Fostering Collective Impact: Measuring and Advancing Higher Education's Contributions to Civic Health and Equity in Colorado

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Although colleges and universities typically employ input metrics such as volunteer hours to assess the contributions of campus-community engagement, they often fail to measure outputs in reciprocal partnerships with community leaders. This article discusses a community-based participatory action research (CBPR) study that centered on community expertise and assessments of campus-community engagement in determining the outcomes for regional civic health and equity. The study used collective impact and decolonial theories, and involved community and campus leaders from three Colorado universities working collectively to develop instruments for determining measurable contributions of campus-community engagement. Findings demonstrated that collective impact and CBPR are well suited to supporting reciprocal partnerships between universities and community leaders aimed at assessing and decolonializing campus-community engagement. The findings also revealed that campus assessments differed from community assessments in illuminating ways. The article concludes with actionable recommendations for campuses interested in fostering collective impact and CBPR in efforts to improve regional civic health and equity.

Keywords: collective impact, campus-community engagement assessment, community-based participatory research

The civic engagement movement began in the 1980s with a mounting concern that higher education's public purposes of strengthening democratic life and equity, and preparing informed, engaged participants in democratic society were being eroded (Hartley, 2011). As the movement gained momentum, colleges and universities began hosting service days, offering service-learning courses, engaging in community-based research, and establishing campus community-engagement centers (Jacoby, 2009; National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement [NTCLDE], 2012). Since the movement's inception, campus leaders have touted input measures—such as hours volunteered, resources spent, and service-learning courses offered—to demonstrate the contributions of campus-community engagement to regional civic health and equity. However, while these measures demonstrate campus commitments to civic health and equity, they in fact indicate little about the measurable contributions of these efforts (Hodges & Dubb, 2012; Maurrasse, 2001; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). Consequently, postsecondary leaders remain constrained in their ability to improve regional civic health and equity because they lack an evidence base for this work, and community leaders have few opportunities to assess campus engagement (Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq, & Morrison, 2010; Maurrasse, 2003; Parr, 1993).

Scholars have critiqued the lack of reciprocity in campus-community engagement, with campuses assuming authority over—instead of forming equitable partnerships with—community leaders (Maurrasse, 2001; White, 2008). One noted reason for lack of reciprocity is the assumptions made by campus official about communities themselves (Stoecker et al., 2009). Specifically, campus representatives sometimes assume that expertise resides solely within the institution, a presumption that perpetuates unequal power dynamics and ignores community expertise, which is indispensable to civic initiatives (Clayton et al.,

2010). Moreover, some officials assume that students always do good work on behalf of communities—a belief that disregards the reality that many undergraduates lack the training and skills needed to engage effectively with diverse communities. In addition, some practitioners ignore the diversity of student identities reflected (or not reflected) in the communities with which students engage (Mitchell, 2008; Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012). Such assumptions symbolize colonialist practices whereby campus representatives unintentionally reinforce power hierarchies that prioritize campus ways of knowing and doing while obscuring community knowledge and organizing (Sefa Dei & Asghardzadeh, 2001; White, 2008). These practices also fail to leverage the potential of multiple organizations, including universities and community organizations, working together to address community issues. As a strategy for countering these assumptions and practices, Mitchell (2008) proposed critical service-learning, which "[balances] student outcomes with an emphasis on social change" (p 53).

The community-based participatory action research (CBPR) study (Jagosh et al., 2015) discussed in this article represents an effort to disrupt these assumptions and colonialist approaches to campus-community engagement. A team of researchers and practitioners partnered with representatives from three Colorado universities who facilitated reciprocal partnerships with their respective communities to execute an assessment of campus contributions to regional civic health and equity. Researchers and practitioners used collective impact strategies that allowed all involved to maintain continuous communication, identify shared values and goals, and share best practices as the project proceeded (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Each campus formed community advisory boards (CABs) to guide assessment efforts (Herman et al., 2011). The study built upon the critiques and findings of prior studies that illuminate hierarchical approaches to campus community-engagement, and addressed the following research questions:

1. How do campus and community leaders assess campus contributions to regional civic health and equity?
2. What are the civic health and equity outcomes of campus-community engagement?

The first question concerned strategies for decolonializing the assessment of campus contributions to civic health and equity; the second examined the measurable contributions of campus engagement for civic health and equity.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by collective impact and decolonial theories (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Sefa Dei & Asghardzadeh, 2001). Collective impact requires broad-based collaboration and networked knowledge generation in public work (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Campuses are important partners in civic health and equity efforts, and community partnerships represent generative sites where this engagement can take place. Collective impact requires the fulfillment of five conditions: a common agenda; shared measurement and accountability; mutually reinforcing activities in which stakeholders use differentiated approaches while coordinating efforts; continuous communication; and backbone support (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Scholars have called for the use of collective impact in campus-community partnerships, community-based research, and community engagement (Lane, 2015; Schindler, Fisher, & Shonkoff, 2017; Schwartz, Weaver, Pei, & Kingston Miller, 2016; Smith, Pelco, & Rooke, 2017). University stakeholders engaged in collective impact often conceptualize their campuses as anchor institutions rooted in and serving regions (Smith et al., 2017). Collective impact has also been used to address issues related to gentrification, growing economic inequality, teen pregnancy, gender equity, law enforcement, and public health (Dettori & Gupta, 2018; Julian, Bartkowiak-Théron, Hallam, & Hughes, 2017; Klaus & Saunders, 2016; Smith et al., 2017). A strong backbone organization, consistency among stakeholders involved in the process, and the presence of informal relationships among stakeholders are important predictors of the success of collective impact involving postsecondary institutions (Gillam, Counts, & Garstka, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2016).

Smith, Pelco, and Rooke (2017) situated collective impact as one of three models of possible community-university partnerships. The first model involves community engagement and collaboration

between communities and campuses that result in mutual benefit. The second model is that of an anchor institution, whereby the university identifies community well-being indicators to address in partnership with community leaders, thus anchoring community improvement efforts. The collective impact model extends campus engagement beyond isolated programs and single courses and focuses on the formation of coalitions that drive change within a community. This latter model highlights the importance of networks and shared leadership in efforts to improve civic health and equity. Where the anchor institution model emphasizes the role of universities in addressing community issues, collective impact diffuses responsibility across a coalition of organizations within a region. In our study, we operationalized the collective impact model for partnerships by decentering the university's identification of civic health and equity indicators and assessment strategies, and centering the expertise of community leaders across a host of organizations.

