YOUTH VIEWS OF NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS: A PHOTOVOICE COLLABORATION

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2020

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ABSTRACT

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Neighborhoods shape the daily experiences of residents, and in turn, neighborhood environments are shaped by residents. Despite evidence that neighborhoods influence residents of all ages, youth perspectives are often not valued, and youth input is largely excluded from intervention planning and decision-making. The present study used Photovoice to engage youth in an assessment of their urban neighborhoods in Toledo, Ohio. Nine adolescents (16 – 20 years old) from an economically-distressed neighborhood in Toledo participated in the project. Participants were included in collecting and analyzing data and disseminating findings to the community. During the six week Photovoice project, participants were asked to take photographs that reflected important aspects of their daily lives and attend weekly sessions to share photos and engage in group discussion. During the sessions, the participants and researcher analyzed the photographic data using Participatory Visual Analysis (Wang & Burris, 1997). Participants hosted a public event to display their photos at the conclusion of the project. To describe participants' experiences, content analysis was used to identify themes discussed across Photovoice sessions. Ten themes emerged from participants' photos, descriptions, and group discussions. Themes reflected three primary aspects of participants' experiences: adolescence, neighborhood environment, and their social roles. Youth completed individual interviews to assess their views of project participation. Results of content analysis suggest that youth perceived numerous benefits of participation that included increased environmental awareness, social connections, efficacy, and communication. Overall, youth's photographs and discussions illustrated the dynamic and varied ways in which youth interact with their neighborhoods. The

present study highlights ways that participation in multiple aspects of the research process can empower youth to think critically and address issues in their own community.

To my grandad.

Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was only successful thanks to the contributions of many generous people throughout the process. I am so grateful to the community partners who graciously donated their time, space, and expertise throughout this project. I am similarly appreciative of my co-chairs, Dr. Carolyn Tompsett and Dr. Catherine Stein, who trusted and supported me in so many ways. Additionally, the SCRA Dissertation Award allowed this project to include more youth, to offer compensation for their time and efforts, and to share their stories with their family, neighbors, and communities. Lastly, I would like to sincerely and gratefully thank my family and friends who supported me though all aspects of this process—I appreciate you being there for the tears, the celebrations, and all of the coffee in the middle.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Researchers have long recognized the importance of environments in shaping youth development. Individuals are part of many environments simultaneously, and each environment shapes our development and experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Neighborhoods are one type of influential environment as they shape youth development and the daily experiences of residents, and in turn, neighborhood environments are also shaped by residents. Substantial research has demonstrated that neighborhood settings have a broad impact across many types of youth outcomes (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Most often, researchers focus on how economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods expose children to risk factors that, when compared to their peers in more affluent neighborhoods, place them at a higher risk for poor outcomes.

Despite the well-documented evidence that neighborhoods influence residents of all ages, youth perspectives are often not valued, and youth input is largely excluded from neighborhood planning and decision-making processes (Frank, 2006; Santo, Ferguson, & Trippel, 2010). Youth likely have different experiences, needs, and preferences than adults. However, even among community-oriented methodologies, youth are less likely than adults to be included in research (Jacquez, Vaughn, & Wagner, 2013). Researchers have identified diverse barriers to including youth, such as structural barriers (i.e., navigating adult-oriented institutions), competing interests of researchers, and the belief that youth are developmentally incapable of making research decisions (Frank, 2006). However, the benefits of including youth as partners in the process are also compelling. For instance, participating in research allows youth to have more of a voice in public affairs, feel more connected to their community, and to develop individual cognitive and social skills (Frank, 2006). The current study used a community based participatory research (CBPR) method, Photovoice, to engage youth in the research process, to document and share

their experiences through photography, and to share their perspective on their neighborhood's assets and needs.

Neighborhood Influence

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory posits that individuals are simultaneously nested in multiple environments, and that both the environment and the person affect one another. For example, a teenager may be simultaneously part of a nuclear family, a classroom, a sports team, a friend group, and a neighborhood, just to name a few. These different settings all influence the teenager's experiences, and each group is influenced by having that person as part of the group. Further, each system may simultaneously contain both resources and stressors. Typically, neighborhood researchers have focused on various ways that living in economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods places children at a higher risk for numerous poor outcomes, including school dropout, internalizing and externalizing psychological symptoms, and early sexuality and childbearing (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). However, according to an Ecological Systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) framework, neighborhoods constitute social spaces that affect children's development and may simultaneously contribute both stressors and resources (Dubow, Edwards, & Ippolito, 1997).

As researchers typically focus on the risk factors of an environment, including socioeconomic status (SES), neighborhood research commonly includes variables meant to measure economic influence, such as family income, parent employment, and parent educational attainment (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). At the neighborhood level, researchers often include Census variables to define SES, including the percentage of female-headed households, the percentage of residents that receive public assistance, and male joblessness (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Neighborhood research has historically focused on systemic disadvantage,

particularly the geographic isolation of low-income, African-American, single-parent families, and the diverse range of poor health outcomes that cluster together with concentrated disadvantage. However, Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon (2002) called for researchers to commit to dynamic, interactive assessment of neighborhoods. In a formidable critique that helped shape the field of neighborhood research, Jencks and Mayer (1990) also argued that the focus on Census-level variables does not capture the dynamic processes through which individuals interact with their neighborhoods and criticized the field for confining its focus to socioeconomic and demographic measures. To address this problem, the authors proposed several, distinct pathways through which neighborhoods could influence youth; however, certain common elements span across the models. To varying degrees, nearly all proposed models account for socialization, which can include having access to positive adult role models and supervision, prosocial peers, and safe, stimulating social environments such as parks or libraries. Similarly, all of the models also consider the role of resources, both tangible and intangible, available to residents. Resources such as jobs, transportation, schools, safe spaces, and police presence affect all neighborhood residents, including youth (Browning & Soller, 2014).

