were somewhat effective because the city got residents from other communities to participate in the immigrant neighborhood. The city government engaged these residents primarily to develop a rapport for the neighborhood planning process.

Participant PN10 commented that in most instances the meetings were well attended. POEL had discussion in groups of 20 or more people but that the program limitations are that it was short term and POELs were hired on project basis. PN-10 further noted that POEL program could have more success if it was long term giving residents time to be continuously engaged in planning discussion or process.

Theme 6: Building Relationships

People are likely to interact with government when they attain success. The white middle-class home owners are used to getting responses to their concerns from the government. They are aware of the changes in the neighborhood because of their regular

contact with the government and their ability to understand the planning issues before development begins. Their contact with the historically underrepresented community was mostly on individual basis. These underrepresented community residents have to work with POELs to build relationships with the government in order to become aware of the planning issues and given an opportunity to discuss and provide inputs. The privileges that affected the interaction and relationships within the diverse minority groups in the immigrant neighborhood indicated that for certain groups such as white residents, belonging to a dominant group, connecting with this dominant group and coming from a particular race, speaking English tend to relate more to your group of origin than with other diverse residents in the neighborhood. Participant PN-8 indicated that neighborhood planning is a process of community building and requires a holistic approach to achieve its goals and objectives. Furthermore, PN-1 noted that the expectation is that community members and beneficiaries must be motivated, encouraged, and become active participants in the planning process. PN-1 and PN-2 added that a lot of community-based organization were founded and controlled by white individuals in the neighborhood. For example, Rainier Beach Merchant Association, historically funded by local banks and businesses that are mostly white owned. The emergence of other groups such minorities' immigrants and refugees quickly saw the challenge of how to be a representative of their own banks and associations. Another point echoed by PN-1 is that "as neighborhood has become more diverse, leadership ought to be a combination of these immigrants and white".

Majority of the participants including, PN-1, PN-2, PN-6, PN-8, and PN-9, indicated that giving the chance to community members to participate in the planning process builds and encouraged positive attitudes amongst resident feeling in the neighborhood. PN-2 also added that through the NGOs, there was some collaboration between the diverse residents and the white residents in the neighborhood. They maintain a cordial relationship because the work together to address the issues that faced the neighborhood. The POELs efforts were effective in creating these relationships which have paved the way for every resident in the neighborhood to become aware of their potential that contributed to the wellbeing of the neighborhood.

Relation of the Themes to the Research Questions

Sampling of Findings for Research Question 1

This immigrant neighborhood is one of the 38 neighborhoods in this American City in the Pacific Northwest, and it is considered to have the most diverse population comparatively. This neighborhood consists of several diverse groups from different ethnic and cultural background. The POEL program was first introduced into neighborhood planning in 2008 to 2009 (Neighborhood Report, 2012) during the neighborhood plan update. This was the first-time immigrants, refugees and minorities were specifically invited to participate in planning discussions where the meeting was held within a comfortable environment in their neighborhood. This initial introduction of the POEL program was very effective because it gave these marginalized groups an opportunity to be involved and determine the future of their neighborhood.

Another reason for the success of the POEL program is directly linked to one of the goals of the program which was to reach and identify people in the neighborhood who have been historically underrepresented and excluded from the city's planning process. The intent is to contact and bring these groups of residents and individuals into the planning process. Other aspects of successes relied on the fact that the POELs were easily approachable because they were members of these diverse ethnic groups, can speak the language and are well known in the community. The POELs connected with each of the diverse ethnic groups to develop awareness of the planning issues which in turn encourage the residents to become involved is discussing the issues (PN-6). The POEL program created positive impact in the community where they served and positive social change to every individual in the neighborhood.

Sampling of Findings for Research Question 2

The identified theme of the POEL program is to make planning participation inclusive for all residents of the immigrant neighborhood. The community outreach and engagement provides the avenue to reach the underrepresented residents and help bring them into the planning process. Neighborhood Planning needs to be inclusive because it needs every resident to be represented on the discussion table. Neighborhood planning is for everyone not for a certain few (PN-3). Participant PN-6 also noted that the POEL program gave diverse residents an opportunity to be fully involved in the process as this translates a sense of ownership as member of their community. The chances to participate in planning discussion in their neighborhood are made easier and accessible to this

underrepresented group. The POELs connected with their respective community and encouraged those individuals to participate had been the success of the program.

