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Community Engagement Strategies for Civic Participation in Youth Development: the University of Mississippi's Fight Against Poverty

Henry Lang-VanDerLaan
University of Mississippi. Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI'S FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

By Henry Lang-VanDerLaan

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Approved:

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Advisor: Dr. Albert Nylander

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Reader: Dr. Melissa Bass

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Reader: Dr. Joseph Holland

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ABSTRACT

Henry Lang-VanDerLaan: Community Engagement Strategies for Civic Participation in Youth Development: The University of Mississippi's Fight Against Poverty

This thesis examined civic participation and community engagement strategies by the University of Mississippi to fight poverty through education in Mississippi. In 2014 the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement started an innovative approach to fight poverty through education in Mississippi. The center began a Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED) program to establish community-university partnerships for university students to engage in communities beyond campus. I served in the program as a CEED scholar from 2015-2017.

In this thesis I explored the state of an afterschool program to determine its success, and to evaluate the community engagement strategy to fight poverty through education in a predominantly African American community. For two years the CEED program provided training in entrepreneurship education, civic responsibility, and local participation in community engagement activities, especially youth development training. Through personal interviews, secondary survey data, and an internship experience, findings indicate that community engagement strategies are effective. I will share my story working at the Boys & Girls Club in Greenwood, MS, as one effective approach.

The McLean Institute CEED students have implemented numerous projects mutually with community partners throughout Mississippi and in the Delta region. We have engaged in real world problems, following a curriculum that showed the relationship between theory and practice. These mutually beneficial partnerships have enhanced the social capital and civic participation of all involved.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mississippi has the highest poverty rate in the nation, with the Mississippi Delta having the highest poverty rates in the state (Census, 2010). Arguably the Mississippi Delta can be characterized as the poorest region in the United States, primarily due to its past extractive institutions and exploitation of its people (Cobb, 1992). Although rich in natural and human resources, this exploitive past has created a region described as exporters of human resource capital, with many youth leaving the Delta to seek better education and job opportunities. The economically disadvantage throughout the Delta are disproportionately African American children who are faced with major challenges due to this past and the current social psychological and economic disengagements. This thesis highlights civic participation and community engagement initiatives by the University of Mississippi to engage in the Mississippi Delta through community-university partnerships to address these challenges for underserved communities.

Utilizing Weerts and Sandmann's (2008) theoretical framing of universities and communities engaged in mutually beneficial relationships, a case study of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Mississippi Delta and the important work these clubs fulfill in underserved communities is explored. The fight against poverty must be a collaborative effort on behalf of the institutions of education and its partnering communities. The University of Mississippi's McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement has as its primary mission to create transformative experiences for university students and to fight poverty through education in Mississippi. As a Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED) scholar, I participated in a 2016

summer-long educational engagement at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Mississippi Delta in Greenwood, Mississippi. This type of university engagement and community participation for democratic decision making serves a critical role in creating educational pathways and action projects to fight poverty.

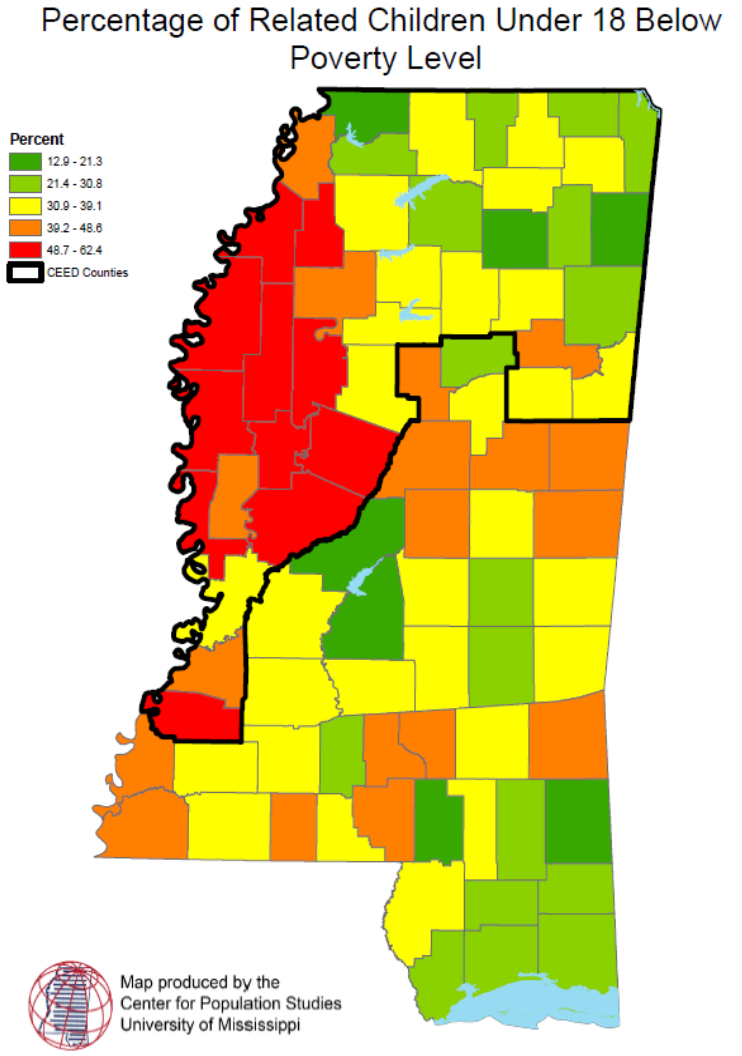
In the past university service often emphasized a one-way approach to delivering knowledge to the public. Now higher education leaders use the term community engagement in describing the mutually beneficial relationships for addressing societal needs. "The new philosophy emphasizes a shift away from an expert model of delivering university knowledge to the public and toward a more collaborative model in which community partners play a significant role in creating and sharing knowledge to the mutual benefit of institutions and society" (Weerts and Sandmann, 2008, p. 74).

Fighting Poverty Through Education in Mississippi

The latest American Community Survey data show that an estimated 651,545 people in Mississippi were poor during 2014-2015.[1] This figure was 22.5% of the 2,890,915 persons for whom poverty status was determined. During this same time period the national poverty rate was 15.5%. For the 651,545 individuals in poverty in Mississippi, 230,604 were under 18 years old, and 77 of 82 counties had poverty rates above the national rate (see Map 1). The poverty rate is disproportionally higher for Mississippi's 1,073,533 African Americans at 35.6% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The counties where UM's CEED students have been working is outlined on Map 1, and Map 2 shows the total poverty rates for Mississippi Counties.

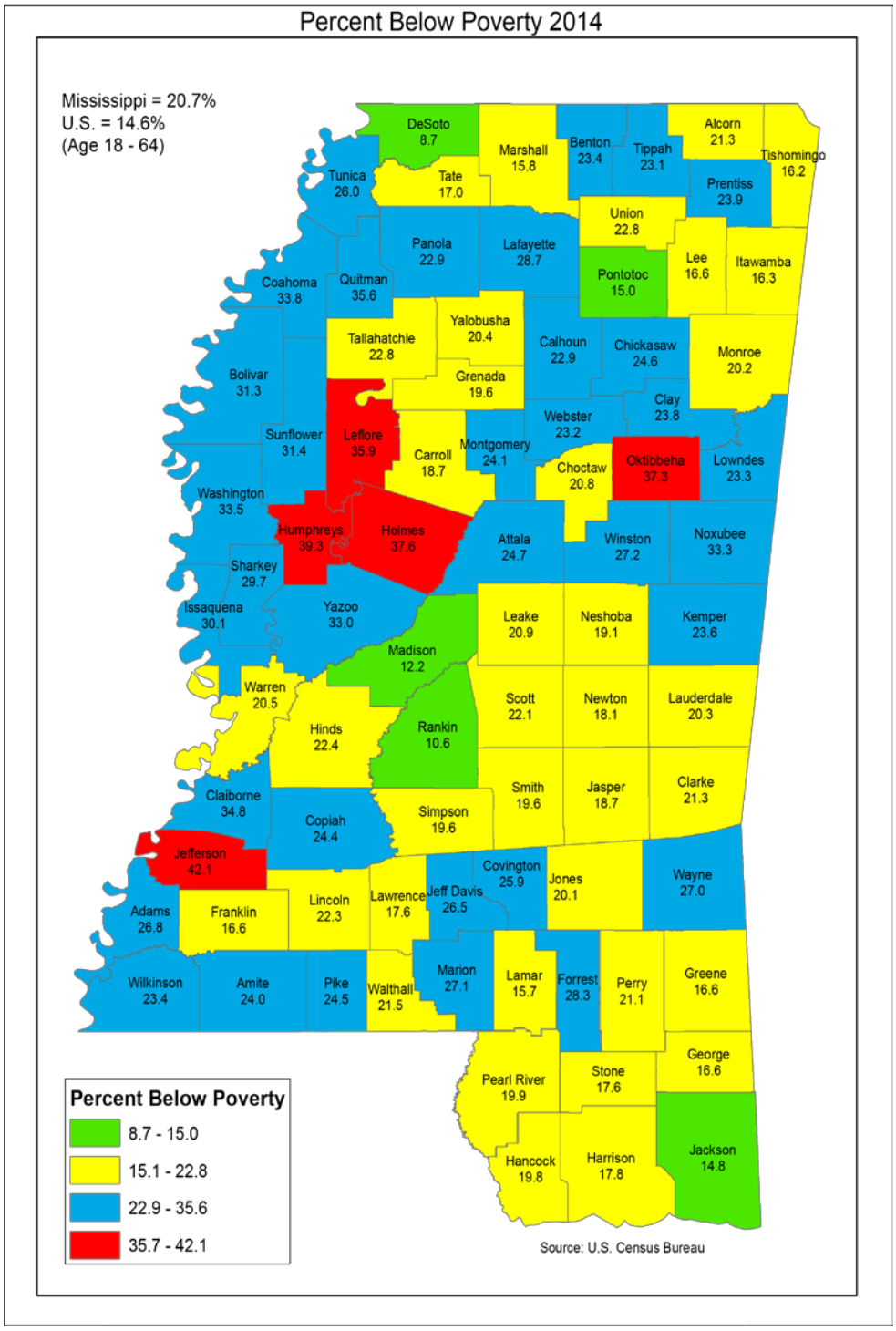
Research shows that poverty is one of the single greatest threats to children's well-being. Effective public policies, however, can make a difference for children, particularly high quality learning experiences like those provided in afterschool programs such as the Boys & Girls Clubs. In the succeeding chapters, I will share how community-university partnerships embody the best community and civic engagement practices through supporting youth development. Survey findings from the Directors of Boys & Girls Clubs in Mississippi on their challenges and needs to maintain appropriate funding are also examined.

Map 1: Percentage of Related Children Under 18 Below Poverty Level



U.S. Census Bureau; 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP03;
generated by Clifford Holley; using American FactFinder; <http://factfinder2.census.gov>; (3 March 2015).