A decade later, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2000) expanded on Jencks and Mayer's (1990) proposed models and suggested three primary and complementary mechanisms through which neighborhoods influence youth. Their first proposed mechanism emphasizes the importance of institutional resources. They note that resources vary in availability, accessibility, and quality, which influences both outcomes and competition among residents. For instance, access to high quality neighborhood resources that include interpersonal connections, knowledge and information, and institutional support have been linked to positive youth outcomes, even when youth's family-level variables are largely characterized by risk (Kowaleski-Jones, 2000).

The second proposed mechanism of neighborhood influence emphasizes positive relationships, particularly with adults. Not only do certain parental characteristics and parenting styles influence relationships with adolescents, but non-parental role models are similarly important, with research in high-risk urban environments finding that positive role models are an important factor in promoting adolescent resilience (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009). The final proposed mechanism focuses on the influence of neighborhood norms and collective efficacy. Collective efficacy such as neighbors' willingness and ability to intervene in delinquent behavior can function as a community-level type of behavioral control that extends beyond parental monitoring; high collective efficacy has been associated with decreased violent crime (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Many of these communal factors vary by neighborhood, with neighborhood environments capable of promoting both risk and protective factors that contribute to adolescent development and outcomes.

These reviews have largely focused on ways in which neighborhoods shape residents, but it is important to acknowledge the ways in which residents interact within neighborhoods. Many researchers have documented the complex ways that people routinely interact with both spaces and people within and outside of their neighborhoods (Basta, Richmond, & Wiebe, 2010; Kwan, 2009; Wikström, Ceccato, Hardie, & Treiber, 2010). In their review, Browning and Soller (2014) suggest that neighborhoods be conceptualized as fundamentally social spaces, and that neighborhood socioeconomic context affects the places that residents routinely visit, or "activity spaces." Notably, residents' activity spaces expose them to individuals, organizations, and institutions. The authors argue that this type of exposure is one primary way in which neighborhoods influence youth residents. Residents who live in socioeconomically-disadvantaged neighborhoods are exposed to fewer and lower-quality organizational resources

(e.g., schools, libraries). Further, Browning and Soller assert that individual residents' activity spaces overlap and intersect, creating "ecological communities," or clusters of people and spaces that routinely intersect. They propose that neighborhoods that allow residents to interact with each other foster more social capital and collective values benefitting youth residents. In other words, concentrated and overlapping ecological communities help account for contextual influence on youth by promoting familiarity, trust, and shared expectations for prosocial behavior. Conversely, the authors assert that concentrated poverty and racial segregation restrict residents' activity spaces and resulting ecological communities. In this way, contextual influences are not limited to traditionally-defined geographic neighborhoods, and they influence the nuanced ways in which residents interact with their communities.

Browning and Soller's (2014) work builds on earlier ethnographies, such as that done by Patillo (2013; Pattillo-McCoy, 2000). In her study of a middle-class, Black neighborhood in Chicago, Patillo explores the complex intersections between people and places and demonstrates how individuals' behaviors shape neighborhood influences. For example, she found that even people who were raised in and feel connected to a neighborhood would often choose to send their children to schools in a different district or take them to play in parks located outside of their neighborhood. She also demonstrated how social ties within neighborhoods could have both positive and negative influences, as even supportive relationships could expose individuals to problematic behaviors. Her work highlights many social paradoxes and suggests that physical characteristics of neighborhoods and social structure shape the daily realities of residents' experiences in complex ways.

Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) also contend that residents' social perceptions shape their environment and their individual outcomes. They argue that perceived neighborhood

disorder is not simply an external problem that influences residents' mental and physical health, but instead, individual perceptions of places also influence neighborhood disorder and the residents' individual outcomes. Residents hold beliefs, stereotypes, and schemas that act as a filter through which they interpret objective cues, which in turn shape how they interact with that environment. For example, if somebody sees litter, broken glass, and abandoned lots, their own biases shape how they interpret that information (e.g., as a neighborhood that has high crime or uninvolved residents), which then factors into their decisions on how to address these issues. Further, they argue that cultural and racial stereotypes are the most influential when residents have not been trained in how to observe their environment, suggesting that training residents in new ways to observe their environments may be a beneficial intervention. Collectively, works on social perceptions and interactions within neighborhoods illustrate how characteristics such as race, class, and collective attitudes are closely tied to the social structure of public places, and how neighborhoods are defined by both their physical structures and resources, and by the people who inhabit and routinely utilize those spaces.

Community-Based Participatory Research

As researchers who study neighborhoods were arguing that the traditional top-down approach was missing critical aspects of neighborhood influence, other social science researchers were levying similar critiques in their respective fields (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008). Historically, the term "action research" entered the social science field when Kurt Lewin (1946) pioneered the idea that research should fundamentally focus on problem solving (Walter, 2009). Stressing the fundamental role of collaboration, Lewin wrote that "the best way to move people forward was to engage them into their own inquiries into their own lives" (as quoted in Wallerstein & Duran, 2008). In other words, participatory action research aims to do more than

simply answer an outsider-imposed question—it aims to create positive social change by engaging, in an equal and collaborative manner, those who have a stake in the change. Three decades later, a second movement of participatory action research arose out of Latin America, largely in response to structural crises and economic underdevelopment (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008). During an era of military dictatorships, a Brazilian philosopher, Paulo Freire, argued that reality is neither an objective truth nor discoverable facts, but is instead the intersection of objectivity and subjective appraisals (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008). In other words, people's perceptions shape their reality just as much as, if not more than, "objective truths."