Decolonial theory "challenge[s] and resist[s] the continual subordination of other lived experiences and reinforce[s] their status as valid … forms of knowledge" (Jagoush et al., 2011, p. 299). Smith, Pelco, and Rooke (2017) cautioned universities against using an anchor institution model for community partnerships wherein campus stakeholders may unintentionally privilege technocratic approaches to addressing community concerns without consulting community expertise. We determined that given collective impact's emphasis on diffused leadership and mutual benefit, it offered a fitting framework for operationalizing decolonial theory and avoiding this pitfall of the anchor institution partnership model. Smith et al. (2017) also stressed that in the process of facilitating continuous communication, the language used by all partners involved should be inclusive and free of academic jargon. Decolonial theory also emphasizes the importance of using accessible language and offering translational services when necessary so people are able to participate equally, and avoiding the dominance of academic styles of communication. Another important step in decolonializing university engagement through collective impact involves amplifying community voices by recognizing the distinct roles of context experts (i.e., local leaders with expertise about their communities) and content experts (i.e., campus officials with research expertise) (Raderstrong & Boyea-Robinson, 2016). Community voices can also be amplified by increasing connections between organizations. We saw CABs as an important means for ensuring that community leaders networked with and learned from one another while amplifying community voice. We also sought to use collective impact across the three universities so that they might share lessons learned, best practices, and sample assessment metrics.

Literature Review

For this study, we surveyed literature exploring definitions and assessments of civic health and equity, effective campus-community partnerships, and community advisory boards. We also explored research that decolonializes campus-community engagement (Sefa Dei & Asghardzadeh, 2001). Each body of research is discussed in this section.

Civic Health Defined and Assessed

Among the national organizations that have examined civic health in the United States (National Conference on Citizenship, 2006; NTCLDE, 2012; Parr, 1993), one of the most prominent is the congressionally chartered National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), which evaluates national civic health. Civic health is "determined by how actively citizens engage with their communities" and leads to "resilient communities, better governance in the form of inclusive democracy, improved community outcomes such as health and education, and a greater ability to weather economic storms" (Potter, Schooley, & Vermulen, 2014, p. 5). NCoC launched its Civic Health Index in 2006 using metrics from the Community Population Survey (CPS) (NCoC, n.d.; Potter, 2016). Since then, with support from NCoC and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, cities and states have produced reports based on assessments of civic health (NCoC, n.d.; Potter et al., 2016). However, while the metrics used in these indices are reinforced by civic engagement scholarship, NCoC relies on

CPS data and, as a result, fails to account for undocumented communities not reflected in the U.S. Census.

Civic health indices include political engagement, volunteerism, charitable giving, group participation, civic knowledge and agency, social connectedness, trust, online engagement, and public work (Levine et al., 2013; NCoC, n.d., 2015; Potter et al., 2016; Rouse, Kawashima-Ginsberg & Thrutchley, 2015; Tivald, 2016;). Indices typically compare the civic behaviors of groups based on (for instance) income, ethnicity, age, and gender. Yet, those making these comparisons have tended to privilege the civic behaviors of White, middle-class individuals while failing to account for the behaviors of other groups such as undocumented individuals and millennials, who, scholars have found, exhibit different civic behaviors (Dalton, 2008; Félix, González, & Ramírez, 2008). Furthermore, these comparisons are surface-level treatments of differences in civic behaviors that overlook the histories of disenfranchisement and inequity that particular groups have experienced (Onésimo Sandoval & Jennings, 2012).

Civic health and equity do not manifest without the collaborative leadership and collective impact fostered by social institutions such as colleges and nonprofits (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Potter et al., 2014). Equity involves considerations of educational attainment, civic enfranchisement, and employment across racial, gender, and income groups and is also achieved through collaborative leadership (National Equity Atlas, 2016). Multiple statewide civic health indices have benefitted from the leadership of college campuses, including in Indiana (Szarleta, 2016), Kentucky (Ardrey, Bain-Selbo & Na'puti, 2016), Ohio (Forren & Conover, 2016), and Connecticut (Buchanan, Pandey & Abraham, 2016). In Colorado, educational, business, community, and nonprofit leaders established the Colorado's Civic Health Network (CCHN) to improve the state's civic health (CCHN, n.d). In 2014, Campus Compact of the Mountain West (CCMW), a regional postsecondary civic engagement organization, and CCHN conducted a statewide civic health index and found that the state ranked eighth in the nation for philanthropic giving, ninth for voter turnout, and 46th for favors done by neighbors (Potter et al., 2014).

In 2012, 25 campuses, led by the American Democracy Project (ADP) and NCoC, experimented with "data-driven action to engage with community partners for strengthening civic connectedness and political engagement" (American Association of State Colleges and Universities [AASCU], n.d). All of the campuses used ADP's Civic Health Matrix, which analyzes civic health in three domains: the campus, the community, and community partnerships. At Indiana University Northwest, campus representatives leveraged civic health data to convene residents to address social issues (Szarleta, 2016); the College at Brockport and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse used NCoC measures to assess civic health on campus; and Metropolitan State University of Denver measured social trust and connectedness of business and community partners (Orr, Levy, & Burek, 2016; Stout, Harms, & Knapp, 2012). Yet, because most campuses used NCoC measures instead of collaborating with community leaders to design assessment efforts, they may have unintentionally obscured community member assessments and voice, and failed to capture the civic behaviors of undocumented communities and millennials.