Map 2: Mississippi Counties Percent Below Poverty, 2014



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Poverty rates for American children have declined somewhat since 2010. However it has changed little for African American children in the United States, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis (Patten and Krogstad, 2015). States where African American populations are large enough to calculate child poverty rates, only four have poverty rates for black children under 30 percent, and none has a rate below 20 percent (See Table 1).

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Black Alone Children in Poverty in the Past 12 Months by State: 2010 Census

	Number	**Percent**
United States	4,025,289	38%
Oregon	9,773	49%
Nebraska	12,840	52%
Iowa	16,899	51%
Kansas	17,495	38%
Delaware	17,722	33%
Colorado	20,819	39%
Washington	24,030	37%
Arizona	24,357	32%
Nevada	24,444	41%
Connecticut	28,075	29%
Oklahoma	32,362	44%
Massachusetts	39,008	32%
Kentucky	42,992	47%
Minnesota	43,031	46%
Wisconsin	59,477	53%
Arkansas	65,439	47%
Indiana	71,905	42%
Missouri	81,317	41%
New Jersey	84,344	28%
Maryland	95,606	22%
Virginia	108,608	28%
Tennessee	119,841	40%
Pennsylvania	139,498	38%

South Carolina	146,215	42%
Alabama	157,651	46%
Mississippi	159,445	49%
California	173,026	32%
Michigan	181,403	48%
Ohio	186,195	48%
Louisiana	196,877	47%
Illinois	215,620	42%
North Carolina	216,421	40%
New York	245,049	33%
Texas	279,857	34%
Georgia	305,250	36%
Florida	324,348	39%
Alaska*	23,263	NA
Hawaii*	21,424	NA
Idaho*	9,810	NA
Maine*	15,707	NA
Montana*	4,027	NA
New Hampshire*	15,035	NA
New Mexico*	42,550	NA
North Dakota*	7,960	NA
Rhode Island*	60,189	NA
South Dakota*	10,207	NA
Utah*	29,287	NA
Vermont*	6,277	NA
West Virginia*	63,124	NA
Wyoming*	7,748	NA
***This is the total population for Black or African Americans alone in the state. There were no percentages of child poverty rates for these states due to the small populations. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 and 2010, American Community Surveys, 2009 and 2010 Puerto Rico Community Surveys.**		

These poverty rates for African American children are shocking for the United States in 2017. Mississippi, which consistently has the highest poverty rates in the U.S., also has the largest percentage African American population in the United States at 37%. Persistent high poverty rates are correlated with the sizable minority population. Data in Table 1 also show that these strong correlations are not unique to Mississippi but are

patterned across the United States. African American children throughout the nation are four times as likely as white children to be living in poverty (Census, 2013).

Although these poverty rates for African American children are disturbing, these data offer a different perspective on Mississippi's consistency in being the worse regarding poverty. Obviously Mississippi is not an outlier when it comes to poverty for African American children. According to the Pew Research findings in 2013 all other demographics fell in their child poverty rates, but the poverty rates for African American children remained the same, highlighting the outlier to be the United States' challenge in fighting poverty for African Americans. "About 38.3 percent of black children lived in poverty in 2013, nearly four times the rate for white children, at 10.7 percent. About 30.4 percent of Hispanic children and 10.1 percent of Asian children [also] live in poverty" (Tavernise, 2015).

Mississippi and the rest of the country must continue to tackle this social problem. Mississippi should no longer see itself as an outlier in the model of development regarding poverty, and the rest of the United States must recognize it is a national problem. It is too critical for the children who are most vulnerable among us. In Table 1, twenty of the thirty-six states with adequate data have a rate of 40 percent or higher for African American children in poverty. Research indicates that impoverished children are more likely to encounter factors that harm their brain development and overall well-being. These risks include "poor nutrition, maternal depression, parental substance abuse, trauma and abuse, violent crime, divorce, low-quality child care, and decreased cognitive stimulation" (Haveman, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1997; Huffman, Mehlinger, & Kerivan, 2000; Mather & Adams, 2006; National Center for Children in Poverty, 1999). The children

basically have no control over these factors, and policies cannot alter such conditions as divorce, parental substance abuse, or violent crime, but it can affect the quality of childcare available to poor children.

Although Mississippi is not an outlier regarding poverty for African American children, historical and systemic oppressive structures have been unique to Mississippi in its economic connections to slavery and its last fight to hold on to the vestiges of a segregated society (Cobb, 1992; Duncan, 2014; Myers Asch, 2011). An often unrecognized divide that is debilitating for African American Mississippians resides in the social psychological entrapments of personal negativities of being told you are the poorest of the poor, not only locally but nationally. These national and state narratives of the being the worst and last unknowingly contribute disproportionate burdens on the most underserved and historically oppressed.

To fight poverty through education, new and innovative community-university strategies like the Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED) program should become normal approaches for college campuses across the United States in their work with surrounding communities. As a CEED student at the University of Mississippi, my involvement in historically underserved communities taught me to recognize these widespread challenges from a macro perspective. For example, the African American child poverty rate has become a major problem in an unlikely state. *The Oregonian* carried a story in 2011 citing that one out of two black children in Oregon lives in poverty, which was one of the highest in the nation.

> An estimated 49.3 percent of the state's 20,000 black children were poor in 2010 -- the highest among all ethnic and racial groups -- compared with 19 percent of

> white children, according to the bureau's American Community Survey. That means half of the state's black children live on less than $430 a week for a family of four, under federal guidelines, less than half the state's $48,325 annual median family income. It's appalling, it's horrific, it's something where I don't know once people get the information how they are able to sleep at night, said Mary Li, Multnomah County community services director. A child is going hungry, a child is cold. This is not simply an African American issue, this is a community issue that we all have to take on as if it were our child. (Hannah-Jones, 2011)

This is not unique to Oregon nor Mississippi. This is a national issue. C. Wright Mills offered a conceptual approach for understanding the difference between a private trouble and a public issue (Mills, 1959). Poverty rates, at this level, across the country are public issues. Therefore the solutions to society's pervasive social ills demand a whole-system approach through education, which is the philosophy and theoretical strategy of the McLean Institute's CEED initiative.

Table 2 shows the estimates of people below 50, 125, and 200 percent of their poverty thresholds, demonstrating the growing problem for the United States. This offers additional evidence that poverty is disproportionally more intense among African Americans, and also Hispanics. Almost 50% of African Americans and Hispanics in the United States are below the 200 percent poverty threshold. At each level, there is a disproportionate number of African Americans and Hispanics relative to other ethnicities.

Table 2:

People With Income Below Specified Ratios of Their Poverty Thresholds by Selected Characteristics: 2015

(Numbers in thousands, margin of error in thousands or percentage points as appropriate. People as of March of the following year. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar16.pdf).

Characteristic	Total	Income-to-poverty ratio[1]															
		Under 0.50				Under 1.25				Under 1.50				Under 2.00			
		Number	Margin of error[2] (+/-)	Percent	Margin of error[2] (+/-)	Number	Margin of error[2] (+/-)	Percent	Margin of error[2] (+/-)	Number	Margin of error[2] (+/-)	Percent	Margin of error[2] (+/-)	Number	Margin of error[2] (+/-)	Percent	Margin of error[2] (+/-)
All people	**318,454**	**19,444**	**589**	**6.1**	**0.2**	**56,912**	**1,048**	**17.9**	**0.3**	**71,681**	**1,116**	**22.5**	**0.3**	**100,894**	**1,198**	**31.7**	**0.4**
Age																	
Under age 18	73,647	6,537	300	8.9	0.4	18,725	475	25.4	0.6	23,117	492	31.4	0.7	30,756	493	41.8	0.7
Aged 18 to 64	197,260	11,572	388	5.9	0.2	31,632	636	16.0	0.3	39,226	701	19.9	0.4	55,348	772	28.1	0.4
Aged 65 and older	47,547	1,335	127	2.8	0.3	6,556	263	13.8	0.6	9,338	302	19.6	0.6	14,789	345	31.1	0.7
Sex																	
Male	156,009	8,484	314	5.4	0.2	25,208	529	16.2	0.3	31,989	579	20.5	0.4	45,868	645	29.4	0.4
Female	162,445	10,960	350	6.7	0.2	31,705	619	19.5	0.4	39,693	640	24.4	0.4	55,025	669	33.9	0.4
Race[3] and Hispanic Origin																	
White	245,536	12,555	445	5.1	0.2	38,504	839	15.7	0.3	49,245	866	20.1	0.4	71,104	978	29.0	0.4
White, not Hispanic	195,450	8,355	365	4.3	0.2	24,091	658	12.3	0.3	31,256	692	16.0	0.4	46,475	823	23.8	0.4
Black	41,625	4,549	276	10.9	0.7	12,538	453	30.1	1.1	15,180	438	36.5	1.1	19,843	456	47.7	1.1
Asian	18,241	1,133	151	6.2	0.8	2,638	209	14.5	1.1	3,275	228	18.0	1.2	4,465	256	24.5	1.4
Hispanic (any race)	56,780	4,839	275	8.5	0.5	16,328	510	28.8	0.9	20,278	522	35.7	0.9	27,921	523	49.2	0.9
Family Status																	
In families	258,121	12,464	516	4.8	0.2	40,272	954	15.6	0.4	51,477	1,029	19.9	0.4	74,400	1,119	28.8	0.4
Householder	82,199	3,666	148	4.5	0.2	11,603	278	14.1	0.3	14,822	309	18.0	0.4	21,812	337	26.5	0.4
Related children under age 18	72,558	6,121	293	8.4	0.4	18,106	466	25.0	0.6	22,399	489	30.9	0.7	29,927	493	41.2	0.7
Related children under age 6	23,459	2,341	154	10.0	0.6	6,296	214	26.8	0.9	7,747	230	33.0	1.0	10,291	230	43.9	1.0
In unrelated subfamilies	1,344	396	75	29.4	4.8	662	87	49.3	5.1	791	97	58.8	5.1	961	107	71.5	4.4
Unrelated individuals	58,988	6,585	285	11.2	0.4	15,978	461	27.1	0.6	19,414	508	32.9	0.6	25,532	591	43.3	0.6

[1]The estimates for people with income below 100 percent of their poverty thresholds (under 1.00) can be found in Table 3.

[2]A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number, when added to and subtracted from the estimate, forms the 90 percent confidence interval. Margin of errors shown in this table are based on standard errors calculated using replicate weights. For more information, see "Standard Errors and Their Use" at <www2.census.gov/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256sa.pdf>.

[3]Federal surveys give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group such as Asian may be defined as those who reported Asian and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported Asian regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). This table shows data using the first approach (race alone). The use of the single-race population does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. Information on people who reported more than one race, such as White ***and*** American Indian and Alaska Native or Asian ***and*** Black or African American, is available from Census 2010 through American FactFinder. About 2.9 percent of people reported more than one race in Census 2010. Data for American Indians and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders, and those reporting two or more races are not shown separately.