Participatory action research is founded on the premise that research is not neutral, but is instead inherently value-laden (Walter, 2009), where subjective truths are a valuable source of knowledge. Action research aims to understand how people perceive their world in order to address inequalities and enact social change on a larger level. Within this framework, participatory action researchers support the educational processes of community members rather than acting as outside experts. Because of this perspective shift, the nature of the relationship between research and communities began to gradually shift from communities as the objects of studies to community members participating in the inquiry (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008). Further, a corollary of this framework suggests that researchers (often community outsiders) can work best when partnering with community members and representatives who are experts in their own experiences of their community (Hergenrather, Rhodes, Cowan, Bardhoshi, & Pula, 2009).

In their review of community-based research assessing health, Israel, Schulz, Parker, and Becker (1998) identify several core principles underlying community-based participatory research. CBPR recognizes that communities are a part of one's identity; the boundaries of these communities are socially-constructed and can be defined by any number of factors (e.g., a

geographic location or a shared experience). Further, it attempts to identify and bolster existing strengths and resources within communities in order to empower community members. Resources may range from skills of individual members to relationships to tangible resources such as infrastructure. By facilitating collaborative partnerships in all phases of the research process, it allows participants to identify issues and concerns, gather knowledge, and inform action that promotes change. It facilitates the reciprocal sharing of knowledge, skills, and power in order to help empower community members to address inequalities. Further, CBPR emphasizes that this collaborative approach spans all phases of the research process, from identifying questions through disseminating findings. Collectively, as Israel and colleagues (1998) emphasize, these principles acknowledge that "knowledge is power," and help to redistribute power to community members so they may contribute their diverse skills, knowledge, and ideas to all phases of the research process in order to improve the well-being of the involved community.

Critiques of Participatory Research. A participatory approach to research has raised some ethical and philosophical questions. Although CBPR may encompass diverse methods across a huge variety of settings, power is the common theme that unites participatory approaches. Theoretically, action-oriented approaches aim to redistribute power and affect change; however, researchers have questioned whether research is an effectual site to transform power structures (Thomson, 2007). In her critique of using participatory methods with children, Thomson (2007) questions whether participatory research actually serves to perpetuate the existing power structures, noting that "localized levels of participation have been condemned as new forms of colonization and tyranny (Cooke & Kothari, 2001) since inviting people to speak out when they remain within existing power structures achieves nothing except the raising of

expectations and increased feelings of exclusion" (p. 210). In other words, she calls into question whether offering to give children "voice" when adults continue to hold nearly all decision-making power actually *disempowers* children. She also asserts that simply choosing participatory methods does not automatically mean that we will hear or listen to participants, and that to combat this bias, researchers must understand that allowing participants to share their experiences does not equate to providing them with the power or resources to speak.

Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) also question how much power is really conferred to research study participants, particularly when projects remain highly managed by researchers. The authors question whether participants actually have the power to make decisions, particularly when researchers dictate the parameters of their projects. Löfman and colleagues (2004) note that researchers often justify maintaining methodological control by arguing that they are protecting vulnerable participants (e.g., children, minorities); however, they question whether this standard narrative simply empowers researchers while underestimating participants' ability to resist power. In this way, "collaboration" may actually act as a subtle form of exploitation, especially when researchers ignore the needs of participants and instead use their projects only to advance their own academic achievements (Löfman et al., 2004). In line with critiques of power sharing, Freudenberg and Tsui (2014) argue that CBPR often fails to produce the promised change, partially because its focus on community may encourage participants to enact change at an ineffective level. The authors argue that rather than focusing on community change, it would be more effectual to focus on policy changes. Others have similarly asserted that CBPR emphasizes *process* over *impact,* despite a current lack of systematic, empirical evidence to suggest that the process produces different or superior data to more traditional research methods (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Holland, Renold, Ross, & Hillman, 2010). In

sum, scholars have questioned whether CBPR can deliver on its premises of sharing power (e.g., Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008), including participants in decisions (e.g., Löfman et al., 2004), and enacting community change (e.g., Freudenberg & Tsui, 2014).

In response to questions of the nature of power and participation, Cornwall (2004) argues that many of these critics misconstrue the rationale underlying CBPR. She argues that allowing participants to share their knowledge and lived experience contests the dominance of "experts" who often build and define knowledge. Thomson (2007) proposes that we conceive of participatory methods in terms of creating spaces and channels through which participants may be recognized and heard. Holland and colleagues (2010) add that researchers also need to explore how their own prejudices are created and maintained within social contexts. Similarly, Löfman and colleagues (2004) suggest that the most effective way for researchers to avoid perpetuating unhelpful narratives is for researchers to be acutely aware of power structures and dynamics; however, the authors note that awareness does not eliminate the exploitative potential of participatory research. Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) argue that the potential pitfalls of participatory approaches do not devalue the importance that a participatory attitude can play in respecting and understanding the people with and for whom researchers work. In sum, the valid ethical and philosophical questions that stem from the premises of CBPR should be acknowledged and considered; however, they do not necessarily detract from the potential of participatory methods to generate knowledge and to further an attitude of respect and inclusion. In other words, although CBPR may not produce data that is necessarily superior to other research methods or create impacts that extend beyond those of other methods, it still can advance many different fields.