On the other hand, the traditional form of soliciting public input in neighborhood planning was not limited to certain group such as the "usual suspects" who are always present in every meeting. Their main advantage is that they well organized, educated and have the time to attend meetings. The planning decision were made to benefits their interest and provided no chances for inclusion of diverse underrepresented residents of the neighborhood. The meeting schedules were not in conflict to their work schedules. In comparison, the historically underrepresented residents' encountered barriers that limited their involvement and participation So, having a theme that ensures inclusiveness created a difference in the response to participation in a democratic sense. Thus, everyone enjoys equal and uninterrupted access into the neighborhood decision making process.

Sampling of Findings for Research Question 3

One of the limiting factors in establishing contacts between the diverse residents and the government is the lack of communication for the non-English members of the residents' group. To improve communications between government and non-English speaking residents' hinges on relationship building. How to work with individual groups means continuous communication was encouraging (PN-8). The language barrier can be uplifted once equitable outreach and engagement is conducted in a culturally specific manner that ensures resident comfort and safety. Furthermore, the city encourages involvement and participation in more POEL programs. The POELs position in the discussion of language barrier cannot be over emphasized. The use of indigenous

language by the POELs in communicating and sharing information can promote awareness and interest in learning English.

Other ways to improve communication between the government and non-English speaking residents is to apply simultaneous interpretation where the POEL speaks and interprets the required information to the ethnic group in the room. Education is another way to improve communications between the diverse resident and the government. Participant PN-1 pointed out that to improve communication with the diverse residents in the neighborhood, communication must not be transactional, and the government needs to slow down and listen and must take time with the non-English speaking resident in order to build their trust and friendship.

Sampling of Findings for Research Question 4

In order to overcome the challenges of encouraging participation from groups with past cultural norms that discourage planning participation and engagement is to initially learn to gain their trust and understand the circumstances that had existed prior to their immigration to the United State. These individuals lack trust of the government is a serious issue that may take long to change. But when encouraged by the POELs, they often change their perception. The change in perception is because of the POEL. As the POEL becomes familiar and friendly, the diverse residents tend to welcome the relationship. When they realize that benefits of engaging in the planning outreach and participation in their neighborhood, the negative perception readily dissipates, and the residents become eager to participate in the process.

The process of involving residents of the neighborhood and representing their diverse views fairly in the decision-making process may remain challenging. The POEL met this challenge by effectively providing several services such as fair and equitable facilitation in each ethnic group native language, simultaneous interpretation and providing quality translation to explain the issues and scope of each project in the neighborhood. As most participants indicated during the interview process, the involvement of these diverse residents in the public engagement process and the encouragement they received had a positive effect and the result was that they viewed public participation in a different light.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the data collection on the effect of POEL program on neighborhood planning process. I reported the results that were generated through a case study method with 10 interview questions. I found that community participation in planning was important to the successful development and implementation of neighborhood plans. Six themes emerged from the data collection and analysis process to answer the for-research questions and determine if the POEL program was successful in bringing the diverse minorities, immigrants, refugees and the underrepresented residents to participate in neighborhood planning.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of these findings as well as the limitations of the study, recommendations for further studies, and the implications for positive social change in the community

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore if the POEL program was effective in bringing the diverse, historically underrepresented communities to participate into the neighborhood planning process. To accomplish this goal, the study engaged City Planners, Community Coordinators, former POELs, and NGOs with in-depth knowledge working with the POEL and the historically underrepresented residents of the neighborhood. The following four research questions guided the study:

RQ 1: How does the POEL program encourage minority, immigrant, and the underrepresented residents to participate in the neighborhood planning process?

RQ 2: What is the common theme of the POEL program and how is this approach different from the traditional form of soliciting public inputs in neighborhood planning?