Note: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Community-University Engagement: Theory

Community-university engagement strategies allow higher education to retain its commitment "to educate generations of informed and engaged democratic citizens through the conjunction of theory and practice, curriculum and engagement, and campus and community" (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). This mutually beneficial engagement benefits college students' learning, and the more civically engaged universities become, the greater the impact will be on creating local and state economic vitality, and collective action to address public problems (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008).

Community engagement theory argues that organizational structures have meaning beyond the individuals: "Institutional theory posits that engagement structures may exist simply to communicate a set of values about the importance of community and

that the structures themselves may be more important than the outcomes" (Weerts and Sandmann, 2008). This theory challenges institutions, and in this case universities, to match its theory, "Transformation Through Service," with engagement practice.

Child poverty and the lack of youth development in the Mississippi Delta need as many established programs and partnerships as possible. Community engagement theory presents the opportunity to assist in creating innovative solutions to address child poverty and bolster youth development programs. This theoretical approach offers both the community and university programs an opportunity to improve society.

The McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement executes the university's UM 2020 Transformation Through Service priority. The Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED) program is one of McLean's signature projects developed to provide university students this mutually beneficial opportunity to engage communities. Serving as a member of the CEED initiative, I participated in an internship at the Boys & Girls Club in Greenwood, Mississippi in the summer of 2016. The Boys & Girls Club is an afterschool program, serving to fill the gap between the end of the school day and participation at home in the evening. This type of civic engagement participation embodies the best practices of community-university partnerships, supporting communities in underserved areas, and my personal and university fight against poverty.

Young people need structure and positive relationships to maximize their potential for future success. Afterschool programs like the Boys & Girls Club (BGCA) offer structure and positive relationships for numerous students from economically

disadvantaged backgrounds (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003), and it has a positive impact on their growth and development.

The CEED project is a community-university effort to assist in the process of developing opportunities in places that are struggling economically and socially. The Mississippi Delta has been effected by out migration, failing physical infrastructures, an undereducated workforce, and a stagnant economy. The CEED initiative functions to learn from and to empower diverse community members by working together to engage in creating positive change in the community. Through participation in local community and economic development projects, UM CEED students implement activities that enhance their involvement in the community.

The CEED program provides entrepreneurship education, civic responsibility, and local participation in community engagement activities, especially youth development programs. This opportunity for civic participation by university students gives communities renewed momentum in their fight to improve their students' opportunities. Since 2014, forty-five CEED students have implemented community projects mutually with community partners throughout Mississippi and in the Delta region. The McLean Institute and CEED students engage in real world problems, following a curriculum that allows students to see the relationship between theory and practice (Stangler & Bell-Masterson, 2015; Taulbert & Schoeniger, 2010). With my interest in youth development and public policy, I assisted in entrepreneurship education and recreational development at the BGC in Greenwood for the summer of 2016.

During this internship experience, I learned that youth are searching for a caring and trusting community. To build functional communities youth development programs

need to foster both human capital skills that make individuals productive, and social capital relationships that make groups productive. Intentional and strategic afterschool programs offer youth development and academic success classes through the facilitation of mentoring and tutoring.

Involvement in high quality afterschool programs, as well as in other extracurricular activities, is related to improved school attendance and performance, more involvement with adults, better peer relations, and enhanced prosocial behaviors (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, and Ferrari, 2003). Young people are increasingly at risk for negative outcomes if not engaged through these afterschool programs. There is evidence that greater participation by youths in programs like the Boys & Girls Club bring benefits to their academic achievement and overall development. Community leaders and policy makers are encouraging youth program professionals and researchers in the emerging youth development field to identify the kinds of influential experiences and role models that actively and constructively engage the whole youth.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)

According to the 2015 Boys & Girls Clubs Annual Report, the BGCA serves to "enrich the lives of youth in public and private schools, as well as those who live on U.S. military installations worldwide" (BGCA 2015 Annual Report). Clubs are community-based and offer youth development programs to meet the needs and interests of young people ages 6-18. All programs provide opportunities for youth to learn during out of school time, including in the summer. Goals include providing "supportive relationships with caring adults and friends that foster a sense of belonging, responsibility, civility and civic engagement" (BGCA 2015 Annual Report).

Researchers have discussed the importance of participating in activities offered at the BGCA. The purpose of the organization is to promote positive youth development. This youth development strategy guides the activities and programs offered in the BGCA's five core program areas: Character and Leadership Development; Education and Career Development; Health and Life Skills; the Arts; and Sports, Fitness, and Recreation. With over 4,200 club locations across the country, serving nearly 4 million people, the BGCA provides youth with a safe place to learn (BGCA, 2017).

BGCA programs focus on academic development and seek to promote positive youth development through less structured programs such as sporting events, recreational games, and health and fitness activities. Cost for participation in BGCA activities are minimal, averaging around $50 a semester, and the clubs have open door policies for the youth to participate on a voluntary and drop-in basis. Ninety percent of the Alumni of the BGCA say that their club was one of the only safe places they could attend and have fun afterschool. More than 54% say that the club saved their life and that number goes up to 75% among African-American males (BGCA Report 2015).

It is impoverished and low income areas that especially need access to programs like the BGCA. These programs are major influencers on children in the communities that need them most. Eighty-eight percent of alumni say that the club helped them determine right from wrong, and eighty percent said that the club helped them build a sense of duty to give back and help their community.

The Boys & Girls Club includes more than 1,140 independent organizations, with the national organization headquartered in Atlanta. The majority of the student members are between ages 5 and 15, totaling 90%. Nationally, the club serves students who make

up 30%, White; 27%, Black or African American; 23%, Hispanic or Latino; and others (BGCA 2017). The BGC in Greenwood served 100% African American students.

As noted earlier institutionalized inequities in the Mississippi Delta have disproportionately impacted the African American community. Afterschool programs offer added value for African American children who have experienced the negative realities of historical and persistent poverty in the Mississippi Delta. The BGCA serves a vital role in communities that have experienced systemic oppression and persistent poverty, and it is vitally important that the state, businesses, nonprofits, and other agencies ensure the continued funding for the Boys & Girls Clubs.

Funding Afterschool Programs

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America received more than seven million in membership dues and grants (Boys & Girls Clubs Financial Statement, 2014). Most afterschool programs generate their financial support from multiple sources at the federal, state, and local levels. They also receive private support, grant funding, and corporate sponsorships, with many of the sports, arts, and academic programs relying on local and state finances to succeed. There also are small entrance fees for the children to participate.

The BGCA is a $501(c)^3$ nonprofit organization and donations are tax deductible. This classification allows the program to qualify as possible applicants for federal and state education grants. One of the largest funding sources of federal money for afterschool school-age child care programs is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers fund.

> [The 21st Century Community Learning Center] supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. (Department of Education)

The 21st Century Community Learning Center's budget in 2016 was $1.1 billion, which would be approximately 1.7% of the Department of Education's annual budget of $64.9 billion in 2017. The entire Department of Education comprised around 8% of all discretionary spending in 2015 and 2016 (Congressional Budget Office). The total federal budget for the United States in 2016 was $1.1 Trillion for discretionary spending, which means that the total budget for the 21st Century Community Learning Center program is only 0.1% of the Budget (Congressional Budget Office).

The 21st Century Community Learning Center Fund divides its budget among all states, and awards grants to applicants based on competition in that state, with merit based competition nationally. A Boys & Girls Club operating costs average between $100,000 to $350,000 depending on the size, quality, and type of program (BGCA, 2015). The Boys & Girls Club of the Mississippi Delta operating expenses for 2015 were $612,000, with the Executive Director's salary approximately $22,000.

The national BGCA salaries and related expenses are $48,222,799. The organization has over 58,000 paid employees, with more than 270,000 volunteers who

take no financial compensation. The BGCA, and most local clubs, rely on volunteers to assist with staff due to the small operational budgets. This can adversely impact the quality of the programs. Volunteers may provide meaningful contributions, but current research suggests that paid staff has more of an impact on the success of a program.

A relevant number for staff and volunteers was the student to staff ratio. In the Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study (MARS) report, they found that the average student to staff ratio, including volunteers and paid staff, was 6.5 children to every staff member. The average ratio for paid staff per child was 8.4:1. Although the findings do not indicate that the ratio of paid staff to children was a more viable indicator for predicting the success of a program, the lower the ratio of students to staff generally the more meaningful adult interactions occur. Also, those programs with higher ratios were correlated with less successful programs (Miller, 2005).

BGCA is designed to help America's youth better themselves in all aspects of their life; therefore, it is essential that volunteers participate in the education of the most vulnerable. Youth who attend BGCAs frequently or in moderate amounts have been shown to have greater academic achievement, stronger positive attitudes towards school, and healthier relationships with teachers and school personnel (Anderson-Butcher and Cash, 2010). In life, outside of education, clubs play an important role in shaping the social development of youth, particularly when it comes to avoiding substance use. There was evidence that showed clubs helped reduce substance use, drug trafficking, criminal behaviors, and property destruction (Schinke, Orlandi, and Cole, 1992).

The McLean Institute and CEED program have been investing with community partners to provide additional resources on behalf of the university. Developing these

community-university partners to invest in Mississippi's children will have impacts for generations to come. I was able to experience this first hand at the BGC in Greenwood.

Greenwood's past is known for its Civil Rights struggle, and the tragic Emmett Till murder in 1955 that shocked the nation. This murder occurred just a few miles north of Greenwood in Money, MS. The Boys & Girls Club where I participated was only a few blocks from where Stokely Carmichael coined the phrase "Black Power." For many, Mississippi's race relations have not improved enough since these events happened more than sixty years ago, and conceivably it is because the state refuses to take ownership for some of these past actions. For this reason the state will find it difficult to significantly alter the nation's perspective that it is an outlier even if its policies effectuate positive social change for these impoverished communities. Yet community-university strategies of community engagement can begin the process to change the story.

For example, one of only a couple historical markers exists regarding the Emmett Till story. In Sumner, MS, the site of the Till murder trial, a Historic Intrepid Center tells the story of Emmett Till. In 2016, I participated with the CEED team in reading the resolution created by the Emmett Till Interpretive Center and presented to the family of Emmett Till. The resolution states that "Working together, we have the power now to fulfill the promise of 'liberty and justice' for all" (Emmett Till Memorial Commission, 2007). The local Tallahatchie community's resolution apologized for this past wrong.

A community that suffers from past injustices, including ongoing reminders of those inequities, and persistent and generational poverty needs significant resources to fix them. It is even more critical for higher education to establish community engagement strategies, which include working closely with these communities to build social and

economic capital. In addition to the CEED initiative, the McLean Institute has implemented several community engagement strategies including a mentoring program to assist local communities in their capacities to generate service and to build social capital.

McLean Mentors Program at the Batesville Boys & Girls Club

The McLean Mentors is a collaborative community-university service program, connecting the university to the community by creating relationships with community partners in the Mississippi area that are meaningful and mutually beneficial. The idea for the McLean Mentors program originated from a community partner, the director of Calhoun City Excel in Calhoun City, Mississippi. The director perceived the benefit of connecting their small group of afterschool students with university student mentors. Since its inception, the program has evolved to match the needs of community partners for mentoring and tutoring collaboration. The program is now assisting other organizations like EDUCATE in Como, Mississippi, and the Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Mississippi in Batesville.