Youth Perspectives

Despite the fact that community-based participatory research recognizes that disempowered groups are valuable assets to a community, even among CBPR studies, youth voices are less likely to be included than adults (Jacquez et al., 2013; Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010). Instead, adult researchers who are interested in some contextual aspect of youth development traditionally define and evaluate a problem (e.g., poor developmental outcomes, educational attainment, violence, etc.), and then craft a narrative about how to address this outsider-defined problem (Langhout & Thomas, 2010; Wong et al., 2010). Again, even in the community psychology niche, where stakeholder involvement is highly valued, adults such as parents, teachers, or other professionals are often identified as the key stakeholders in youth's lives; research is often done *for* youth, but not *with* them (Langhout & Thomas, 2010). Frank (2006) notes that there are practical and theoretical barriers that may impede research with youth, many of which are rooted in concerns about their psychosocial development and competency. As Jacquez and colleagues (2013) outline, classic developmental theory suggests that children are unable to engage in abstract thought and reasoning until they are nearly teenagers; therefore, adult researchers may feel that children are unable to participate in several aspects of the research process (e.g., data analysis and dissemination). In addition, adult-oriented institutions are driven by legal and economic interests that may not align with youth participation, and these factors are compounded by a lack of understanding of youth concerns; together, these political, economic, and cultural barriers impede youth participation. Perhaps speaking to the extent of these barriers, in their review of CBPR studies, Jacquez and colleagues (2013) found that fewer than 1 in 5 (15%) CBPR studies partnered with youth during *any* phase of the research process.

In their study of youth participation in research, Wong and colleagues (2010) observed five types of youth participation, which they arranged in a pyramid. Two typologies are placed on the bottom rung of the pyramid: in one ("Vessel"), adults have total control over the research design and youth lack a voice; this is arguably the most common design. In the other ("Autonomous"), youth have total control. Both of these typologies are considered minimally empowering and place power solely within one group. Moving one rung up the pyramid, two more typologies begin to shift towards shared power. In the "Symbolic" category, youth are given space to share their voice, but adults retain most of the control. Conversely, in the "Independent" category, adults give youth most of the control. Notably, even as these typologies approach an equal sharing of power, control is *given* by adults—power still primarily lies with adults, who may choose to share it at their discretion. Finally, at the pinnacle of the pyramid, the ideal typology, "pluralistic," embodies a shared power in which both youth and adults share the responsibility of enacting communal change. In this model, the pluralistic design is viewed as the one that most empowers and enhances positive youth development. The authors further concluded that shared power most effectively promotes youth development and empowerment because it simultaneously values youth's knowledge and places some of the burden of change on adults, who are more likely to have access to institutional resources and support. They argue that not only do these experiences promote individual development in youth, but they also promote individual and community health by empowering and validating youth contributions.

Benefits to Research and Communities. Many authors have concluded that both research and communities benefit when research includes youth's perspective. When focusing on CBPR studies that included youth, Jacquez and colleagues (2013) concluded that partnering with children and adolescents throughout the entire process—from identifying research questions to

choosing methodology to disseminating results increased the likelihood that the product of research would be applicable to youth. Powers and Tiffany (2006) echoed this finding when they concluded that research conducted by youth is more likely to be accepted by other youth. Youth involvement in research can also benefit the larger community in a variety of ways, including by illustrating and addressing youth concerns, generating and implementing recommendations, and improving adult perceptions of youth (Frank, 2006). Santo, Ferguson and Trippel (2010) added that youth research also benefits the community in both the short term and the long term. The authors note that youth are affected by many communal decisions, including those that are directly noticeable, such as decisions about schools or recreational facilities, and those that are more indirect, such as zoning decisions that create a reliance on automobiles. The long-term communal gains are especially important in that youth inclusion fosters a sense of leadership, efficacy, and investment in a large segment of the population, which ultimately improves sustainability of community initiatives, especially as adolescents age into adults with more social and economic influence (Santo et al., 2010). To summarize, youth are both current and future key stakeholders in community change and there is substantial evidence that they are a valuable asset to a community, yet they remain a largely-untapped resource in participatory research (Langhout & Thomas, 2010; Powers & Tiffany, 2006).

Benefits to Youth. Youth collaboration also fosters individual development within the participants (Ozer, 2017). Adolescents grow physically, intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, and socially; notably, this period of rapid development extends into the early twenties (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Therefore, adolescence can be an especially beneficial time for youth to participate in developmentally-oriented programs. Although adolescent development spans multiple domains, Eccles and Gootman (2002) highlight cognitive development, noting

that during adolescence, people greatly increase their capacity to think abstractly, consider hypotheticals, process more sophisticated and elaborate information, consider many facets of an issue, and reflect on the self. Although Eccles and Gootman's (2002) review spanned diverse community programming, Wong and colleagues (2010) specifically focused on youth inclusion in research, and they argue that by actively participating in multiple phases of the research process, youth are able to build skills by engaging with different types of thinking, problem solving, and strategizing. Sharing power over the research process can also help youth build both a personal and social identity, as Strack and colleagues (2004) assert that participating in CBPR promotes youth's social consciousness by providing opportunities to build relationships with others, examine social roles, and look outside of themselves to larger contexts. Similarly, Frank (2006) concluded that including youth in the research process helps youth learn about their community, learn how to enact change, develop subject-specific skills, and become more confident and assertive. Additionally, Powers and Tiffany (2006) found that participating in research helped youth to build a diverse social network, experience roles and responsibilities involved in decision making, and serve as role models. However, the emergence of these skills depends in part on youth having access to safe settings in which they may practice and develop these skills.