Community Partnerships Defined and Assessed

Campus-community partnerships represent important sites for engagement efforts (Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Beaumont, 2016; Jacoby, 2009; Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2007). Before establishing these partnerships, campuses first identify the community with which they envision engaging. Some public institutions rely on state statute, which demarcates their service area to define the community (Orphan, 2018; Thelin, 2004). Other campuses define the community using geographic areas contiguous to the campus or through inventories of adjacent nonprofit organizations, secondary schools, and government agencies (Cruz & Giles, 2000). Generally, there is a lack of consensus around what constitutes a campus-community partnership or community engagement area (Sand & Holland, 2006). These definitional differences notwithstanding, Cruz and Giles (2000) recommended studying community partnerships to understand mutual benefits for community and campus.

Campuses commonly assess the efficacy of community engagement by focusing on desired student learning outcomes, a strategy critiqued by scholars because such assessments often lack specificity

(Beaumont, 2016; Gelmon, Holland, & Spring, 2018; Mitchell, 2008). The assessment of student learning also raises methodological issues. Student learning is often measured using unrepresentative focus groups and student and faculty surveys that do not incorporate community partner assessments. Furthermore, these assessments reinforce colonialist approaches that privilege student learning over community betterment (Sefa Dei & Asghardzadeh, 2001). Power distribution between institutions and community partners continues to be a concern as partnerships prioritize the needs of institutions over those of community partners (Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2007).

The measurable contributions of campus-community engagement to civic health and equity beyond the assessment of student learning are unclear (Hartley, 2011; Jacoby, 2009). In their examination of campus engagement, Stoecker, Tryon, and Hilgendorf (2009) found that nonprofit leaders perceived that it was their organization's mission to provide students with real-world experiences even though doing so strained limited resources. Alternatively, campus leaders perceived that students were enhancing the organization's capacity and had no awareness of such strain—findings echoed in other studies (Gerstenblatt, 2014; Sandy & Hollander, 2004). Campus-community engagement contributions are primarily documented from the perspective of academic institutions and often exclude the community partner experience (Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2007). Campus engagement measures continue to center on student learning outcomes, and data are increasingly used to seek financial support from alumni and donors (Gelmon et al., 2018). This research reveals how campuses benefit from assessments or campus-community engagement through enhanced fundraising and improved learning experiences for students. However, whether or not partnering organizations receive the same benefit is largely unknown.

Scholars have responded to the lack of output measures for community engagement by developing assessments. Srinivas, Meenan, Drogin, and DePrince (2015) created the Community Impact Scale to examine the benefits of community-university partnerships from the perspective of community partners. Similarly, Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll and Kerrigan (2011) developed an assessment for service-learning that measures community partner outcomes, including enhanced ability to fulfill mission, economic benefits, and mutual benefit. McNall, Reed, Brown, and Allen (2008) found that effective partnerships were associated with the increased understanding of public problems among all stakeholders (community and university), and improved service to nonprofit clients. Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq, and Morrison (2010) identified three partnership types: (1) exploitative, wherein campuses privilege student and faculty needs and fail to ensure reciprocity; (2) transactional, wherein campuses work with partners on short-term projects; and (3) transformational, wherein campuses and community organizations forge sustained partnerships to address problems. Exploitative partnerships can be interpreted as colonialist in that campuses assert dominance while privileging campus interests. Despite efforts to create reciprocity in partnerships, many are short-lived, situated within the academic calendar, and dependent on campus officials who change positions and sever partnerships, as also reflected in transactional partnerships. Yet, sustained reciprocal partnerships built around co-created goals and metrics can lead to "transformational" engagement (Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Clayton et al., 2010). Thus, transformational partnerships have decolonializing and collective impact potential because they avoid hierarchical arrangements, identify and operate around shared goals, involve collective action, and embody reciprocity. Scholars have yet to explore how assessments of campus-community engagement may include measures that speak to how this engagement supports collective impact within regions (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Community Advisory Boards

Community advisory boards, composed of campus and community stakeholders interested in addressing social issues (Blumenthal, 2006; Cramer, Atwood, & Stoner, 2006; Herman et al., 2011), have the potential to oversee campus engagement and encourage mutual benefit. They may also enact collective impact by fostering collaboration across sectors focused on addressing social issues (Kania & Kramer, 2011), reducing duplicative efforts and encouraging shared goals (Herman et al., 2011). The creation of a CAB requires three steps: (1) development, (2) infrastructure building, and (3) action planning. Leaders must also define why the CAB is needed and determine whom to involve to ensure

equitable representation of campus and community stakeholders (Center for Community Health and Development, 2017).

While much is known about national and statewide civic health and equity and the conditions necessary for reciprocal community-campus partnerships, there remains a knowledge gap regarding how campuses and community leaders understand the campus contributions to regional civic health and equity. Moreover, assessments that are co-created with campus and community leaders are lacking, even though this strategy has the potential to decolonialize campus-community engagement and encourage collective impact within regions. Though frameworks for assessing campus-community engagement have been developed, they lack specificity around regional contexts, which are often central to the engagement efforts of public colleges and universities (Orphan, 2018). This study sought to fill these gaps.

Methodology

This study centered on community expertise in creating localized measures to understand campus contributions to civic health and equity while advancing a framework for decolonialized campus engagement and collective impact. We determined that community-based participatory action research would be an ideal methodology for operationalizing a decolonialized approach to collective impact because it involves "community stakeholders … form[ing] equitable partnerships and co-construct[ing] research for the mutual and complementary goals of community health improvement and knowledge production" (Jagosh et al., 2015, p. 2). CBPR challenges the notion that only an academic can conduct research and instead encourages community members to identify research questions, collect and analyze data important to them, and report findings (Stoecker, 2005). CBPR provided a framework for fulfilling our decolonial commitments to decentering academic expertise and content experts and centering community expertise and context experts (Raderstrong & Boyea-Robinson, 2016). CBPR also allowed us to strengthen our collective impact approach by involving community stakeholders from multiple sectors, including government, secondary education, business, and community centers. Once a CBPR project is complete, findings should be shared with community leaders in formats these individuals deem appropriate. For example, CBPR findings may be presented to an organization as policy briefs, infographics, or reports that are free of jargon. The findings from the three assessments conducted for our study were presented during events involving community leaders and in reports and infographics distributed regionally. CBPR in combination with collective impact provided a framework that allowed CABs to design assessment tools and analyze assessment data.