RQ 3: How is language barrier addressed as a way to improve communication between the diverse residents' groups and the government?

RQ 4: How does the POEL program meet the challenges of encouraging participation from groups with histories of past disenfranchisement or past cultural norms that discouraged planning participation and engagement?

This research was based on Hilmer's (2010) participatory democratic theory. Hilmer (2010) stressed the need for active, positive and equitable participation of beneficiaries in the democratic participatory process at the neighborhood level. The

research participants confirmed Hilmer's (2010) participatory democracy: They indicated that planning participation at the neighborhood level was due to effective and sustainable outreach and engagement of the residents in the planning process.

I selected the qualitative case study as the most appropriate method for this research because the resulting data would allow me to answer the research questions. The case study approach requires multiple sources of data to gain in-depth understanding of whether the POEL program was effective. I relied on two sources of information: face-to-face, semi structured interviews and a review of official government records and documents.

According to the findings, participants identified several factors that positively affected the POEL program in the neighborhood. Six themes emerged based on information gathered from the research participants: list them here? These themes, according to the participants contributed to some of the success of POEL program in the neighborhood. This chapter includes an interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusions.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this study, I found important insights that indicated that the POEL program was effective in bringing the historically underrepresented residents in the neighborhood planning process. The research was guided by four research questions as specified above. The findings derived from the analysis of the participants' interview data, supplemented by the literature review are discussed in the following sections.

Research Question 1

In Research Question 1, I examined how the POEL program encouraged the historically underrepresented residents (minorities, immigrants, refugees, persons with physical disability, seniors and youths) to participate in the neighborhood planning process. The participants responded to these questions as they indicated range of views and perspectives on residents' approach to planning in their neighborhood. The participants indicated that they were encouraged to participate because POELs created an environment that was conducive and effective within familiar surroundings. Furthermore, the participants posit that the POELs were individuals selected from the respective communities as enablers of the communities they represented. These enablers possessed some unique qualities such as being fluent in their respective language since some members of the community had limited English proficiency, they were well known member of the communities, and respected their community culture and norms. An equitable outreach and engagement conducted in a culturally specific manner allow these residents some comfort and confidence in navigating the planning process (Neighborhood Report, 2016).

Another important facet used to encourage these diverse residents to participate in planning was the ability to communicate planning techniques, processes and policies in their respective languages instead of trying to understand the use of planning jargons in English language. This approach, built trust, lessens the fear of the unknown and built confidence in the process. The PN-1, PN-4, PN-6, PN-8 and PN-9 expressed the view that before the institution of the POEL program, the historically underrepresented

residents were conspicuously absent from the neighborhood planning meetings because they faced certain barriers such as childcare needs, lack English language Proficiency, lack knowledge of the planning process, lack of information and lack of trust of governmental intentions but the inception of the POEL program witnessed an increased participation by these diverse residents. The participants noted that due to POELs encouragement, neighborhood meetings saw an increase in attendance which rose to 90% in some communities.

More research participants indicated that with the city staff, outreach and engagement was transitional and not enough time was given to understand and listen to these diverse residents. The strain in communication and patience discouraged these residents from being involved and attending neighborhood meetings or project discussion forum. The POELs encouraged this historically underrepresented resident to participate in neighborhood planning was a change in the way these diverse residents see planning and planning related projects in their neighborhoods. The encouragement to participate was fair and equitable.

In the identified themes from the research, participants stated that the POEL connected and engaged the diverse ethnic groups to develop awareness, build trust, and become enlightened and knowledgeable about planning issues. As the residents became better informed of the issues, they were encouraged to participate in the planning process. The themes became other motivational factors that encouraged community members' involvement in the planning decision-making process.

Research Question 2

In Research Question 2, I sought to examine what were the common themes of the POEL program and how was this approach different from the traditional form of soliciting public inputs in neighborhood planning? The study participants identified several themes that could promote planning outreach and engagement in the immigrant neighborhood. These themes that promote community participation in neighborhood planning are similar to those of other social intervention programs and activities.