In light of the extensive and diverse benefits to youth and to their settings, the research process itself may be contextualized as an intervention (Langhout & Thomas, 2010). Community-based participatory action research could promote development in multiple domains (Ozer, 2017; Santo et al., 2010; Strack et al., 2004). CBPR may allow youth the chance to question their environment and look at systemic influences behind their everyday lived experiences (Santo et al., 2010; Strack et al., 2004); adolescents may be uniquely suited to offer a

youth perspective on environmental factors, because developmentally, they are better able to engage with their environment than are younger children (Ozer, 2017). These cognitive and social skills can help people learn how to navigate complex and rapidly changing adult landscapes (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Further, as CBPR addresses context and power dynamics, its developmental influence may extend beyond that of more common programming that focuses solely on individual characteristics (e.g., socioemotional learning programs; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Ozer (2017) contends that promoting a sense of agency while simultaneously teaching youth to take a systemic perspective may be even more important for systematically-disadvantaged youth as they are learning to navigate structural barriers (e.g., poverty, racism, sexism, etc.). Participatory research may be especially well suited to promoting multiple aspects of adolescent development, and it may offer a somewhat unique experience for adolescents in an impoverished neighborhood.

Photovoice

Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) is an innovative and versatile research methodology that embraces many of the core principles of community-based participatory research by utilizing photography to understand and document people's experiences of the world (Walton, Schleien, Brake, Trovato, & Oakes, 2012). Broadly, Photovoice projects train participants in the methodology and ethics of photography and then participants visually document their experiences (often with a general assignment) through photographs. Photography offers a somewhat unconventional research method that enhances communication and a fairly simple way to express complex experiences, ideas, and feelings (Carlsson, 2001; Simmonds, Roux, & Avest, 2015). Carlsson (2001) argues that photography can serve as "communication bridges" between strangers, and that it can make it easier to represent a situation. She also notes that

photographs can be considered an expression of the photographer's reality, as each photograph is the product of several personal, creative decisions. Chio and Fandt (2007) argue that photography can be a useful pedagogical tool and that the creative process of taking pictures can be especially important in helping students connect to and identify with abstract issues such as race, ethnicity, or gender. The authors note that the creative potential of photography can reduce the distinction between "experts" and "nonexperts" by reinforcing inclusiveness. Further, they assert that the act of taking photographs promotes ownership, self-reflexivity, and awareness. Similarly, Dennis and colleagues (2009) noted that photography can be especially beneficial in engaging youth in research because it is less likely than writing or drawing to make youth feel self-conscious. In short, photography can be a user-friendly, accessible method that provides opportunities for participants to feel valued and to share their experiences.

In addition to visually documenting their experiences, a Photovoice methodology includes having photographers share their experiences with other participants and with researchers. A group discussion facilitates exploring themes, differences, and meaning behind photographs. Group discussions are most often guided by a series of questions designed to elicit information about photographs. The SHOWeD method is the most often used mnemonic (Shaffer, 1985), and it asks participants: 1. What do you <u>see</u> here? 2. What is really <u>happening</u> here? 3. How does this relate to <u>our</u> lives? 4. <u>Why</u> does this problem, concern, or strength <u>exist</u>? 5. What can we <u>do</u> about it? These discussions also elicit themes across participants. After the conclusion of group discussions, with the explicit consent of photographers, photographs are then shared publicly in order to engage both the larger community and influential others.

The Photovoice process, founded on Freire's (1973) notion that learning occurs through dialogue, uses documentary photography as a means of social reform. Photovoice methodology

can help to create a more equal sharing of power between experts and "nonexperts" by ensuring participants (i.e., those whose lives are being studied) retain autonomy over multiple phases of the research process (Chio & Fandt, 2007; Walton et al., 2012). Photovoice also capitalizes on the power of visual imagery to help capture the attention of policy makers, and in doing so, provides a powerful avenue for often-marginalized groups to capture and share their experiences with an audience that they otherwise may not be able to access (Kramer et al., 2010; Palibroda, Krieg, Murdock, & Havelock, 2009; Walton et al., 2012; Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998). According to the founders, Photovoice ideally embraces three main goals: 1. Enabling people to express and document their community's assets and needs 2. Promoting critical dialogue about issues through ongoing group discussion of photographs and 3. Reaching policy makers. These goals are not unique to Photovoice, and closely align with the CBPR core principles, as they underscore individual and community strengths, embrace research as a co-learning process, and balance research with action through community capacity building (Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Hergenrather et al., 2009; Israel et al., 1998).

Photovoice was designed to empower people to develop skills that increase their ability to advocate for themselves and for their community by reaching out to policy makers and/or other influential bodies (Hergenrather et al., 2009). By allowing participants to document their experiences visually, Photovoice empowers participants who may otherwise be excluded from more traditional research methodologies to tell their stories and share their experiences, and in doing so, it enhances others' (e.g., researchers or policy makers) understanding of a community's resources and needs (Carlsson, 2001; Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Maclean & Woodward, 2013). For example, participants with limited verbal proficiency, cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities, limited access to the internet, limited transportation, and children are all able to

participate in Photovoice projects. By making the research process more accessible to often-marginalized groups, Photovoice expands representation and increases the diversity of voices that are able to define and improve their own realities (Hergenrather et al., 2009). In other words, it allows people who are often not heard to share their truths in a meaningful and influential way. Because of this broad applicability to both diverse people and topics, Photovoice methodology has been used to address a wide variety of topics with many different age groups, ranging from early adolescents through seniors (Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Wang, 2006). In sum, Photovoice provides a creative, interactive, and valued way for youth to engage with the research process (Messias, Jennings, Fore, McLoughlin, & Parra-Medina, 2008; Wang, 2006), and for the research process to facilitate structural thinking among youth (Sirin, Diemer, Jackson, Gonsalves, & Howell, 2004; Vila, 2013).