The mentoring program began with eight university student participants and now has more than forty student volunteers participating. UM students register for at least one hour per week to fulfill volunteer hours at various afterschool sites. The program organizes an on-campus day to bring the community students to campus to immerse them in the prospects of attending college and to enhance the students' relationships with the mentors and to bridge the connection between the university and the community.

This community-university engagement strategy offers a quality mentoring program for fighting poverty. The McLean Mentors currently work in collaboration with the BGC of Batesville, educating school-age children from 6 to 18 years old, and

Batesville is a 20-minute drive from campus. I will analyze data from a survey of the university mentors who participated in educational activities at the Boys & Girls Club of Northwest MS to offer additional evaluation of community engagement strategies for civic participation in youth development. This program will be assessed as one of the strategies for effectively engaging youth programs.

Connecting with the Historically Disenfranchised

The history of this nation calls for the need to extend substantial resources to those who are most vulnerable among us through community engagement, public policy, and government intervention. The national poverty rates for African American children are a blemish on the nation. Fundamental to the solution is calling for the nation to acknowledge that the reason why so many underprivileged are born into impoverished and low-income families has a direct link to previous institutional inequities.

African American Mississippians, and all impoverished children of any race or nationality, need healthy access to afterschool programs to continue their education and to stop the generational failure. The high poverty rates for the nation's children, particularly historically disenfranchised groups, are morally wrong and a betrayal of the nation's ideals. Although there are vast improvements in the treatment of minority groups in the United States, racism and prejudice are still prevalent in society.

The research evidence demonstrates that when structured programming was offered to students at the clubs there were many benefits even at the social psychological level. Participation in afterschool programs increased youth self-esteem and developed stronger leadership skills. The increased attendance and quality of the program, significantly impacted the child's life (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, and Ferrari, 2003).

The opportunities of programs like the BGCA to affect the life trajectory of youth make them paramount to society and supportive in changing cyclical societal problems in impoverished communities.

The Mississippi Delta's rich cultural heritage and productive agriculture land have not been equally shared. It is a region still struggling to educate a group of its citizens who were systematically held back and oppressed for generations. Though these community engagement practices do not necessarily address the structural problems, my internship time at the Boys & Girls Club in Greenwood impacted 50 to 75 student lives, and this community-university model serves as a potential solution for macro level changes.

The literature supports the argument that there is a need for afterschool programs. One way to support underserved communities in their youth development work is through developing strategies to increase community-university partnerships. My university CEED experience in the Greenwood club offered a personal experience of this successful strategy. In chapter 3 the methodological approach for evaluating these strategies for civic participation in youth development programs will be discussed.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

As a Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED) scholar, I participated in a 2016 summer-long education engagement at the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Mississippi Delta in Greenwood. This community engagement participation was a part of the CEED's effort to establish strategic community partnerships to create solutions for fighting poverty through education. This study utilized a mixed methods approach through participant observation during my internship experience, phone interviews, McLean Institute secondary survey data on mentoring (n=48), and U.S. Census data.

Through this study, I served as a participant observer in examining how community-university partnerships make a difference for youth development programs in the Mississippi Delta. This research method relies on personal experience and participation, not just observation. In participant observation the researcher shares in the activities of the people in the observed setting, with such participation providing an insider's view in the community. As a student-engaged participant, I took field notes during the CEED internship and made observations of the Boys & Girls Club.

These observations occurred over a six-week time with the Boys and Girls Club in Greenwood. During this time, I logged over 240 hours in continuous days and weeks of participating in the program. At times I fulfilled the role of an assistant program director and instructor, leading and teaching multiple programs and classes. These classes covered entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and reading sessions on health and nutrition.

The student population was 100 percent African American, with an average daily attendance of 50 to 75 students.

I also observed the Grenada Boys & Girls Club which is part of the larger Boys & Girls Club of the Mississippi Delta. The Grenada club had a similar demographic make-up, but much better facilities, resources, and infrastructure. Observing the Grenada program allowed me to take field notes on another program's financial position. I was able to conduct interviews with the staff leaders of this program, and although everything was basically the same between the Grenada and the Greenwood clubs, there were clear disparities between the facilities and resources.

Participating as a volunteer staff member offered personal insight into how the program directors and staff members performed their day-to-day functions. This experience helped shape the research questions I utilized in the interviews with the seven directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Mississippi Delta. This methodological approach provided a richness I otherwise would not have been able to achieve. As described, the Mississippi Delta is a unique region that would have been almost impossible to fully appreciate without first immersing myself in the community. This mutually beneficial engagement allowed me to gain trust and confidence from the club staff and the many youth involved in the program.

At the conclusion of the six-week experience, I transcribed my field notes and experiences, focusing on the institutional theoretical approach of community engagement and its successful impact on youth development programs. Additional research was conducted to assist in framing this study, and finally, I developed a semi-structured interview guide to assist in collecting information from the directors of the seven clubs

which make up the Boys & Girls Club of the Mississippi Delta. Those seven clubs are located in Clarksdale, Greenwood, Grenada, Itta Bena, Jonestown, Lexington, Tunica County, and Yazoo City.

These phone interviews were to each director, including the Greenwood and Grenada club directors. Each call took 30 minutes to 1 hour, although I had collected many hours from the Greenwood and Grenada club directors during the summer experience. The directors were asked a series of questions regarding the ways in which finances impacted their day-to-day operations. The semi-structured approach also permitted the directors to add additional information on the clubs. The interview guide included these questions to each director.

- On a semester and annual basis, what is the direct impact of funding on your program and what challenges are caused by funding?
- What local and state policies impact your program financially and educationally?
- As program director, do you see a correlation between the funding of your program and the education of the students?
- Do you believe your educational training is meeting your students' needs for academic help?
- In what way is your program responsible for closing the educational achievement gap between the student's current ability and what the student's ability can become?
- What else has a major impact on your program and its success?

Human subjects review was approved by the University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board. The required materials can be found in the Appendix.

McLean Institute Mentoring Survey

The mentoring survey has been administered by UM's McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement to all McLean Mentors (n=48) since the fall 2015 semester, including at the Batesville Boys & Girls Club. The results of this survey were analyzed to add to the understanding of the effectiveness of another McLean

Institute and community-university engagement strategy for youth development in the Delta. It also provides findings on another Boys & Girls Club, and these data have not been publicly reported.

University mentors were asked to participate in an online Qualtrics survey. The survey consisted of open and close ended questions to assess the impact of the afterschool engagements, and there were statements that used a 5-point Likert Scale Analysis from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree to gauge participants' perceptions.

The statements were as follows:

- Tutoring elementary school students through the McLean Mentors program was personally an enriching experience.
- The Saturday on Campus allowed me to nurture the elementary school students' educational aspirations.
- This program exposed me to people whose backgrounds and life experiences are different from my own.
- This program increased my understanding of the challenges that community based organizations face in meeting unaddressed needs in Mississippi.
- Doing service outside of Oxford broadened my perspective on Mississippi communities.
- More University of Mississippi students should participate in service work outside of Lafayette County.
- Participating in this program increased the likelihood that I will pursue opportunities to serve my community.

Findings also were analyzed from an internal assessment conducted by a McLean Mentor graduate student for the purposes of improving community engagement strategies for civic participation in youth development programs. This internal evaluation was on the Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Mississippi in Batesville.

This mixed method approach has been utilized to assess the community engagement strategies on behalf of the McLean Institute's CEED program and community-university engagement, and more specifically for this thesis, to understand

how afterschool programs operate in the Mississippi Delta. The next chapter will discuss the findings.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

To begin this chapter I will share the results of my summer internship and follow-up interviews with the Boys & Girls Clubs Directors of the Mississippi Delta. Then I will discuss the results of the secondary survey data, and the assessment of the McLean Mentors program. These findings and discussions will highlight community-university engagement strategies for civic participation and partnerships which are beneficial in supporting youth development programs.

Greenwood Boys & Girls Club Students

"Coach Henry, are we gonna play baseball today?" screamed a sea of 8 to 14-year-old boys for whom I was responsible for that day. Baseball had become a staple at this point in the summer, which had been a surprise to the director of the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwood, Ben Smith. Ben was a club member in Greenwood when he was a child. After attending the college nearest to his hometown, Mississippi Valley State University, a Historically Black College located in Itta Bena, Mississippi, Ben returned home and took a job with his former afterschool program. Within four years of his hiring, he had become the director of the program at the age of 29. Ben Smith is the person that made sure that the Boys & Girls Club of Greenwood continued to be open to children from the community.

The reason that Ben was surprised that baseball had become a staple sport for both the boys and the girls over the summer was because there had never been interest in that sport before my arrival. Also, prior to my arrival there was not one person on staff who played baseball or even knew all of the rules of the game. The bats, gloves, and balls

had been collecting dust in the back corner of the equipment room for years. Basketball and football dominated the culture of the students and thus baseball had been ignored. Students in the program never asked to play baseball until my participation with them.

My experience playing baseball allowed me to teach the student members how to play baseball with proper hitting, pitching, fielding, and base running coaching, or at least do my best to teach them. One of the first purchases I made for the club was a batting tee, which was supposed to be for the 6 to 8-year-olds. It turned out, however, to be useful for the entire camp. All age ranges needed assistance learning to hit pitches that were thrown to them at the beginning of summer. They also needed to learn how to catch behind the plate, which is essential for playing the game of baseball. Near the end of the six weeks, the older boys could almost play a full game. Now there were enough players who could throw the ball to the plate; there were enough fielders who could catch fly balls and field ground balls; and there were just enough students who could hit the baseball to have a real game. The girls, who at first were not as interested in playing the game, and they did not play the other sports, began fighting to line up and take swings at baseballs and softballs. They wanted to learn how to throw and catch just as the boys did. By the end of the summer the girls' teams beat another club in a competitive softball game.

This internship opportunity and community-university engagement strategy offered an experience for both the students of the Boys & Girls Club and me. These baseball experiences and stories are more than just my passion for sports; they demonstrate the impact that staff members have on youth development. In one six-week internship, student lives were transformed on the field and in the classroom. This baseball story can be one among many if appropriate student-staff ratios are met. Paid, qualified, and engaged staff members who are dedicated to changing student lives are a major factor in the success and quality of a Boys & Girls Club.

As one "staff" member, I was able to create new ways for student members to network and to build teamwork. One person with the passion and knowledge of a sport can spark an interest in students that would otherwise not be possible. Although getting students to like baseball may not seem like a pathway to addressing systemic injustices or institutionalized inequities, this educational and recreational program highlighted what one catalyst for change can do to alter the experiences for impoverished students. Researchers have shown that local people must address local problems (Grisham and Gurwitt, 2004). It is also shown that community-university partnerships can strengthen social infrastructures to empower communities to address their own challenges (Sandmann and Weerts, 2008).