We also chose CBPR because of its critical theory underpinnings (Stoecker, 2005). CBPR's concern with power redistribution and the importance of community leaders as catalysts for change connect with our decolonialist commitments. McIntyre (2008) introduced four components of effective CBPR that were instrumental in our study, including a commitment among all involved to work through problems collectively and non-hierarchically, the use of dialogue to allow participants opportunities to reflect continuously on and assess the process, collective action that centers the needs and goals of community leaders, and mutually developed research processes. Ultimately, collective impact's emphasis on collective problem solving and action, mutuality, and communication map directly onto CBPR methods.

Site Selection and Trust Building

We selected Colorado for this study because, as noted previously, the state had produced a report with a statewide civic health index in partnership with higher education institutions, and it had a statewide network promoting civic health (CCHN, n.d.; Potter et al., 2014). These conditions indicated the presence of a statewide civic infrastructure—of which postsecondary institutions via CCMW were vital components—that would lend itself to the interrogation of the research questions and use of CBPR and collective impact (Parr, 1993). We limited recruitment to public universities that were members of CCMW because we felt confident that campus presidents supported civic engagement through annual membership dues to CCMW and because campuses had mission-based and statutory civic commitments (Hartley, 2011; Thelin, 2004). We also determined that leveraging the existing backbone support of

CCMW with its Colorado member campuses would strengthen our ability to realize the goals of collective impact.

We were awarded a Public Good grant through the University of Denver's Center for Community Engagement to advance Scholarship and Learning (CCESL) and then issued $2,000 mini-grants to each campus to support the costs of participating in the study. To recruit campuses, CCMW distributed a call to participate to members. Four presidents returned proposals, and three were selected. The selection criteria included the following: the campus had expressed civic commitments in key institutional documents including strategic plans and mission statements (Votruba, 2005), had created a CAB, and had submitted letters of support from senior administrators and community leaders. Campus civic commitments were also determined in part through each campus's origins as an access institution established to support their regions (Orphan, 2018), as well as the fact that two institutions had already been recognized with the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and the third was planning its application for 2020 (Furco, 2002). We also sought evidence that campuses were interested in decolonializing campus-community engagement. This evidence comprised campus stakeholder knowledge of prevailing institutional discourses that cast communities in a deficit-based light and awareness of practices that exemplified reciprocal campus-community engagement. For example, institutions had language in place that underscored "interconnectivities" (Sefa Dei & Asghardzadeh, 2001, p. 297), such as using the term *engagement* to emphasize reciprocity and collaboration with communities, instead of traditional hierarchical labels such as *outreach* or *service*. Institutions also embraced practices and partnerships that acknowledged local contexts and histories, diverse perspectives, and community agency and solvency (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Examples included community partnerships that emphasized alliances and promoted mutual benefit, especially with culturally diverse communities, and preexisting work with immigrant and refugee populations, native and indigenous peoples, incarcerated populations, and other marginalized groups.

Jagosh et al. (2015) proposed a four-step CBPR process in which participants become acquainted, establish trust, experience and resolve conflict, and build additional trust. Participants require ample time to progress through each of these steps (McIntyre, 2008); however, we were sensitive to the time constraints of community members serving on CABs and hosted meetings at times and in locations that were convenient for them. During meetings, we garnered input from CABs that we used to design each campus's assessments (Stoecker, 2005). We also employed collective impact to ensure that the three participating campuses learned with one another, and that the work of individual campuses complemented regional and statewide efforts to understand higher education's contributions to civic health and equity.

Data Collection

Once the three campuses were recruited, we progressed through the first two steps of CBPR and met all five conditions of collective impact. Each CAB consisted of 18-20 people, half drawn from the community and half from the university. This project took place over the 2016-2017 academic year. In an effort to become acquainted and build trust with project leaders, while ensuring continuous communication, we hosted bi-monthly virtual meetings. During these meetings, participants established a common agenda and described how they were overcoming challenges, building support, and measuring campus contributions to regional civic health and equity. Backbone personnel from the University of Denver and CCMW provided coaching through webinars, including one on the Community Impact Scale (Srinivas et al., 2015), one on CAB development, and one on ADP's Civic Health Initiative. Guest speakers who had led similar initiatives presented via web conferencing, and all sessions were recorded. Continuous conversations with the CABs were indispensable to designing assessment instruments and collecting and analyzing data. The CABs decided to modify ADP's Civic Health Matrix and campus audit of civic engagement (American Democracy Project, 2003), the Community Impact Scale (Srivinas et al., 2015) and NCoC's indicators. As the CABs were designing assessment instruments, they shared their efforts and solicited advice from fellow participants and backbone personnel. Project leaders shared the assessment instruments with backbone personnel, who in turn provided additional resources aligned with the project leader's instruments.

Backbone personnel conducted fall campus visits during which they interviewed key university personnel, including senior administrators, directors of civic engagement centers, and students. During these interviews, participants were asked how they were operationalizing project goals and navigating challenges and successes. Backbone personnel also offered professional development and aided the CABs in conducting campus audits. The CABs determined that these audits were necessary to identify activities to assess. Backbone personnel also hosted focus groups with the CABs to discern how they understood the benefits of campus-community engagement and to design instruments. In the spring of 2017, backbone personnel visited each campus again and led focus groups with the CABs to examine assessment findings. Backbone personnel also conducted exit interviews with project leaders to understand how they would use the findings and leverage the CABs moving forward. All interviews, focus groups, and meetings were recorded and transcribed (Saldaña, 2012). To triangulate findings (Creswell, 2007), we collected documents, including campus proposals to participate in the initiative, CAB meeting agendas, CAB reports, assessment instruments, and assessment results and reports.

All data collected were made available to the CABs. Bi-monthly meetings and online trainings were recorded and entered into a repository where campus partners could reference these materials later. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and shared with the CABs. The CABs found the repository helpful since each institution was at a different stage of development and implementation. Access to each other's data and materials allowed the CABs to share best practices, address challenges, and access materials that could inform their own work. The repository also expanded each participant's knowledge of CBPR methods.