Review of Photovoice Projects with Youth. Photovoice has been employed with youth to examine a wide array of issues, with many projects specifically recruiting low-income and/or minority youth. Streng and colleagues (2004) used Photovoice to examine the experiences of ten recently-immigrated Latino adolescents in a small town in North Carolina. The project took place over a one year period (June, 2002 through May, 2003), and aimed to identify issues that were affected both positively and negatively by immigration experiences; it had a further goal of examining these issues with local health and human service providers in order to create a plan of action. The authors recruited participants through a Latino club at a local high school; one goal of this club is to engage students in civic action and to enact social change. Students completed four photo assignments, and were involved in multiple stages of the research process, including creating and defining assignments, taking photographs, and defining themes based on group discussions. The students collectively decided upon the assignments: 1. What is it like to be a

Latino adolescent living in Centerville, North Carolina? 2. What are some solutions to the issues brought up in the first photo-assignment? 3. Social activities and celebrations and 4. What is it like to be a Latino adolescent going to high school in Centerville? Each participant chose three photographs to discuss, and the group generated issues and assets for each topic using the SHOWeD method. Discussions lasted approximately two hours each and were held at a public library. Researchers then coded transcripts of discussions and presented their findings to participants to modify; ultimately researchers and participants collectively decided upon ten themes to highlight in a public exhibit of photographs. The authors concluded that the use of CBPR allowed them to uncover "hidden transcripts," that they describe as occurring when marginalized people construct a sharply critical political and cultural discourse.

Multiple researchers have also used Photovoice to engage youth in health research. For example, Findholdt, Michael, and Davis (2011) used Photovoice to engage low-income, rural children in research on preventing childhood obesity. They recruited teenagers (15 to 18 years old) who had spent at least eight years living in the community and had attended a local elementary school; the researchers made a methodological decision to have teenagers reflect on their childhood in the community rather than recruiting younger children. They used Photovoice to assess community assets and barriers to children's physical activity and diets, and also to build support for future intervention efforts by raising public awareness of these community conditions. The authors reported that the participants were able to grasp public health and environmental concepts, were able to use photography to document community assets and barriers, and were able to identify themes among their stories. Students also reported that they enjoyed the process and felt a sense of ownership over the outcome. One student reported that participation in the project helped her overcome shyness, and another student chose to pursue a

career in health care as a result of participation. Additionally, community members were engaged and interested in hearing from youth. Importantly, the authors concluded that although the themes that participants identified through Photovoice were similar to those identified using other research methods, the visual method of presentation generated more enthusiasm and interest that did the traditional methods. They reported that more than 40 people attended the public display of photos, and the display was covered in a front-page newspaper article that ultimately led to invitations for other public speaking engagements that spanned the state of Oregon.

Necheles and colleagues (2007) also found that audiences engaged well with the results of a Photovoice study on health. The authors asked 13 high school students (ages 13 to 17 years old) who lived in low-income zip codes in Los Angeles to document their perspectives on factors that influence health in their communities. Youth participated in nine two-hour sessions over the span of five months. After taking pictures, individual photographers used pile sorting methods to begin to analyze themes; then, the entire group used the same pile-sorting activity to generate a final set of 10 themes. The group chose to use posters and calendars to share their chosen photos, as they felt that posters would be seen by people who could not attend the traditional photo display. Their posters were displayed throughout their high schools and at a local science museum. Additionally, the students also hosted an exhibit of their photos, which was attended by friends and family, community partners, public health officials, health care providers, local college advisors, and the press. The exhibit was covered by *The Los Angeles Times* in an article that included interviews with youth; this article was then reprinted in newspapers and online sites throughout the country and was translated into both Spanish and Chinese (native languages of some participants). Notably, after the conclusion of the project, both participants and a

community partner encouraged the authors to employ more participatory methods in their future research on youth obesity prevention.

In addition to finding that Photovoice projects have been well-received by the public and have spread their results beyond an academic audience, scholars have also found that Photovoice can foster relationships across diverse people. Caroline Wang and colleagues (2004) used Photovoice to document community assets and concerns in Flint, Michigan. The project ultimately included four different groups of photographers, two of which comprised ten adolescents each, and two of which comprised adults with various community roles, including policy makers. The diverse composition of photographers (i.e., youth and policy makers) is a unique feature to this project, and the authors concluded that it ultimately helped create one of the most powerful outcomes of the project. The authors emphasized that the shared experience of photographing and discussing concerns about neighborhood safety and violence fostered long-term relationships between participants who might otherwise not be able to directly communicate (e.g., teenagers were able to directly engage with Flint's mayor and other community leaders). They concluded that "people representing widely disparate ages, incomes, experiences, neighborhoods, and social power no longer saw one another as inaccessible and lacking common ground, but as approachable fellow human beings" (p. 913). Although the data that the study generated were also valuable, the experience of participating in a Photovoice project created valuable individual skills and relationships.

Wilson and colleagues (2007) engaged Photovoice methods as a first step in an attempt to increase civic engagement among early adolescents. The authors recruited participants from an afterschool program focused on providing opportunities for civic engagement with other youth in order to address issues in their schools and neighborhoods. Students were 10 to 12 years old and

attended Title 1 public schools in low-income communities in California. In total, there were 122 participants who were divided into 13 same-gender groups (6 to 10 students per group); students attended 25 90-minute sessions that were held weekly after school. In addition to taking photos and using the SHOWeD method to discuss themes, students also used a large map of their schools to map out areas of assets and needs. After deciding on themes, each group was tasked with designing a social action project to help address one of the identified issues. Sample projects included writing a letter to the school district engineer to fix a piece of property that was afflicted with graffiti and bullet holes, presenting skits to school assemblies, and organizing initiatives to clean up school grounds. Reflecting on their limited success, the authors concluded that the students had trouble grasping causes of the identified issues and therefore, the proposed solutions tended to be too simple to address the root causes. However, the authors caution against concluding that students were too young or cognitively limited to grasp causality; rather, they propose that the limited cognitive ability is instead evidence of the poor schooling environments. They argue that in order to support student's engagement, programs must accommodate a lack of experience with critical thinking, a general resistance to writing, and overall negative attitudes towards school.