In the Heart of the Delta

Greenwood is in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, the geographical region defined by the Mississippi River. This alluvial floodplain, not technically a Delta, is bordered to the west by the great river and to the east by the Yazoo River basin. For centuries the two flooded throughout the area to create one of the riches soils in the

world. Due to this fertile land, the Mississippi Delta is the largest cotton producing region in the state of Mississippi which is the 4th largest producer of cotton in the United States (USDA.gov). Greenwood was and continues to be the epicenter for trading cotton in the state of Mississippi. Its downtown streets are lined with banks and cotton trading companies, despite the fall of the cotton crop in modern agriculture. It is hailed as the cotton capital of the world, although it may no longer truly hold that title (Greenwoodms.com). As a result of the thousands of acres of cotton farms that surround the town of 15,000 people and its historical production, there is much evidence of the racial divide embedded in the social relations within the community. From slavery to Jim Crowe, all have historical roots in Greenwood.

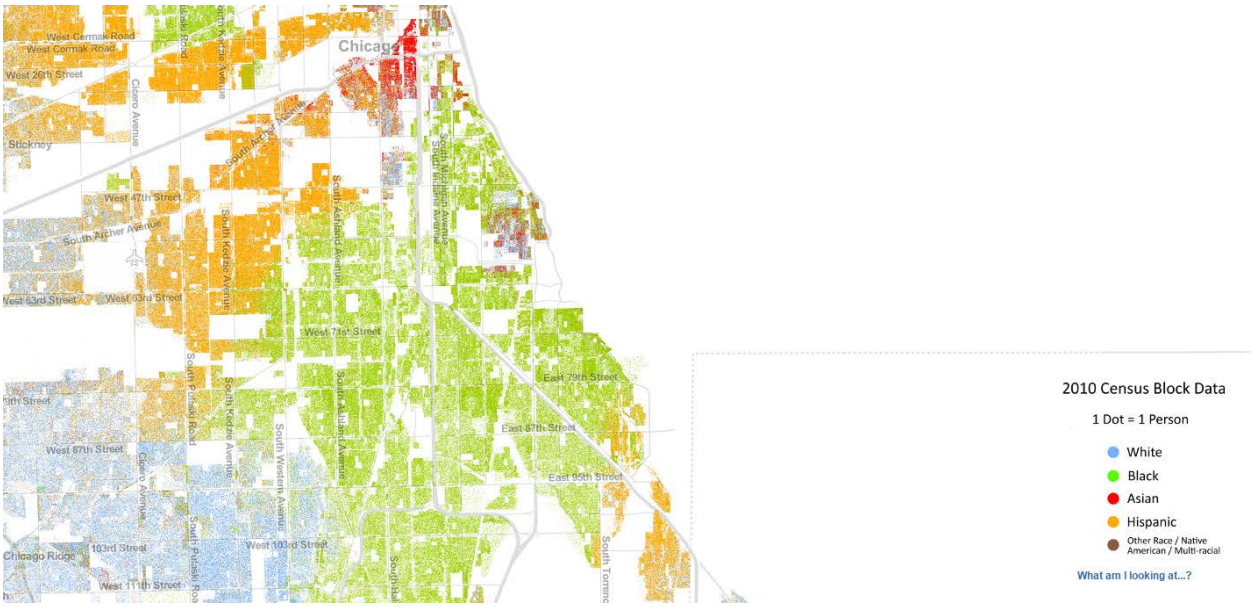
The residual effects of bigotry and institutionalized racism are visible in the daily lives of the residents of Greenwood despite the tremendous progress that has been made in the community over the past 50 years. The town that is seven miles from where Byrant's Grocery once stood, the infamous store in which Emmett Till had an encounter with a white woman and was brutally tortured and murdered at the age of 14, unsurprisingly has some racial tensions and history. A history that may serve as a microcosm for many African American communities across the country, but also a history that forces its community to acknowledge its existence. Although Greenwood has a brutal racial history and lingering systemic racial problems, the town is far more conscientious about race than other places I have been in my travels. As stated earlier in chapters 1 and 2, Mississippi's systemic racial and impoverished problems are not unique to the state, but rather a microcosm for the nation as a whole. The brutal and visible

nature of the state's past forces its citizens to address this history in ways not seen in other places across the country.

In large cities, such as my hometown of Chicago, the history and continuing effects of institutional racism that existed for decades in public policy are not often acknowledged by the citizens of its various neighborhoods. Historically, many urban impoverished African American communities were caused by bigoted policies that were adopted in cities like Chicago (Bogira, 2011). These communities remain so segregated that many towns and neighborhoods have almost no African American residents.

The maps below were taken from the Racial Dot Map of the United States created by the Cooper Center at the University of Virginia. Each dot on the map represents one person counted in the 2010 Unites States Federal Census. First, these maps show the prevalence of segregation in both rural and urban areas containing African American and Caucasian populations. Second, the scale of these pictures is not the same. The first two photos are of the exact same scale; however, the second photo of Greenwood is as small as the map gets for a more accurate look, and the second photo of Chicago is zoomed out for the same reason. The culture and histories of these two regions are very different, and the maps offer a visual representation of the segregation. Communities in the Chicago area are separated by so much distance that one could choose to avoid its racial history. Theoretically, residents of Chicago could experience much of their life without entering an African American neighborhood, which makes ignoring racial problems and racial realities far more common than in a community like Greenwood.


Duck Hill
Greenwood
Itta Bena
Winona
2010 Census Block Data
1 Dot = 1 Person
White
Black
Asian
Hispanic
Other Race / Native American / Multi-racial
What am I looking at...?


Chicago
West Cermak Road
West 26th Street
Stickney
West 47th Street
South Archer Avenue
West 63rd Street
West 71st Street
East 79th Street
East 87th Street
East 95th Street
West 87th Street
West 103rd Street
Chicago Ridge
West 111th Street
South Torrenc
2010 Census Block Data
1 Dot = 1 Person
White
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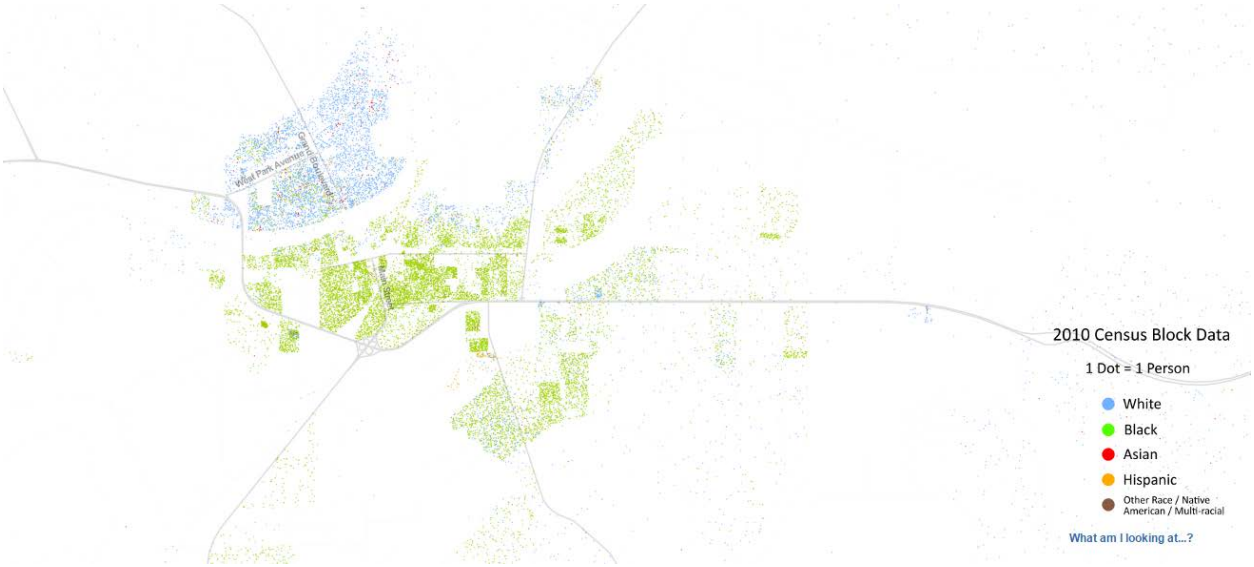
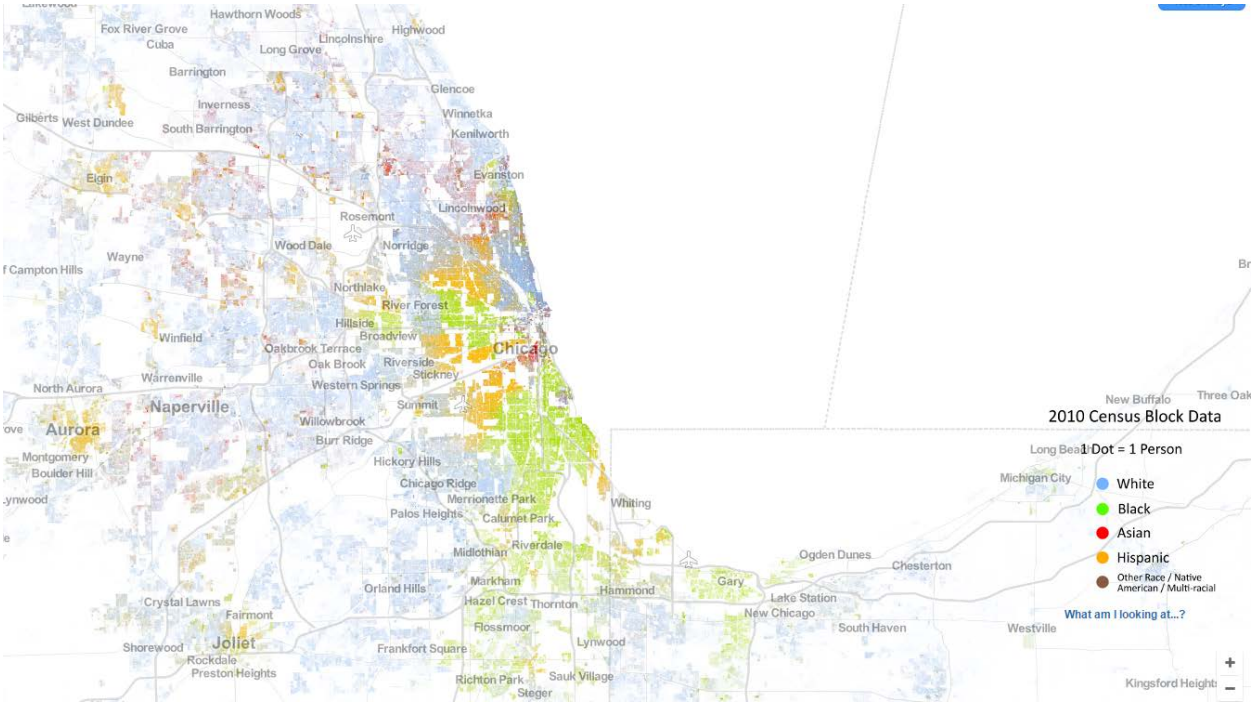
Asian
Hispanic
Other Race / Native American / Multi-racial
What am I looking at...?