Data Analysis

In CBPR, research participants lead data analysis (Jagosh et al., 2015). The CABs were engaged in analyzing data related to campus contributions to civic health and equity. We determined that data analysis for the larger collective impact project should be the responsibility of backbone personnel, although member checking would be important to ensure that our analysis matched participant experiences (Creswell, 2007). Guided by CBPR principles, we asked the CABs for advice about which data merited analysis and how they should be analyzed. The CABs indicated interest in understanding the uniqueness of efforts across campuses, including challenges overcome, leverage points created, processes used to establish the CABs, and results of audits and assessments. With this in mind, backbone personnel identified a priori codes concerning these broad themes (e.g., the code "CAB" referred to community advisory boards, and "LP" referred to leverage points) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After analyzing data with a priori codes, we identified emergent codes that spoke to the nuances of each campus's efforts and themes across campuses. For example, all campuses identified the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification as a goal; as such, we coded each instance in which Carnegie was mentioned as "CARN."

Limitations

There were a few noteworthy limitations to this study. First, the CABs comprised campus administrators and community members once-removed from clients and communities; therefore, these voices were absent from the research. Second, English-language instruments limited accessibility for non-English speakers and individuals who were illiterate. Third, those most likely to respond to survey requests were partners with multiple "touch points" with their respective university, and these partners may have been ones for whom the relationship was strong. Thus, their willingness to participate may have artificially inflated the assessments. Finally, the instruments assessed partnerships yet failed to discern the greater contributions of these partnerships to communities. We were left wondering to what degree campuses are, for instance, improving literacy levels or reducing hunger or violence against women.

The Three Campuses

People University[1], the least advanced of the three campuses in institutionalizing a civic commitment, is a public regional comprehensive university founded in the 1930s as a branch of a land-grant institution to provide regional access to higher education. People University is located in a region shaped by a rich cultural legacy of Latino and farming communities. In 2012, the university conducted a scan of existing community partnerships to determine how many were taking place; however, the results were not used to improve community engagement. People University had pockets of community engagement, but there was no centralized support for community-university partnerships, and civic engagement was not reflected in promotion and tenure guidelines. That said, campus stakeholders were community-engaged. Campus stakeholders viewed the achievement of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification as a distant goal for the university, with more immediate goals taking priority, namely auditing existing activities and connecting community engagement to institutional priorities, including the newly attained Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation.

City University is a public research university located in a large city and was the second most advanced of the three campuses in institutionalizing civic engagement. The region in which the university is located has experienced an influx of in-migration and rapid economic growth that has contributed to low unemployment and gentrification. City University was founded in the 1910s as a commuter branch of the state's flagship institution and has maintained a diverse student body since its founding. Many faculty are committed to community-engaged research and teaching, and City University has longstanding relationships with the community. Although there are some centralized supports in place for faculty and staff interested in community engagement, these supports are centralized in an understaffed office focused largely on the co-curriculum. At the time of data collection, an assistant vice chancellor, along with the president, had made community engagement a central priority, and the university was in the process of submitting its first application for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

Stone University, the study campus with the most institutionalized civic commitment, was founded as a normal school in 1889 and is located in the northern part of the state. Stone is a regional comprehensive university that serves an area known for its agricultural and oil economy. Stone is a predominately White university; however, its student population has seen a significant increase in diversity over the last decade. Stone has an office for community engagement that provides robust supports to faculty and staff. At the time of data collection, the university had sunset a strategic plan focused on strengthening its approach to community engagement and was drafting a new plan that incorporated greater reciprocity with community partners and assessment. In 2015, Stone University achieved the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and, during the period of the study, was preparing for re-classification in 2020.

Findings

Following the wishes of the CABs that guided this study, our findings illuminated the impetus for campus and community partner involvement in the initiative, processes used to establish the CABs, leverage points and strategic support created by the CABs to promote assessment, and challenges related to campus-community partnerships. We highlight these findings here to examine the first research question: How do campus and community leaders assess campus contributions to regional civic health and equity? We conclude by describing the results of each campus's assessment to address the second research question: What are the civic and equity outcomes of community-university engagement? Table 1 describes our operationalization of each condition of collective impact using CBPR methods.

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[1] Participating campuses were assigned pseudonyms reflecting their campus missions and histories of civic engagement.

Table 1: CBPR Operationalization of Collective Impact

Collective Impact Condition	CBPR Research Methods
1. Establishment of a Common Agenda	• Convened CAB • Co-led discussions to determine focus areas • Campuses pursued the same goal of designing campus-community engagement assessment instruments
2. Shared Measurement and Accountability	• CABs designed assessment instruments; community partners led discussions and assessments • Bi-monthly status updates provided to backbone personnel • Campus audits of campus-community engagement efforts • National assessment tools modified to fit unique campus and regional circumstances
3. Mutually Reinforcing Activities	• CABs shared lessons learned and strategies developed for pursuing common agenda
4. Continuous Communication	• Bi-monthly meetings • Frequent email communication
5. Backbone Support	• Synthesized and shared extant research about CABs, CBPR, and efforts to assess campus-community engagement • Provided professional development • Convened bi-monthly meetings • Archived all meetings and webinars • Conducted campus visits • Provided mini-grants • Created, oversaw and managed resource repository

Process for Establishing the CABs

Project leaders tended to identify campus representatives for the CABs as those who generate awareness around the initiative, as Stone's project leader shared:

> Brainstorming between myself and the associate director, about who are the key individuals on campus who need to be, at the very least, aware of this work and understand that this work is going to happen and for whom this work might have some direct relationship.

In City University's case, the president's involvement in creating the CAB created visibility for the collective impact initiative. Another strategy used by project leaders was including individuals who were already community-engaged, "rather than trying to convince those that were not on board," as Stone's project leader described.

Campus leaders identified community leaders for the CABs who had long partnerships with the university. People's project leader referred to these individuals as "our go-to people." City's project leader identified community partners who understood higher education: "[The community partner] really got higher ed. [sic] and could do that." Stone's project leader identified community leaders who had "obvious partnerships…. Public libraries, without a doubt, they've been champions. When we talk [about the city] … [t]here's the assistant city manager." This campus leader also identified community leaders who had long relationships with communities of Color and were promoting equity in the city.