The participants suggested that one of the themes was the inclusion in the decision-making process. As noted by Wiley (2018), that while participation and inclusion are necessary conditions for empowerment and collective control, they were not necessarily sufficient. Wiley (2018) also noted that sufficiency requires attention to the breadth of participation and inclusion and the extent to which it was experienced as empowering and ultimately enabled the exercise of collective control over decision and action. Similarly, the POEL program proved that in turn it enabled the historically underrepresented residents to be included and participate in collective control and action in dealing with neighborhood issues.

The participants indicated that the POEL program provided the opportunity to collaborate and partner with stakeholders. This enabled these diverse residents to benefit from the exposure and contacts crated by working together in planning related projects. This action gave the POEL program an advantage over the tradition form of planning participation in the sense that personal contacts develop into relationships which creates and encourages a better working environment.

Furthermore, the participants identified that education of these diverse residents play an important role to promote community outreach and engagement. The education of these residents often occurred in focus groups discussion and workshops which were organized by the POELs in their respective communities. This enables community members to receive adequate information and knowledge of planning issues and used these lessons to educate others in the community. Conversely, the traditional form of public participation often appears to be transitional leaving neighborhood residents unaware of the planning focus since a large proportion the people present in these large forums were the "usual suspect" a group of well informed and well-organized individuals than the diverse residents in the neighborhood. The POEL program approach was different from the traditional form of participation based on the following items listed above such as, communication, education, inclusion, participation and collaboration of ideas promoted collective control and action in the neighborhood.

Research Question 3

In Research Question 3, I sought to examine how the language barrier was addressed to improve communication between the diverse residents' groups and the government. The participants identified that communication especially in English was the most limiting factor that prevented most of these diverse residents from participating in the neighborhood planning process. Since a proportion of the residents' population was non-English speaking, it was pediment to find alternative ways to reach these groups of individuals to get them involved and participate in the planning process. Other forms of communication were sought that included interpreters and translators, using ethnic media

in the neighborhood and lastly, communicate directly with the residents in each of respective communities.

The POELs communication framework had an advantage because of the ability to speak and address planning issues in the respective ethnic languages. As members of these respective communities, POELs respected community cultures and are fluent in their respective languages. They conducted equitable outreach and engagement in a culturally-specific manner meeting most the residents in their respective environment that was comfortable and familiar and easily accessible. For groups with limited English proficiency, translation of information into their individual language helps to increase awareness and improved communication as they begin to understand the planning issues being discussed. Furthermore, the participant indicated that improved communication whether in English or in their ethnic languages, gave the residents a sense of empowerment and were excited to finally get an opportunity to contribute in the development and making decision on issues that also affect the lives of their neighborhood.

Research Question 4

In Research Question 4, I examined how the POEL program met the challenges of encouraging participation from groups with histories of past disenfranchisement or past cultural norms that discouraged planning participation end engagement? Participants indicated that the POELs met these challenges by allowing residents to take leading roles in the planning and location processes. Participants explained that POELs promoted community participation as a means of developing consensus building and awareness

created among these diverse residents and other stake holders in the neighborhood. The participants further indicated that awareness creation and community education gave community members the opportunity to learn and come together to promote positive attitude in working with city staff and other stakeholders in the community. The interaction with other members and organizations in the neighborhood allowed members of these diverse resident groups to be part of the changes that occurred in the neighborhood. Through the POEL program, stakeholders and the historically underrepresented residents will participate in the decision-making and planning process that was be most likely benefit everyone in the neighborhood as the issue of concerns affects everyone irrespective of race and national origin.

The participants indicated that POEL program was successful because it created an environment where most diverse residents had the first opportunity to engage in decision-making and in a planning process. So, with their involvement in the planning process, the expectation was that these residents will be motivated, encouraged and supported for their active participation in the planning process. Participants indicated that given the chance to participate in the planning process builds and encourage positive attitudes for strengthening planning in the neighborhoods. Thus, the positive attitude developed to support the POEL program cannot be overemphasized in the entire process. The exposure of these marginalized residents in the planning process has social change implications for these group residents since most of them came from countries where public discourse was not allowed or may be dangerous for the participants. By being involved in the democratic participatory process, equitable outreach and engagement

ensures that all voices of community members were heard, and it is especially important that the city's outreach and engagement efforts are respectful and appropriate for everyone.