In another project that aimed to promote a deeper understanding of complex issues such as violence, Chonody and colleagues (2013) asked ten teenagers (15 to 17 years old) to complete four photographic assignments in Philadelphia. All participants were low-income and had at least one additional social barrier (e.g., homelessness, runaway, foster care placement, youth offender, pregnant or parenting teenager, basic skills deficit). Of the four photo assignments, one focused on community assets while the other three focused on violence. Consistent with other neighborhood research, participants' photos and discussions (using the SHOWeD method) noted

that violence was linked to low neighborhood connection. The project aimed to help youth develop critical thinking skills, and the authors concluded that the teenagers were able to draw connections between complex social issues and the realities of poverty. However, they also noted that participants generally felt defeated when discussing possible solutions to reducing violence, questioning whether it was worth expending resources on community involvement when faced with such unfavorable odds. Collectively, although the data generated reflected existing knowledge from more traditional research methods, the process of participating helped adolescent photographers to draw complex connections about their realities. However, simply developing a deeper understanding of issues did not make participants feel more able to change their social realities.

Neighborhood Research Using Photovoice. Many researchers have found that Photovoice methodology is well-suited for engaging adolescents, with some specifically using it to learn about youth perspectives on their neighborhoods. Santo, Ferguson, and Trippel (2010) used Photovoice in combination with GIS mapping to engage African American high school students in the Youth Neighborhood Mapping Initiative. Notably, this project provided summer employment for 14 teenagers, so participants worked for thirty hours per week over eight weeks. The program aimed to both foster civic engagement among participants and to examine youth perspectives on neighborhood needs and assets in two low-income neighborhoods in Memphis. Although the only prerequisite for participation was living in one of two neighborhoods, more than half of participants resided in public housing projects. In addition to taking photographs, students created digital photo-maps, used blogs to share their experiences, and used GIS to create interactive maps that they could share online. In order to help foster participant engagement, the authors did not pre-define a set of projects for teenagers to address, and instead provided a skill

set and analytic tools. Teenagers used Photovoice to identify a set of neighborhood issues, and then devised strategies to address those issues. Among other outcomes, the project culminated in a set of physical and design recommendations intended to improve spaces that teenagers identified as underutilized. Participants shared their concepts with community members and with city planning officials. Similar to Chonody and colleagues (2013), the authors found that at times, participants were overwhelmed at the scope of neighborhood issues. However, they noted that blogs ended with hope and captured a developing awareness of individual roles within communities. They also emphasized how youth learned to question and challenge inequalities in their neighborhoods. Further, they also underscore how their use of creative techniques, such as Photovoice, allowed youth to express themselves differently than adults.

In another study that combined Photovoice methodology with mapping technology, Dennis and colleagues (2009) created the Youth Mapping for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative that was designed to increase social capacity for addressing health disparities in Madison, Wisconsin. The authors argue that youth are often as knowledgeable about their neighborhoods as are adult residents, and they contend that everyday knowledge of social spaces is a combination of location, images, and stories of events. Therefore, to account for the multidimensional nature of spatial knowledge, they chose to combine Photovoice methodology with narrative accounts (individual interviews in addition to group discussions) and GIS mapping. The project included approximately 50 participants (ages 10 to 18 years old) over three phases, and divided participants into groups according to age. The authors reflected that photography was particularly successful in engaging young people, and they suggest that the act of framing photographs required people to engage with their environment in new ways by requiring participants to somewhat distance themselves from their lived experience. In terms of

positionality, taking a photograph places participants as temporary, "contemplative quasi-outsiders" (p. 468), which in turn creates space for deeper reflection and a different interpretation of circumstances. Further, they emphasize how the use of photography allowed young participants to express themselves without feeling self-conscious about their writing or drawing ability. At the conclusion of the project, youth presented their findings to district police officers, health care providers and clinics, neighborhood residents and community leaders, and newspaper reporters. The authors also found that even participants who were initially skeptical were enthusiastic and excited to share their findings at the end of the project.

In a project that aimed to compare Photovoice methodology to more traditional research methodology, Rudkin and Davis (2007) engaged youth in a Photovoice project to assess perceptions of their neighborhoods and had youth answer traditional neighborhood measures as well. They recruited 30 youth (age 12 to 18 years old) who lived in low-income, minority neighborhoods in the Park Hill Photography Project in Denver, Colorado; youth attended four 2-hour workshops. In addition to standard group discussions about photographs, the authors used a two-stage process to "score" photographs on multiple dimensions. In the first stage, scores were created based entirely on youth ratings, and in the second stage, scores were created with both youth ratings and adult determinations of community connectedness. After photos were given a score, the authors sorted them into categories based on the degree to which they reflected the youth's social relationship to the neighborhood; photos were then given a weighted score. By working with photographers to assign a number to photographs, the authors were able compare the content of photographs to standard measures of community, including sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997), and the Neighborhood Youth Inventory (Chipuer et al., 1999). Correlations with standard measures were moderate,

ranging from .38 to .59, suggesting that the different methodologies may overlap to some extent, but that they each generate unique data as well. After the project, youth were interviewed about the experience. Youth reported that they saw advantages to both questionnaires and to photographs. They reported that questionnaires were comprehensive in a way that photographs were not, but at the same time, they felt that questionnaires were too long and repetitive, could be too constraining because of fixed answer formats, and often left out important aspects of community life. In this regard, they felt that photographs offered a fuller description of community life. However, youth reported other concerns with photography as a method. Participants reported that not all photos turned out as they had hoped, they sometimes would miss important scenes when they did not have their camera, and they often excluded people from their photos because of the requirement that they obtain explicit permission to photograph people. Youth felt that adults were already somewhat suspicious of teenagers with cameras, and they believed that asking for a release to take a photo often increased the unease and suspicion. Lastly, youth noted a concern that their photos might be misunderstood by others. The authors concluded by underscoring that youth emphasized aspects of their community that adults (i.e., the authors of the original measures) had not considered important.