Impetuses for Participation in the CBPR Study

A guiding impetus for campuses to participate in the CBPR study was the prospect of attaining the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. Campus leaders also sought to solidify their campus's organizational identity as a community engaged campus (Albert & Whetten, 1985). City University's project leader explained how attaining the Carnegie classification would enhance the university's identity:

> Carnegie has been something that will establish us as a leader in community engagement, and it is something that is far enough away that we could put things in place and kind of get all of our ducks in a row, but close enough that it was still tangible.

Stone University's impetus was tied to its legacy as a normal school, as highlighted in its proposal for participation in the study: "As the leading university for teacher preparation statewide … [Stone] has a vested interest in advancing our region's civic health and equity."

Community partners cited various reasons for participating in the CBPR study. For example, one of People University's community partners shared that the organization's president "wants to strengthen that bond between the community and the symphony and the music department. Perhaps educating the community about the importance of music and the arts at the university level." Community partners also hoped that participating would improve communication with the university: "You can communicate monthly, 'How are things going?' or Have this idea, what's your opinion of this?' I think that's important." Community partners additionally expressed the desire to enhance reciprocity of partnerships, as one People professor reflected:

> You always have to be conscious of trust issues between the community and the university, and you have to be as sensitive as you can to those considerations and involving the community as much as you can and giving them a voice.

Finally, some community partners indicated interest in strengthening their relationship with the university in order to influence the curriculum. One City community partner shared:

> I would also really love to see a PeaceJam curriculum … adopted by faculty members, because I think pretty much all this is a focus of our curriculum. Whether that's a PeaceJam course taught solely by a professor or integrated into courses.

Leverage Points and Strategic Support

Stone University and City University had robust campus administrative support around assessing community engagement. Stone's project leader shared, "I think what matters is that we do have the provost's support of the work, recognition of it, [and] the president gets it, too." Likewise, City's project leader commented that "some of the administration told us that community engagement is [a] priority area." Stone's and City's administrations supported the development of community engagement strategic plans. Stone's project leader conveyed the university's hope that a strategic plan would encourage greater intentionality, saying it would provide "a comprehensive framework for some of the work … we're doing that would allow us to more intentionally think about impact." At the time of the study, People University was in the midst of a presidential search, and the project leader, who was serving on the search committee, expressed hope that the incoming president would prioritize community engagement and "build the academic program and [speak] to that and [present] that as our public face. I would hope community engagement would be part of that."

The CABs were intentional about finding leverage points between initiative goals and institutional and community priorities. At People University, for instance, the CAB strategically connected assessment efforts with the goals of a federal grant reserved for HSIs. As the project leader described, "It's really about Hispanic first-generation. We got it because we're an HSI. Everything that we do under this umbrella somehow has to tie specifically to that." City University's president wanted greater emphasis placed on partnerships, which project leaders leveraged: "One of the goals, as we collect all of this information, is to put together a comprehensive list of community engagement and community partners for [City]. That's something the President has been asking for." Stone University's administration was interested in improving student retention and campus climate, and project leaders leveraged scholarships showing that community engagement achieves these goals, as one CAB member described: "Looking at

our climate survey data and what people are indicating whether that's in the community or with campus or individuals, so I think one is supporting the campus and understanding. There's a nice symbiotic relationship there." As City's project leader shared, the CAB connected the initiative with campus strategic planning: "We will be putting together a civic action strategic plan for our institution, which will align very closely with accreditation and Carnegie—and, so, hopefully, three birds, one stone." People's CAB recognized that department chairs had influence with faculty by virtue of their positions, and given that the project leader was a chair himself, he recognized this group as allies: "The other nexus point I have is through the council of chairs, at least on campus because that does get me to every department on campus."

Each campus conducted audits to identify engagement activities. City and Stone used the ADP (2003) tool, while People designed its own instrument using relational conversations and visual aids. The CABs deemed the audit process an important leverage point because it allowed stakeholders to ascertain existing activities, as People's project leader articulated: "The first step was to do a campus inventory, because those of you that work on our campus know that it's a mess of things that nobody knows what nobody else is doing." While Stone and People conducted the audit before launching their respective assessment, City conducted both simultaneously, as the project leader described: "As people are filling out the campus inventory, they're providing us with the community partners they work with, and then we're able to follow up and ask them to complete the community impact assessment."

Another leverage point centered on campus desire to create course designations ensuring student awareness about community-engaged courses. As City's project leader put it:

> So that students know that, when they're signing up for a course, it has a community engagement or a service-learning component, because sometimes students sign up for [a] course, and at this point, currently in our system, they have no way of knowing.

Project leaders also believed that such course designations would allow for greater ease in auditing campus-community engagement activities. City University's project leader underscored the challenge of determining the difference between community-engaged and service-learning courses:

> Does it make sense to consider a community engagement designation, which would require another definition but that would highlight all community engagement initiatives that were different types? As the high-impact practice designation progresses, will we be able to say, of all civic or community engagement initiatives or courses, this many were service-learning?

At stake in this effort was a finalized definition that captures the breadth and diversity of courses. Another leverage point was the creation of repositories that allowed for the tracking of activities, as City's project leader shared:

> There was conversation [about] doing the interactive map on the website, so when we talk about community partners being able to come to a hub, whatever that is, and being able to see all of the communities and neighborhoods that we do work in…

The CABs modeled their approaches on collective impact and decolonial frameworks, which created momentum within the regions and the state for leveraging postsecondary institutions in improving civic health and equity. City's project leader described the merits of this approach:

> It's been the mutual mentoring process, because [Stone] shared with us their first strategic plan for civic engagement. We have a model to go off of. Not just a model but a connection from [Stone whom] we can ask about this because she was involved in that process. One really great piece of this initiative is to have the connecting network and, we have a lot of guidance and support [from CCMW and University of Denver backbone personnel].

Designing Assessment Instruments
The CABs sought to prioritize community expertise when designing assessment instruments, as expressed by City's project leader:

> You don't always get to hear the community perspective on our impact and how that differs. One hope is, through focus groups and the ongoing work of the CAB, to bridge those gaps and be able to get a holistic picture of impact.