Limitations of the Study

The goal of this research was to examine if the POEL program was successful in bringing the historically underrepresented residents of the immigrant neighborhood to participate in the neighborhood planning process. Specifically, the focus was to encourage inclusion and diverse representation of these groups in the planning process, since they share overlapping concerns which results in closely-related outcomes. First, the use of interviews in data collection had some limitations in terms of the amount of information the participants provided. Another limitation was that the data collection was from a relatively small sample size and the views of the participants were significantly modified may not reflect those of the selected community in the neighborhood.

Second, the case study represented the insights of a selected neighborhood in the city. This city currently has 38 neighborhoods, each with its unique characteristics, features, mix of residents, leadership and values. The findings of this study did not reflect what might be found in other neighborhoods since the limitations inherent in one neighborhood cannot be generalized to apply to other neighborhood without a city-wide research of those neighborhoods.

Third, a final limitation was presented on my status as a Land Use Planner working for the city which had the potential to introduce bias into the research. Because I

conducted the research, it is likely that a certain degree of subjectivity was unavoidable in this study. However, I did take steps not to allow that bias to impact the study.

Recommendations

Recommendation for Action

The study provided insights into the POEL program, and the efforts made to bring the historically underrepresented communities to participate in the neighborhood planning process. Community Outreach and engagement is important because it offers community members opportunities to take leading roles in collaboration, developing relationships and partnerships with the city and local stakeholders to address common neighborhood problems and concerns. The result benefited the historically underrepresented residents and the city through consensus and partnership building. Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1) Design a comprehensive inclusion outreach and engagement plan that would embrace the POEL model with long range policies to increase access and information to the historically underrepresented communities in the neighborhood.

2) Maintain continuous collaboration and partnership among the city, community-based organization and the historically underrepresented communities to promote awareness and foster better relationships and understanding of the issues and concerns affecting neighborhood residents.

3) Extend the POEL program to implement sustainable community education and outreach to disseminate information to neighborhood residents on a more

regular basis not as needed, as it has been the case. This will offer an opportunity for all residents to make informed choices and would allow these residents to share their views and thoughts and provide inputs during a project proposal or during changes in the neighborhood plan.

4) Adopt the Participatory Democratic Framework as a strategic approach for neighborhood planning to foster maximum community support and cooperation throughout the process.

The recommendations presented above were based on the results of this study and were supported by the participatory democratic framework featured in Chapter 2. These recommendations are intended to support the effectiveness and success of the POEL program in immigrant neighborhood. The recommendations for action are to provide guidelines that would enhance and facilitate diverse representation and inclusion in neighborhood planning as a public policy in a social integration program.

Recommendation for Future Study

In this study, I revealed some limitations that should be addressed in future research on this topic. Further research to support the effectiveness of the POEL program in a larger community context and within a large population sample should be encouraged. This study was restricted to a small neighborhood and included relatively small number of participants. A study of a larger population and sample size might produce different results because of the diverse nature of a larger population in terms of race, ethnicity, economic, education, social and political status, may possess different attributes.

I found out that individual from the historically underrepresented communities have positive ideas about the effect of the POEL program. Participants also indicated that in some aspects, the effectiveness of the program was limited and was not a continuous and consistent. In this regard, future researchers should consider including robust inclusive representation to ensure longevity of the program.

Finally, I recommended that a comparative study of two communities should be conducted to further examine the effectiveness of the POEL program. This recommendation was intended to examine attitudes and perspectives and establish relationship between these communities and local government in respect to the level of inclusion and participation of the marginalized population in the planning process. These recommendations are relevant to future research in the area of the POEL program.