Greenwood must confront its history on a daily basis which might be why there has been such progress racially since the Civil Rights Movement. In my internship experience, the community was far more aware and open about racial problems than I

anticipated. This did not mean that there were not great challenges in a community scarred by a racist and violent past. It did mean that the community and the club recognized these concerns and offered a safe space for many children in the community.

For example, during my internship time, four teenagers were killed in shootings. Some of my male students said the reason they were not involved in those particular shootings was because of being at the Boys & Girls Club. All of the students had met or were friends with the teens that were murdered. The club was not the only reason those students were not in harm's way. However, the students believed that the club was part of what kept them safe, and these findings are consistent with the 92% of African American BGCA members and alumni across the nation who feel the same way about their club. Perhaps that is why the club in Greenwood has so many club members for its population size, more than 200 club members in a town of 15,000.

According to the 2010 Census, there are 2,912 children in Greenwood who are of age to attend the BGC, and of that population at least half are African American. There are roughly 1,450 African American students in the community who are able to attend, ages 5-17, and of that population over 200 children are members. This means that more than 10% of the African American children in Greenwood are members with the Boys & Girls Club. This demonstrates the importance of this club for the community and its afterschool program despite having programmatic challenges itself.

Meet Some of the Club Members

Now I would like to introduce you to some of these students who impacted me during my time at the club. Numerous individual stories could be provided, but I will share only a few to offer a glimpse into the world of these young Deltans. An outcome of

successful civic participation with underserved students is that not only are you impacting a student's life, but they impact and change your life. For example, Kyle, who was a six-year-old at the club, had some challenges when I started. He did not listen to directions and would constantly bother and upset other children. He often refused to read or participate in academic activities. He was a cute child, so he understood how to get adults to let him out of trouble.

Kyle and I bonded during a NASA day program, which was brought to Greenwood by one of my CEED colleagues from the space center on the coast. All summer we struggled to get Kyle to read or to do his math, but on the NASA day he refused to leave. His eyes lit up watching the space craft launch and he loved making his own balloon rocket (see his picture below). The rest of the summer we could get him to read as long as the book was about space or the stars. Most of the reading material available was far above his ability as a six-year-old, but we were able to spark an interest.

Next is Michael, a thirteen-year-old with a fairly difficult home life. His mother was the only parent with whom he still had contact, and he was primarily raised by his grandmother. The records showed that he was somewhat behind in school, but more importantly he was difficult to discipline. Michael's attendance was sporadic because no one in his family was willing to give him a ride each day. The only way Michael attended was riding his bike one mile to the club.

On the second interaction I had with Michael, he spat in my face when I asked him to stop sitting on another child. By the end of the summer we had a close bond. This is because he was an awful baseball player who desired to be a catcher. At the start of the summer, he could not catch a single pitch thrown to him, nor stop pitches that were in the dirt or too high. He would continually fall over in his stance and try to catch pitches with his bare hand. I made a deal with him that if he promised good behavior all week, I would spend a half-hour with him on Fridays coaching him to become a better catcher.

It took some time for him to gain the discipline to control and alter his behavior, but his desire to be a better catcher forced him to adjust in other areas of his life. Michael will not be starting behind the plate for the Mississippi Braves anytime soon, but he did just fine in our inner club matches. Michael still struggled with discipline and following directions, but the one-on-one time I had with him had a tremendous impact on his behavior for such a short period of time. This interaction also impacted me, and I am forever changed because of this transformative experience.

Will was an exceptional athlete who could dominate in almost every sport. He was the best player in basketball and football who attended the club and was well liked by both the staff and his peers. He had a fairly complicated home life with his parents no

longer living together. He did have a close connection with his half-brothers who also attended the club. I believe both of his parents were still very involved in his life.

Will was an average student who did not enjoy reading. He was the reason I began selecting the books that each child read during power hour because he would always try to sneak out of the library with picture books meant for 1st graders. Will was a sixth grader at the time. So, I found books that were great epic novels that were rewritten at middle school levels and assigned him "Frankenstein". Every day I made him give me a report about what he had just read in the book. Although at first he hated it, by the end of the summer he had finished the novel and was excited to start another book. He learned to enjoy books because we were able to find stories that appealed to him and were just right for his reading levels. Other staff members were not as familiar with the stories in the library, so previously he was reading material written by authors who were not very talented or were not interesting to him. Taking the time to match children with the material that they found interesting was vital to getting them to enjoy reading.

There were many of these transformative experiences throughout the summer. Some local residents believe that the students are not capable of success because of their tough backgrounds and lack of educational opportunities. These findings, however, show that engagement strategies can make a difference.

Student/Staff Support and Facility Needs

One challenge I experienced in my time at the Greenwood facility was the lack of paid staff. During the summer, there were four paid staff members daily assigned to supervise 50 to 75 children. The hired staff members were the director of the program, Ben Smith; a local school teacher, Janine Ryan; a man who served as assistant director

while still being paid hourly; Cody James; and me. I was not actually paid, but the role I served would have been a paid position if I was not part of the CEED program. There were other volunteers who helped out from time to time. Those volunteers had a much smaller role in the program and were not there consistently enough to be cited as significant assets to the program.

What is significant about the four staff members is that all of us were major influencers on what programs were taught, how they were taught, and what activities the children did throughout the day. We also were responsible for most of the maintenance and overall up keep of the facility and equipment, such as the basketball court, pool table, computers, kitchen area, art supplies, and the sports equipment.

The Boys & Girls Club of Greenwood functioned significantly worse when one of the four members was not present. Program teaching lessons were cut shorter; there was far more free time; reading power hours were not completed; and the overall structure of the club suffered. Although it is only one person, the ratio of students to staff shifted immensely with one fewer staff member. If there were 60 children in attendance on average, then that meant that the normal ratio of students to paid staff was 15:1, which was not the worst experience, but doable. However, one absence made the ratio go to 20:1, and two staff members missing made it 30:1. This happened on several occasions. I know from one of the McLean Institute's summer learning programs on campus that they keep their student to instructional staff ratio 5:1.

Researchers argue that one measurement of a quality afterschool program is the ratio of students to paid staff (Horizons National website, 2017). There is not as much research describing the enormous chaos present in a program when the ratio is drastically

large. I personally experienced attempting to manage 60 children for 9 hours with one other person. Obviously this was not the ideal instructional strategy, as it was incredibly difficult to keep the students on task learning the significance of saving money or different strategies for reading to help boost their comprehension and application skills. When a ratio of students to paid staff members is too large, the program ceases to have the ability to change lives.

It is worth noting that the quality of paid staff is also important. During my time in Greenwood, the other three paid staff members were talented professionals who knew how to work with children. Janine Ryan was a school teacher who specialized in reading and art. She helped the girls improve their reading every day, which was shown at the end of the summer to have improved for a majority of the attendees. She also engaged them with new and creative art projects once a week. Janine managed to get the best out of students who were having problems, where other staff members could not. Cody was another staff member who had absolute respect from the students and improved their reading and math skills. He could teach any program that the BGCA had to offer because he had been a member for years before working for the club. Although Cody was not a college graduate, he was a passionate and dedicated staff member who provided quality academic instruction.

One strong need for the Greenwood Club is a newer facility. Compared to the Grenada Club I visited during the summer, the Greenwood center needs additional space and infrastructure to continue serving its high need. The Boys & Girls Club of Grenada, a town just a half hour drive from Greenwood, had double the amount of space and facilities for the same number of students. That club inherited an old high school building

that was abandon when the local high school was rebuilt. As a result, the Grenada facility had playground equipment, multiple classrooms and libraries, significantly more computers, and higher quality recreational equipment (basketball hoops, pool tables, and art supplies, ect). There was enough space and equipment to meet all of the needs of their students easily, which was not the case in Greenwood.

A complete rebuild of the Greenwood facility would be needed to be able to meet the needs of all of the children that attend the club. Those assets are just not present in Greenwood, and therefore a strong community-university partnership to assist in raising funds for the club could be significant. Recently, the program had to shut down for almost two weeks because of budgetary restrictions, which makes building a newer facility more difficult if left only to the club. This is where collaborative partnerships between communities and its institutions of higher learning might prove valuable.

Community-University Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

I drew a significant observation while serving at the club in summer 2016. There must be a high level of social capital between the staff and the club members. This comes in the form of trust, and this certainly applies for the community-university partnership. Additionally being a white male in an all African American neighborhood and club, I had to build a trusting relationship with the students. Most students did not know who I was at first, and they did not want to listen to me. They were shocked that I kept returning to work each day. Stoecker and Tryon (2009) share the challenges of vulnerable students trusting outsiders. I experienced this initially, but gained the students trust because they quickly evaluated me and realized that I was authentic and committed to their well-being.

This is an important topic to consider when implementing community-university relationships in afterschool programs. Both in the interviews with the program directors and the McLean Mentor secondary data, it was continually stated that clubs need staff to be at their best, but they need a particular type of person to be on staff. They have to be fully committed to working with children; they must be able to adapt and connect to any age, gender, or race that a child might be; and they have to be able to tutor and teach.

In the Directors' interviews they referred to them as having to be "the right people" or "highly desired." In the internal evaluation of the McLean Mentor study, Taylor (2016) referred to them as "unique mentors." These results point to the same type of person, someone who can gain the respect and admiration of students and who can make a significant difference in their lives. These are the people who move the program in the right direction. In the literature on community engagement and community development, catalysts are needed in communities to move the programs in the right directions (Harnish and Sinder, 2013).

My time interning with the Boys & Girls Club was the result of my involvement with the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement. A program modeled on the community-university engagement theory. My partnership with the community, living in the town, going to local sporting events and festivals, and becoming a part of the community allowed me to have the impact that I did. It helped me connect with the children and the other staff members because I quickly became one of them.

There is an emphasis on the word engagement in the full title of the McLean Institute. That emphasis is there because of what I mentioned earlier about children trusting the staff. Significant change only happens if there is a partnership between the

community and the university. Often times there is the notion that university students helicopter in to get the data for research, but make no attempt to actually address the problems that plague the community. While this is important in academic work, projects like the Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED) recognize that university students and campus must also commit to long-term partnerships that bring transformative experiences to all. The concept of taking from a community without mutually working together to solve problems is often why communities distrust the university system. There has to be a mutual partnership striving towards the same goal to have impactful change occur (Sandmann and Weerts, 2008).

Part of my involvement required spending a summer in a community with my specific interests, which happened to be education and afterschool programs. Although my time in the Mississippi Delta and Greenwood was brief, this community-university engagement had a significant impact on me, and I believe it was mutually received by the Greenwood Boys & Girls Club.

Directors Survey Findings

After the summer experience, I established additional questions that I wanted to ask all of the directors (n=7) who were a part of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Mississippi Delta sites—Clarksdale, Greenwood, Grenada, Itta Bena, Jonestown, Lexington, Tunica County, and Yazoo City. As part of my CEED project, it is important to create a practical document that is useful and beneficial for community partners. Therefore I decided to engage all directors to inquire of their financial needs, since that was so prominent during my time in Greenwood. These findings will be shared back with each club, with

recommendations for improving the community-university partnerships as well as sharing the general findings.