City's and Stone's CABs modified the Community Impact Scale (Srivinas et al., 2015) because they believed the modified version better captured the community's perspective. People's CAB used relational and visual approaches depicting partnership strength and longevity. Community members offered insights about the feasibility of completing surveys given limited time and the clarity of questions. Regardless of design, each instrument sought information about how the campus reciprocally assisted partners in fulfilling their missions, serving clients, fundraising, and improving civic health and equity in the region.

Data were collected through online and paper surveys, focus groups, and interviews. When a campus leader encountered difficulty securing responses, CAB community leaders encouraged the participation of colleagues. As City's efforts progressed, it became evident that the CAB needed to define what was meant by 'community engagement' on instruments so that it reflected relevant activities. People's CAB also discovered that it needed to define 'community engagement' to garner centralized support, as the project leader described: "Using these tools to document and define and then looking towards where can we house this work next and begin to institutionalize it." Stone's project leader indicated that a definition was needed to help CABs understand the differences between service-learning and community engagement:

> A lot of what we've done has been not just learning about what's happening but also re-framing the discourse and the narrative around "What is community engagement? Why are we talking about this as community engagement and not service-learning? How is this different from outreach?"

Campus Contributions to Civic Health and Equity

Once data were collected, the CABs entered findings into the Civic Health Matrix (Potter, 2016) and determined that campuses made significant contributions to regional civic health and equity, including increased capacity and strengthened relationships across community organizations—which translated into regional collective impact. For example, a poverty-focused nonprofit and longstanding partner of City shared that the university had enhanced the organization's ability to work across sectors:

> We're looking for that demographic of people or locals to the area would be ideal. We work with refugee community and immigrant students at [area high schools], so having [campus] folks come out to support those programs, working with [our clients]…

The assessments also revealed that each campus contributed within clusters of social issues. For example, there may be a critical mass of activities addressing homelessness, teacher efficacy, or immigrant resettlement. Community partners also reported that they were able to serve more than one marginalized group thanks to their partnership with the university.

Campus assessments did not always mirror community assessments, as City's project leader reflected:

> As we were looking at the initial data … we thought [it] was quite ironic. To see the comparison of what civic health indicators we at [City University] said we did, and what civic health indicators our community partners said we did, because we identified no political engagement, and they identified political engagement.

Finally, a number of community leaders shared their belief that partnerships with the university were mutually beneficial. For example, in a focus group, the director of the symphony in the city where People University is located highlighted

> the partnership with the symphony and the music department because there is not another university or community college, that offers students the chance to play with the symphony…. The partnership also allows the [financial] support of the conductorship. We also have instruments that belong to the university that we are allowed to use when necessary, depending upon which concert we have. That really affects the community.

Campus-Community Partnership Challenges

While, on the whole, assessments revealed that campuses made significant contributions to civic health and equity, assessments revealed challenging aspects of university engagement. One such challenge, echoed in the literature, concerned turnover of university personnel (Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Clayton et al., 2010 Clayton et al., 2010), which one City community partner described:

> One issue that I definitely ran into, and I've been in this position for three years and with this organization for five, was there's a ton of turnover in higher [education], especially with a lot of these positions. Even something as simple as having an address that doesn't change would make a really big difference just in continuity because sometimes you build up these relationships and then they'll fall.

Another community partner articulated the challenge of the university not having an obvious coordinator of community engagement, saying, "A lot of times we are trying to recruit these students and we don't even know where to go." Moreover, community organizations are often contacted by multiple campus representatives seeking partnerships, which can be overwhelming. Community partners also reported being redirected multiple times before identifying the appropriate campus staff member to assist them with a project. City's project leader described how lack of centralization creates challenges for community engagement: "We know what happens but we've had no way of necessarily capturing a comprehensive snap shot of [City University]."

A lack of clarity around definitions of 'community' and 'community engagement' also created challenges for community partners when attempting to determine how their goals aligned with those of the university, as described by a City community partner: "One of the things that we had to decide was how are we defining community." Campus stakeholders also expressed concern that narrow definitions of community engagement would divert resources from their efforts. Stone's project leader commented, "We have a lot of work to do, and we have still mixed voices on campus about the value of this work and what it means and where should we be investing."

Lack of training for students was another challenge, as one Stone community partner observed:

> To have a laid-out plan of objectives for the semester and what the student hopes to learn and how can we help to make sure that that happens, but also make sure that we benefit from it. [T]hat set structure I think would be beneficial from an organizational standpoint for us to say, "Okay, we can expect this of all students."

A final challenge to campus-community engagement efforts was uncovering campus contributions to equity. For the participating campuses, the question of how to assess this metric remained largely unanswered. Stone's project leader noted, "We are in discussions and thinking as we work through this that maybe when we talk about equity, it's not a column or a row by itself but rather … something that needs to be infused into all of this."

Discussion and Recommendations

The findings demonstrated that collective impact and decolonial theories provided useful frameworks for campuses as they pursued the first research question: How do campus and community leaders assess campus contributions to regional civic health and equity? De-colonial theory was particularly useful to campuses as they addressed the second research question: What are the civic health and equity outcomes of campus-community engagement? When community partners led assessment efforts, misalignments between stakeholder perceptions of campus contributions to civic health and equity surfaced. Decolonial theory also illuminated the complexities of defining 'community' and 'community engagement' since these definitions must be created collaboratively and represent the expertise and opinions of various stakeholders, including community members. City University encountered difficulty applying NCoC indicators to their engagement efforts because the indicators did not reflect the behaviors of undocumented students. Subsequently, the CAB developed comprehensive measures that reflected the behaviors of groups, regardless of citizenship status. Finally, decolonial theory reinforced the importance

of co-creating and co-leading CABs with community leaders. This research strongly suggests that collective impact and decolonial approaches hold potential for designing assessments that identify campus contributions to civic health and equity uniquely suited for and designed by communities, particularly when operationalized using CBPR (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Sefa Dei & Asghardzadeh, 2001).