Implications for Social Change

The results from this study can provide a positive impact on the equitable outreach and engagement of neighborhood planning in the city. The information on what hinders individuals from participating could be important information for officials that want to increase inclusion and diversify participation in the city. This information can be reviewed, and adjustments can be made by local government to limit the barriers that have hindered the historically underrepresented communities from participating in neighborhood planning. However, if these historically underrepresented residents participate in neighborhood planning and gave their perspective on proposed projects and plans as users of the public service, there is a greater chance for equity in neighborhood planning decisions. As explained by Hilmer (2010), the participatory model of

democracy looks for maximum community participation in the decision-making process. The objective of participatory democracy is to engage a maximum number of the community in the decision-making of neighborhood planning. As creative ways were identified in the outreach and engagement process, the theory of participatory democracy was embraced in a manner that is inclusive of the residents of the neighborhood. For this model to work, some responsibility to continue the POEL program must be taken on by the members of the neighborhood and government officials. Residents must exercise public judgment and act on the issues of public concern and government officials must listen and encourage rather than hinder participation for all members of the community.

There were several practices utilized during this research that worked well for the population of interest. The hand recording of the collected data was less intimidating to participants, and they seemed more relaxed and willing to participate in the study. To ensure accuracy when recording data, I found that listening checks worked well. I also found that hosting the focus group discussions and interviews in the community gave the participants a sense of comfort.

The themes identified in this study can serve as a model to help develop, Implement, and improve the POEL program and activities. Individual groups or organizations can use these themes as a model to design and implement sustainable participation and development programs. Agencies or organizations may choose to adopt or incorporate all the identified themes as part of their plan for community participation programs or initiatives. The themes identified in the study contributed to positive social change by enabling and enhancing the understanding of the lived experiences of these

historically underrepresented individuals. These experiences can be used to develop or improve neighborhood participation as a sustainable development approach.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine if the POEL program was successful in bringing residents of the historically underrepresented communities to participate in neighborhood planning processes. The research was designed to answer the four research questions in the qualitative cases study and the findings augment scholarly review knowledge on the subject. I triangulated the themes that emerged from the interview data with 2 City Planners, 2 Community Coordinators, 4 former POELs, and 1 member each for the two NGOs in the neighborhood to derive answers for these questions.

The goal of collecting the interview data was to gain a better understanding of the POEL program from individual involved in the program and its impact on the socio-economic and political impacts on the historically underrepresented communities. The study increases the knowledge of planning outreach and engagement and its limited impacts to the historically underrepresented residents in the neighborhood. The POEL program developed strategies to respect the cultures of the respective communities and foster equitable engagement outreach provided opportunities for these marginalized group of individuals to be represented and participate in planning decision in their neighborhood. Participation enabled the POEL program to create positive and sometimes negative effects on the residents involved in the program. The positive factors of the POEL are sometimes adversely affected by the overriding negative effects of the program. However, the identified factors can assist policy makers, city staff as well as

stakeholders to offer the continuous support and expansion of the POEL program in the

city to encourage equitable outreach and engagement to every neighborhood city-wide.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1) How do you define planning outreach and engagement?

2) Neighborhood Planning is a specific planning approach aimed at creating livable and sustainable environment for its residents. What is your view of this approach to planning?

3) What specific role do you play in Rainier Beach Neighborhood Planning?

4) How often do you meet to discuss planning related issues that affect the neighborhood?

5) What population group is most likely to be involved in planning activities and what factors limit or enhance their involvement?

6) What factors influence neighborhood residents to participate in neighborhood planning?

7) How effective has the POEL program been in bringing diverse neighborhood residents to participate in making planning decision?

8) What should be done to improve communication between the City government and non-English speaking residents?

9) How do you get information about neighborhood related activities and does your schedule provide enough time for you to attend events or meetings?

10) What are the privileges that affect the interaction and relationship within the diverse Rainier Beach community?

Appendix B: Consent Form
Consent Form/Supplemental Information

Community Engagement and Diverse Representation in Rainier Beach Neighborhood of
Seattle, Washington

Walden University

I am a PhD. student at Walden University and I am conducting a study on community
engagement and diverse representation in Rainier Beach Neighborhood of Seattle,
Washington. The Rainier Beach neighborhood has been identified in earlier studies as the
most diverse neighborhood in the City of Seattle. This form is part of a process called
"informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take
part.