Each director was interviewed by phone and asked these questions through a semi-structured interview guide.

- On a semester and annual basis, what is the direct impact of funding on your program and what challenges are caused by funding?
- What local and state policies impact your program financially and educationally?
- As program director, do you see a correlation between the funding of your program and the education of the students?
- Do you believe your educational training is meeting your students' needs for academic help?
- In what way is your program responsible for closing the educational achievement gap between the student's current ability and what the student's ability can become?
- What else has a major impact on your program and its success?

Similar findings and themes were generated from these interviews. Funding was the top priority for each. The majority of program directors acknowledged that they depended on grants and donations to operate their programs. Community support varied for each, but even in the best situations all of the clubs still needed grant money to keep the doors open. Seventy-percent of the program directors agreed that grant money is the difference in keeping the clubs operating. Extra money from grants lead to new programs, new activities, new facilities, and new materials, all of which unanimously agreed is also a way to keep attendance up. When there are new educational programs and recreational equipment to get excited about, children attend in larger numbers. According to the directors, government funds have provided the majority of the funds to purchase these new materials.

Another consistent finding was hiring and maintaining a quality staff. After government funding, program directors cited staffing as a critical component to the

success of a Boys & Girls Club. The program directors stated that staff is what makes the largest impact on the lives of the students, and having the resources to hire qualified and dedicated staff is critical for extending the education of students and their willingness to participate. Eighty-five percent of the program directors wanted staff members who truly loved being with children, and who see the position as more than a job.

> It takes staff to move the needle on anything. If we want the kids to be interested in new sports, music, science, reading, or art, it will never happen if the staff does not have a passion and interest in that subject. We need the funds to hire people who are truly interested and qualified because even if they love children, most cannot afford the rate they are being paid. This leaves us with less qualified and highly desired people, and with more who just want a paycheck. (Program Director of Mississippi Boys & Girls Club)

When asking, "Do you believe your educational training is meeting your students' needs for academic help?" the common answer was that the directors desired highly educated staff members, who also had a passion for the work. The directors indicated this was particularly important when it came to the middle and high school students. Also, when staff members are available to offer higher educational instruction, there is a significant increase in attendance for the older students. The necessity of a high quality staff is a consistent finding in previous studies on afterschool programs in California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Ohio. The majority of program directors surveyed in the Delta said that their budget is not large enough to hire the staff they desire.

The directors also wanted more parental support in their programs, so they discussed interest in offering programs for the parents to be included, especially the

younger parents. Another theme was safety of the programs. Every director believed that their club was a “Safe Haven” for all children in the community no matter the age. Universally it was expressed that keeping their children busy with sports and activities kept them off the streets or from damaging their lives.

“You gotta shake it up. Do whatever it takes to show kids new ideas and new ways of thinking. Find out how you can make it better and get new people from outside involved to make kids interested in coming back and staying,” stated the Grenada program director. Another director said that their club tried specifically to keep the club open so that the kids in the community had somewhere to go. This director took pride in allowing the students to play basketball and swim when there was nothing else to do in the community. This was important in keeping attendance up during the school year because it became a home for playing sports which is vital for their success.

Again and again, funding and paid staff kept coming up in the interviews. Clearly these topics are at the top each director’s daily agenda. The directors believed that improving educational success, particularly in math, science, and reading, was very important, and that having paid staff was the key to this success. They consistently indicated during the interviews that a dedicated staff was noticeable by the students. One director said that if the students believed a staff member was there only to collect a paycheck, then the students would disrespect the club and the instruction.

As mentioned funding was a central theme for each director. The clubs varied in where they received funding and how much. Some attained more from the local community, whereas others relied heavily on grant opportunities. Some clubs had large facilities with Olympic sized pools and large indoor basketball courts for their children to

utilize. Also, some facilities have a lot of funds for equipment and libraries, making their clubs far more appealing to children than facilities with only one basketball court and no television. The directors indicated that these differences were the results of community partnerships and large blocks of grant money.

Finally the program directors unanimously agreed that the largest impact of the program was character building programs. They all wanted their students to know right from wrong. These data and findings will be shared with the directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Mississippi Delta. This is a hallmark of excellent community-university partnerships, i.e., mutually benefiting from one another and sharing resources as to create transformational opportunities. The underserved and under resourced Deltans deserve this commitment. To conclude the findings and discussion chapter, I want to highlight another community engagement strategy by the McLean Institute which relates to another Boys & Girls Club near the university campus.

McLean Mentor Survey Findings

For the past two years, UM students have been mentoring at the Boys & Girls Club in Batesville, MS. Each semester students complete an online survey consisting of open ended questions to assess the impact of the afterschool engagements. To date almost 98 percent of students mark that they would participate in the McLean Mentors program again. When asked why they would participate again, some students answered:

I felt very enriched after spending time with these children. It's such a great opportunity that we have to help impact their lives at a young age, in hopes that they'll stay focused on school and move on to great things. I would love to be able to participate first hand in this again.
It was a fun and life changing experience.
I adore these kids so much, and I feel like working with them has helped me grow as a person.

It was great service and opportunity to mentor younger children.
Love helping the kids, wish the program was closer to oxford.
The kids at the Boys and Girls Club undoubtedly made more of an impact on me than I did on them. This experience forced me to extend a different level of patience and love than ever before. Through my work here, I also developed a love and appreciation for tutoring elementary-aged children. I would love nothing more than to participate in this program again next year.
It was a great opportunity to give back to my local community and help empower kids.
I think that my participation in the McLean Mentors program helped me grow a huge amount! Not only did I learn so much about myself, but being from far away, it helped me learn so much about where I am living now and my community. I had so much fun bonding with the kids and watching them grow from week to week! I can't wait to start going back in the fall!!
I think that this was really beneficial to both the mentors and the children. I enjoyed spending time with them and I think that as this program continues the program will continue to improve.
No, I will be student teaching next semester, and do not want to overload my schedule.
Lots of fun helping young students with homework.
I enjoyed the whole atmosphere and the staff and children were great. They made me want to come back every week.
This is my second year participating and I have enjoyed it just as much as I enjoyed it last year!
I came to adore those kids, and as you work with them, you realize how intelligent they are. They're truly the highlight of my day.
It was an amazing experience. As a college student, it is easy to forget that there are people outside of the university setting. It was refreshing to get to help and learn from children once a week.
Tuesday afternoons in Como are my favorite day of the week. The kids think I am helping them but really they help me. They bring me closer to my faith, challenge me in ways I am not challenged in the classroom and show so much pure joy and love.
It was a heart-warming experience to see that my small efforts impacted a young child's life. I had small child tell me they would like to come to Ole Miss when they grow up and be just like me. It feels good to be someone's role model, and fills an empty spot in your heart you didn't know was there.

My experience at the Boys and Girls Club in Greenwood was very similar to these responses. When I left, I realized that the impact made on me by the students was likely greater than the impact I had on them. For the Likert statements regarding the impact of the afterschool engagements, see Table 3.

Table 3: McLean Mentors Perceptions of Participating in After School Programming

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Tutoring elementary school students through the McLean Mentors program was a personally enriching experience.	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	17% (n=7)	83% (n=35)	42
This program increased my understanding of the challenges that community-based organizations face in meeting unaddressed needs in Mississippi.	0% (n=0)	2% (n=1)	5% (n=2)	33% (n=14)	60% (n=25)	42
This program exposed me to people whose backgrounds and life experiences are different from my own.	2% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	2% (n=1)	33% (n=14)	62% (n=26)	42
The Saturday on Campus allowed me to nurture the elementary school students' educational aspirations.	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	38% (n=8)	29 (n=6)	33% (n=7)	21
Participating in this program increased the likelihood that I will pursue opportunities to serve my community.	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	2% (n=1)	29 (n=12)	70% (n=29)	42
More University of Mississippi students should participate in service work outside of Lafayette County.	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	17% (n=7)	83% (n=35)	42
Doing service outside of Oxford broadened my perspective on Mississippi communities.	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	2% (n=1)	33% (n=14)	64% (n=27)	42

The strongest findings on behalf of the McLean Mentors in this table were the tutoring experience personally enriching their lives, as well as 83% of the students indicating that they believed UM students should participate in community engagement

outside Lafayette County. This is a strong finding and one that I also strongly believe should happen. To empower youth development programs in one of the most impoverished regions in the United States, UM students would only have to drive an hour from campus.

In the spring semester of 2016, the McLean Institute worked with a UM Sociology graduate student to conduct an internal assessment of the McLean Institute's Youth Mentors program. She studied 48 university mentors serving at the Boys and Girls Club of Batesville. Her findings were that the McLean Mentoring program was successfully meeting its expectations of civic participation in empowering youth development for this Boys & Girls Club (Taylor, 2016).

Taylor noted that community-university partnerships need careful attention to continue to be successful. Mentors have to be rigorously trained in their volunteering activities. Taylor also recommended stronger screening to identify UM students who demonstrated the characteristics of "unique mentors" before being allowed to serve in the program. It is imperative in community-university partnerships working with youth development programs for university students to be completely committed to making a difference for the students, and not there just to fulfil service hours.

Finally, this internal assessment showed that successful mentors engage students in both tutoring activities and relational activities.

> Tutoring engagement means that the mentor can teach any subject to any student and have that student improve. Relational engagement is defined as the ability to connect with students on a personal way through nonacademic conversations. Again, the "unique mentors" were able to engage with children in both tutorial and relational ways. The programs that are related to character building were cited as being more successful and impactful when taught by mentors who could engage students in a relational way. Generally, those mentors were ones who felt closely connected to the children and the program. (Taylor, 2016)

These findings are important for universities throughout the country. It demonstrates how community-university partnerships are models for social change, and that developing and sustaining community engagement partnerships are crucial for fighting poverty. It also shows the impact of community engagement strategies on behalf of universities and their impact on youth development in one of the most impoverished regions of the United States. Universities should expand these opportunities and continue to evaluate the outcomes through research. The final chapter will share the conclusions of this thesis and provide a summary of the CEED engagement strategies to date.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

Community-university partnerships are on the forefront of social change in the United States (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Long term engagement from both community partners and university students with high levels of passion for what they are doing are highly effective for transforming communities struggling to provide opportunities for their most vulnerable. This study shows that collaborative efforts on behalf of the institutions of higher learning and its partnering communities are critical to fight poverty through education in Mississippi. It has demonstrated a role that university students can engage in throughout Mississippi.

Fighting poverty through education in after school programs such as the Boys & Girls Club in Greenwood, MS proved to be beneficial in addressing inequities in one Delta rural community. Many of my fellow CEED colleagues and their projects, not mentioned in the findings and discussion, also have been successfully engaging students in this community-university engagement initiative. In concluding, I will give a brief insight into some of these other CEED projects around the state, and share how this involves students across the UM campus.