At the close of a collective impact project, the framework encourages stakeholders to identify a new set of goals that will allow for continued collaboration (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Each campus in this study had committed to using assessment results to improve campus-community engagement. Additionally, the CABs remained intact and continued guiding campus-community engagement. This study is significant because it can inform other campuses interested in assessing contributions to civic health and equity in reciprocal partnership with community leaders while also strengthening the theoretical foundations and evidence bases for this work.

The following are recommendations, drawn from our findings, for campuses interested in decolonializing campus-community engagement, leading collective impact, and assessing campus contributions to regional civic health and equity:

1. Campuses should create CABs to guide assessment and engagement efforts, and employ best practices for CABs and collective impact. CAB meetings should be held bi-monthly in locations of convenience to community members and last 60-90 minutes each. These meetings should be used to garner insights from community leaders about how to design assessment instruments, lead campus-community engagement initiatives, and foster collective impact. CAB meetings should be conducted using language that is free of academic jargon and inclusive of the diverse expertise of community and campus leaders. Key terms including 'community engagement' and 'collective impact' should be defined collectively by CABs and used consistently during meetings and in written communications.

2. Campuses should provide training to students to equip them with the skills and efficacies necessary for engagement, which will strengthen partner capacity and reduce the burden of training students themselves. Mitchell (2008) provided examples of how this training could work. She recommended decentering Whiteness within service-learning experiences and centering the expertise of students and communities of Color. This can be achieved by disrupting the hierarchical helping mentality permeating many service-learning courses that assumes communities are devoid of assets and expertise, and ensuring that students have opportunities to develop cultural competencies and project management skills useful to community organizations. Campus leaders may consider partnering with offices of diversity and inclusion and career centers to train students.

3. Institutions should create centralized, easy-to-find access points for community members that ensure continuity in campus partnerships and facilitate access to university resources. These access points should be both physical and virtual. Physical access points could include a center or office that provides information to visitors about how to become involved in collective impact. Physical access points should be clearly marked on maps posted around campus. Virtual access points should include a link on the campus homepage to a webpage that provides community leaders with opportunities to anonymously assess campus-community engagement, and information about how to partner with the campus. This webpage should contain an online form that allows community leaders to submit partnership requests that include research project details, number of individuals needed, time and date desired, and other pertinent details that will allow a university staff member to identify the appropriate campus unit for partnership. These requests should be fielded by a community engagement or external relations office, and responded to within a timely manner. This office should also maintain a database of university personnel who have experience and interest in partnering with community organizations. This database could also include broad areas of emphasis that align with collective community concerns and that could lead to collective impact such as homeless, public health, and women's rights. Campuses could conduct audits of existing campus activities to create such databases. We recommend the American

Democracy Project's (2003) audit tool as a starting point. Another virtue of maintaining such a database is that it helps to ensure that community organizations are not overwhelmed by partnership requests.

4. Campuses should provide backbone support for regional collective impact that ensures continuous communication, regular convenings, free meeting space, and national visibility for local efforts (Dubow, Hug, Serafini, Litzler, 2018). Campuses can also create repositories for project elements while researching and synthesizing research findings about collective impact and CBPR that allow CABs to easily access condensed research relevant to their goals.

5. CABs should tailor existing campus-community partnership assessment instruments described in this article's literature review to address unique regional needs and characteristics, and to align with campus priorities in order to build an evidence base that reflects community expertise. In our study, there were some indicators that all three CABs and campuses identified as important to assess (e.g., youth voter participation). There were others that were specific to particular regions (e.g., refugee resettlement and rural education). The CABs informed the identification of indicators using their context expertise about areas of need. Data collected from these indicators could prove invaluable to community and campus leaders as they pursue collective impact.

6. Perhaps unsurprisingly, campus and community leader assessments of campus contributions to civic health and equity differed. We found these points of difference to be productive focal points that allowed campus leaders to reconfigure engagement efforts to align with expressed community needs. Campuses should interrogate misalignments between community and campus assessments as these may reveal hierarchical or colonialist strategies in which campuses unintentionally center content experts on campus and fail to amplify the voices of context experts in communities.

7. Campuses should gather both qualitative and quantitative data in assessments. Quantitative data account for broad trends within the community with regard to regional needs and areas of strength in campus-community partnerships. Quantitative data also expose misalignments between campus and community stakeholder assessments of campus engagement. Alternatively, qualitative data expose the nuances of community opportunities and challenges and provide insights into why and how certain issues affect communities. Qualitative assessments also offer opportunities to amplify community voices in their own words. Participants may conduct qualitative interviews, observations, and documentary analyses. Quantitative data may be collected through short online or paper surveys distributed via email or during events co-hosted by campus and community leaders.

Future research should determine the best strategies for leveraging existing quantitative civic health data, such as local, statewide, and national governmental datasets, to gain a baseline understanding of regional civic health and equity (NCoC, 2015; Parr, 1993). Regional databases and agencies may also assist campuses in tracking civic and equity indicators over time while directing resources to areas of need. Another line of research could pursue the creation of an equity-focused audit for campus-community engagement. One framework that may be useful is the National Equity Atlas (2016). The U.S. Census provides county-level data that speak to regional equity, including rates of poverty, homeownership, education, and employment, and that may be leveraged. However, it is important not to rely too heavily on quantitative data for the reasons described in recommendation #7; it is also worth noting that these data may not reflect undocumented communities. The Opportunity Atlas (https://www.opportunityatlas.org) may be another source for assessing regional equity. Finally, future research should examine the creation of comprehensive measures of civic engagement that reflect the behaviors of marginalized communities and millennials. A promising first step in this work was developed by Diaz-Solodukhin (2017) in her adaptation of NCoC civic health indicators to identify the civic behaviors of undocumented communities. While more research is needed, the current study demonstrates that campus and community leaders may enact collective impact and pursue mutually beneficial civic health and equity goals using CBPR.

Social movements often experience periods in which they must reconfigure strategies and assessments to sustain momentum and enact change (Hartley, 2011). The civic engagement movement's next phase should advance decolonialized assessments, strategies, and theoretical frameworks for campus-community engagement and collective impact. Doing so will help to ensure campuses are realizing their democratic potential and promoting equity in reciprocal partnership with communities. We hope other community and campus leaders and researchers will continue this important work.

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