Background Information:

Community engagement is the goal of the Planning Outreach and Engagement Program.
The purpose of the study is to explore if the Planning outreach and Engagement Liaison
program has been successful in bringing the diverse Rainier Beach residents to participate
in neighborhood planning process.

Procedures:

The study includes a face to face interview, which is expected to take approximately 30-
60 minutes. I am asking you to be interviewed because of your experience working with
minorities, immigrants, and the underrepresented diverse Rainier Beach residents. The
interview will be audio taped to ensure that accurate feedback is recorded. Your consent
to participate is requested.

Voluntary Participation in the Study:

Your agreement to participate is strictly voluntary. Additionally, I will be the only one
privy to your responses. Individual responses will not be reported in publications.
Instead, findings will be reported collectively, and the name of the individual participant
will not be disclosed. You may also withdraw from the study if you decide against
participating after initially consenting to participate.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study:

Though identity will not be disclosed by the researcher, it is possible that someone will
be able to deduce a local participant identify on their own. The results of this study,
however, are not expected to have negative repercussions on anyone. The benefits to the

City and the community are clearer determination of effects that result from the involvement and inclusion of these marginalized Rainier Beach residents in the democratic decision-making process in the neighborhood. The benefit is to develop the community engagement program for further use by the City and community.

Reimbursement:

For completing the interview and review process, each participant will receive a thank you gift of $50.00 for your time and effort. Each participant will get a VISA gift card at the end of the one-on-one interview.

Confidentiality:

Privacy will be maintained for all records associated with the study. Participant identity or individual responses will not be reported in publications. Tape recordings and other records will be kept in a locked file, accessible only by the researcher.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Christopher Amba Ndifon, and the Walden University advisor on this study is Dr. Linda Day. You may contact the researcher at 206-841-5153 or email christopher.ndifon@waldenu.edu with any questions you may have about this study. You may also contact Walden University Representative if you have questions about your rights as a participant by email: irb@mail.waldeu.edu.

Please keep a copy of the consent form for your records and return the original in the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed. When this is received by the researcher, contact will be made to schedule the initial interview date and time. Confidentiality will be maintained regardless of your decision about participating.

Statement of Consent:

I have been provided and understand the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I am an adult, capable of making independent decisions and I consent to participate in this course exercise.

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Email address: _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is valid as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically

Signature or email address: christopher.ndifon@waldenu.edu.

 Doctoral Student: Christopher Amba Ndifon

Appendix C: Letters of Cooperation
Sample Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

May 25, 2018

Dear Christopher Ndifon,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "Community Engagement and Diverse Representation in Rainier Beach Neighborhood Planning in Seattle, Washington", "within the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. As part of this study, I authorize you to insert specific recruitment, data collection, member checking, and results dissemination activities. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: 2 Community Engagement Coordinators, 2 Community Liaisons and 2 Community Planners. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
xxxxxxxxxx
Outreach and Engagement Advisor
American Northwest City

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix D: Site Permission for Office Conference Room

Date: April 13, 2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

Attention: xxxxxxxxxx:

My name is Christopher Ndifon, and I am a doctoral student from the Walden University. I plan to conduct a research and my study is about community engagement and diverse representation in xxxxxxxxxx. The purpose of my study is to explore if the engagement efforts to involve minorities, immigrants and diverse underrepresented xxxxxxxxxx residents in neighborhood planning has been successful over an extended period

I am requesting permission from the xxxxxxxxxx to use the conference room within the building to conduct interviews on potential participants recruited for the study. I plan to interview potential participants in a private conference room within the building. The participants will include xxxxxxxxx and the time for the interview is being limited to one to one and a half hours.

I believe that conducting this study will be beneficial to all of us because we will all gain relevant information regarding the phenomenon of community engagement and diverse presentation in xxxxxxxxxx in a new perspective. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me through my cell phone at 206-841-5153 or e-mail Christopher.ndifon@waldenu.edu.

I am hoping to receive a positive response from you.

Sincerely yours,

Christopher A. Ndifon