Two of my fellow CEED scholars coordinated a statewide entrepreneurial leadership program to bring high school students to campus for summer 2016, which included several student participants from Greenwood. The McLean Entrepreneurial Leadership Program fostered dialogue about how Mississippi can utilize resources through the university to address some of the state's most pressing needs. Outcomes of the program were designed to help stimulate business in local communities, improve educational systems, and strengthen the conversation between the university and

community members. These community engagement strategies allow the university to develop a network of partnerships across the state to improve the quality of life in Mississippi.

Since 2014 the CEED initiative has impacted hundreds of individuals through students, faculty, and community partners implementing projects across the state (see Table 4).

Table 4: McLean Institute CEED Students' Impact in Mississippi

Adams County: Janae Owens led a LOU Saves program on financial awareness for students and adults in Oxford and Marks, MS.
Bolivar County: Holly Pitts worked with the GRAMMY and BB King Museums assisting in educational programming for students in the Delta.
Calhoun County: Vera Gardner, Madison Gable, Elizabeth Kelley, and Brittany Fields partnered with Catholic Charities in Vardaman to develop a summer smART program and to teach financial workshops for the local students. Professor of Nutrition and Hospitality Management, Dave Holben, and Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Tejas Pandya, both received McLean Institute grants to develop research projects in Calhoun County.
Coahoma County: Caitlin Brooking, Elizabeth Robinson, and Mackenzie Poole partnered with Tri-County Workforce Alliance and Baby University to implement education programs in Clarksdale, MS.
Harrison County: Brittanee Wallace served in an internship with NASA's office on the MS coast, and she also developed a NASA day for the Boys & Girls Club in Greenwood.
Hinds County: Ryan Snow and Camille Walker interned with the Mississippi Development Authority and The Entrepreneur Center in Jackson, MS. And Leah Gibson interned with the Mississippi Public Broadcasting to produce news reports about economic development for the state.
Issaquena and Tunica Counties: Associate Professor of Civil Engineering, Cris Surbeck, received a Mclean CEED grant to conduct research on the "Sensitivity Analysis on the Relationships between Quality of Life and Quality of Environment in the Mississippi Delta Region."
Lafayette County: Mike Davis created and developed a social polling app, Impster, and Lorin Dawson coordinated with Zyn Careers to develop electronic database tools in human resource management departments.
Lee County: Camille Walker worked with Congressman Trent Kelly to help inform CEED students about state and federal economic development programs. Ashley Smith interned and partnered with the CREATE Foundation to coordinate volunteers with the Imagine the Possibilities education career event for students of Lee County. Chris Beard interned with the Northeast Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo to further the availability of primary care physicians in rural Mississippi.
Leflore County: Henry Lang-VanDerLaan interned with the Boys & Girls Club in Greenwood to provide educational programming.
Marshall County: Rebecca Bramlett and Austin Powell developed and coordinated an entrepreneurship education program for inmates at the Marshall County Correctional Facility.

Quitman County: Taeisha Gambrel and Janae Owens partnered with Y.O.U. (Youth Opportunities Unlimited) to provide educational programming for elementary students.
Sunflower County: Will Bedwell partnered with the Mississippi Center for Justice to study the environmental impacts of water pollution for community residents.
Tallahatchie County: Kate Sackett and Audrey Dayan partnered with the Tallahatchie General Hospital and the James C. Kennedy Wellness Center to provide health education programming for the community. Mary Blessey partnered with the Emmitt Till Interpretive Center to provide instructional classes in photography for the elementary students.

UM's Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Team is in its third year. As evidenced by this thesis and the many projects developed throughout Mississippi, the university's community engagement strategies are successfully making a difference for those students most in need. The McLean Institute's CEED initiative, through generous support from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation, has invested almost 1.3 million in university students and community partners.

Three cohorts have gone through the program, with almost 50 UM students receiving funding to fight poverty through education in Mississippi. The focus has been on developing entrepreneurial and economic development solutions. UM students bring their unique disciplines to bear in developing community engagement strategies to do this work. Below is a list of the cohorts and their academic majors/departments, which shows the intellectual diversity of the program.

Cohort 1 (2014-2016)
CEED Graduate Students
Mary Blessey, Southern Studies; Caitlin Brooking, Sociology; Daniel Fudge, Political Science; Janae Owens, Exercise Science; Ashley Smith, Higher Education

CEED Undergraduate Students
Chris Beard, Biochemistry; Michael Davis, Business (Finance); Lorin Dawson, Business (Economics); Brittany Fields, Exercise Science; Elizabeth Kelley, Elementary Education; Elizabeth Robinson, Business (Economics/MIS); Samuel Russell, Business (Management); Katelyn Sackett, Pharmacy; Ryan Snow, Public Policy and Economics; Camille Walker, Public Policy

Cohort 2 (2015-2017)
CEED Graduate Students
William Bedwell, Law Student; Rebecca Bramlett, Criminal Justice; Taeisha Gambrel, Mental Health Counseling; Zack Grossenbacher, Integrated Marketing

CEED Undergraduate Students
Alex Borst, International Studies/German; Audrey Dayan, Psychology; Madison Gable, Philosophy; Vera Gardner, Mechanical Engineer; Leah Gibson, Broadcast Journalism; Terrius Harris, Marketing/Corporate Relations; Henry Lang-VanDerLaan, Public Policy Leadership; Holly Pitts, Civil Engineering; Mackenzie Poole, Psychology; Austin Powell, Public Policy Leadership; Brittanee Wallace, Integrated Marketing

Cohort 3 (2016-2018)
CEED Graduate Students
Brittany Byrd, Pharmacy; Robert Patterson, Health Promotion; Ryan Snow, Sociology; Janice Vidal, Higher Education

CEED Undergraduate Students
Dawn Boddie, Geological Engineering; Austin Carroll, Biochemistry; Que'Taurus Certion, Accountancy; Jessica Clarke, Integrated Marketing; Seth Dickinson, Public Policy Leadership; Allison Floyd, Accountancy; Elena Bauer, Business Administration; Karson Nelson, Public Policy Leadership; Nikki Park, Accounting; Rodrick Rogers, Electrical Engineering; Brady Ruffin, Integrated Marketing

Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Team

Universities across the United States, particularly state funded schools like the University of Mississippi, have a responsibility to serve as strong partners to address the

major social challenges in their state. Community engagement strategies offered through the CEED program strengthen community-university partnerships, and allow the opportunity to transform lives and to alleviate poverty. The University of Mississippi's goal is to create an educated student body to become productive members of society. Researchers have documented that civic engagement is often not a priority on many college campuses, although it is increasingly becoming essential to their missions (Saltmarsh, Hartley, and Clayton, 2009).

As shown by the CEED initiatives and the academic representation of UM students, community-university partnerships take on many different projects. Focusing on youth development to fight child poverty rates, particularly for African American children, should become a central mission of higher education. Ensuring access to quality afterschool programs is also necessary if the United States is going to improve these appalling conditions.

This thesis demonstrates that programs like the Boys & Girls Clubs of America continue to have a major impact on the lives of youth who go through their program. From education to character development to financial literacy to overall wellbeing, afterschool programs have the potential to be transformational for students.

It is time to recognize that child poverty is a national problem. One way to address it is through these community-university engagements. College students who are able to connect and mentor youth are available on every college campus. Afterschool programs need qualified and dedicated staff who can connect with students and be a positive force in their life. Investing in community-university partnerships that focus on youth development offers innovative changes in society.

This may come through different forms of change, such as restructuring state and federal budgets to invest more in community-university partnerships and afterschool programs. One recommendation is to create degree programs that permit semesters working and learning in impoverished communities as credit toward university students' degree completion. Another one is increasing funding for the administrative costs of operating afterschool programs, which was cited by all program directors as critical to their mission. This is how programs get more influential mentors and tutors involved. The same is true for community-university partnerships. Universities need to continue to match the resources with their transformation through service goals. Community-university partnerships supported through the McLean Institute made my work at the Boys & Girls Club possible.

When compared to annual state or federal budgets, these investments were modest. For my specific case, I received $19,000 over two years, with $3,000 of that investment directed towards my summer living expenses in Greenwood. This is a small dollar amount for creating and developing life-changing partnerships. All it takes is a small investment, a university student willing and able to meet the needs of communities, and a dedication to alleviating poverty.

NOTES

1. Poverty status is determined for all people except those in institutions, military group quarters or college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old (children who are not related family members – typically foster children). The 2015 American Community Survey data were collected throughout 2015, and income data, from which poverty statistics are derived, refer to the 12 months prior to the month in which the survey was completed. Consequently, the time period covered by the Survey for income and poverty extends from January 2014 through November 2015. Release of datasets with 2015 Survey results began in the last quarter of 2016.

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Appendices

CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in Study:

Impact of Financial Backing for Afterschool Programs in the Mississippi Delta

Investigator
Henry Lang-VanDerLaan
303 Howry Hall
Anthropology
McLean Institute
University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677
(662) 308-1822
hlangva@go.olemiss.edu

Faculty Sponsor
Albert Nylander, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology and

310 Howry Hall
University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677
(662) 915-2050
nylander@olemiss.edu

☐ By checking this box I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

The purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to understand the finances of afterschool programs in the MS Delta region and how they affect the daily and annual functions of public afterschool programs and the quality of the services rendered.

What you will do for this study

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes total. I will ask you questions related to the research question. During the interview, I will take notes for reference purposes as well as audio record the interview with your consent. If you do not wish to be recorded, you can decline and the interview will only have hand written notes.

Time required for this study

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

Possible risks from your participation

In this study, you will not have any more risks that you would in a normal day of life. You are free to pause or stop at any point during the interview.

Benefits from your participation

You should not expect benefits from participating in this study. However, you might experience satisfaction from contributing to public knowledge regarding the importance of afterschool programs. Also, they survey may contribute to increased funding over time.

Confidentiality

Printed data will only be stored in cabinet that can be opened with a key. All electronic recordings will be saved in secure hard drives. Henry Lang-VanDerLaan, Albert Nylander, and JR Love will have access to the data to be used for educational purposes.

Right to Withdraw
Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during this interview.

IRB Approval
This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, then decide if you want to be in the study or not.

Statement of Consent
I have read the above information. I have been given an unsigned copy of this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and I have received answers. By completing this interview, I consent to participate in the study.

IRB Approval Email

Mr. Lang-VanDerLaan:

This is to inform you that your application to conduct research with human participants, “Senior Thesis" (Protocol #17x-171), has been approved as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(#2).

Please remember that all of The University of Mississippi’s human participant research activities, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulations, must be guided by the ethical principles in The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.

It is especially important for you to keep these points in mind:

- You must protect the rights and welfare of human research participants.
- Any changes to your approved protocol must be reviewed and approved before initiating those changes.
- You must report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the IRB at irb@olemiss.edu.

Jennifer Caldwell, PhD, CPIA, CIP
Senior Research Compliance Specialist, Research Integrity and Compliance
The University of Mississippi
212 Barr
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677-1848
U.S.A.
+1-662-915-5006
irb@olemiss.edu | www.olemiss.edu