Although not necessarily comparing Photovoice to other methodologies, Gant and colleagues (2009) sought to study the effects of participating in a Photovoice project. As part of the Good Neighborhoods Initiative in Detroit, Michigan, the authors aimed to use Photovoice to increase community involvement among young residents. They had 33 adolescents (ages 15 to 21 years old) who lived in five neighborhoods complete the Survey of Youth Engagement (Indiana University Center for Post-secondary Research, 2000) both before and after participating in a Photovoice project. They found a main effect of age, with youth over age 18

scoring significantly higher than youth under age 18; they concluded that Photovoice can promote significant change in civic engagement among older youth. Effect sizes also revealed that Photovoice participation accounted for approximately 16% of the variance between younger and older youth's post-test scores. The authors noted that the methodology seemed to have a special appeal to young people, which may increase its potential to engage adolescents.

In sum, Photovoice has been implemented in research with both youth and neighborhoods, with researchers finding diverse benefits. Photovoice can help raise public awareness of neighborhood issues (e.g., Findholt et al., 2011; Necheles et al., 2007), foster relationships between diverse parties (Wang et al., 2004), and stimulate civic engagement among youth (Santo et al., 2010). Further, Photovoice methodology can help youth develop complex ideas about neighborhood issues (Chonody et al., 2013) and feel a sense of ownership over the outcome (Findholt et al., 2011). In addition to fostering individual development of participants, Photovoice can minimize youth concerns about other research methods, such as feeling self-conscious about their verbal abilities (Dennis et al., 2009) or answering constraining and redundant questionnaires (Rudkin & Davis, 2007).

A review of existing studies suggests that Photovoice may offer a useful tool for research with both youth and neighborhoods. Children in neighborhoods are unlikely to define their community according to U.S. Census tracts, and even residents who live in close proximity often define their neighborhoods in substantially different ways (Coulton, Korbin, Chan, & Su, 2001), suggesting that residents conceive of their neighborhood based on their unique experiences rather than based on researcher-defined boundaries. Using Photovoice allows residents to bring their own definitions and perceptions to bear on the research, allowing for a diversity of perspectives that may better reflect residents' lived experiences. Further, when applied to research with both

youth and neighborhoods, Photovoice could help create sustainable environmental change that may impact the setting long after the completion of an individual research project. Youth are important stakeholders in a community—both as adolescents and as future adults—who have a current and future investment in the well-being of their communities (Frank, 2006; Ozer, 2017). Further, as minority youth who live in high-poverty neighborhoods often remain in those neighborhoods for many years (South, Crowder, & Chavez, 2005), they might have an even higher investment in the future of their communities than their more affluent peers. In sum, youth offer perspectives and identify unique communal needs that differ from those of their adult neighbors (Gearin & Kahle, 2006), and Photovoice creates a space for them to identify and address the important community issues that affect their experiences.

The Present Study

The present study used Photovoice techniques to engage adolescent residents of a low-income, urban neighborhood in Toledo, Ohio in an assessment of their neighborhood's assets and needs. The study used Photovoice techniques to better understand how participants experienced their neighborhood and defined its strengths and weaknesses. The present study included teenage participants in multiple aspects of the research process, primarily collecting data, analyzing data, and disseminating findings to the larger community and to key stakeholders. By including participants throughout the process, the overarching goals of the present study were to teach youth about the research process and to empower youth to enact change in their community.

Research Questions

1. What do youth identify as their neighborhood's strengths and assets?
2. What do youth identify as their neighborhood's needs?
3. How might youth benefit from being a part of a Photovoice project?

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that after participating in a Photovoice project, youth would:

1. Demonstrate increased awareness of neighborhood surroundings, particularly as evidenced by a systemic view of neighborhood issues.
2. Demonstrate increased self-reflection.
3. Participate in a group discussion with their peers about potentially sensitive topics.
4. Appreciate that others have different and valuable experiences.
5. Use photographs to communicate with others.

CHAPTER II. METHODS

Participants

Participants in the present study were nine teenagers (3 males; 6 females) between the ages of 16 to 20 years old (M = 18.3 years, SD = 1.8 years) who were enrolled in the Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) through the YMCA of Greater Toledo. The YOP, funded by the Lucas County Workforce Development Agency, aims to improve educational attainment, to prepare youth for employment, and to promote civic engagement. To enroll in the YOP, youth must meet income guidelines as established by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); therefore, the program comprises low-income youth who receive income assistance, for example through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Demographic characteristics of the sample are found in Table 1. Seven (78%) participants identified as Black, one (11%) identified as White, and one (11%) identified as multiracial. In terms of education, two (22%) participants were enrolled in college, four (44%) were attending high school, two (22%) were high school graduates and one (11%) did not graduate high school. One (11%) participant reported full-time employment (40+ hours per week), two (22%) reported part-time employment (20 hours or less), and six (67%) reported no current employment. Five (56%) participants were parents with one (45%) or more (11%) children.

Procedure

All procedures were approved by Institutional Review Board of Bowling Green State University. Participants were recruited through a partnership with the YOP. One of the youth leaders shared the opportunity to participate in the study with youth who consistently attended

group meetings, and interested youth were given a consent form with further information. Eleven youth expressed interest in the study, and nine attended the required introductory session. Informed consent was explained to all participants and to parents of minors under age 18, both verbally and in writing. A signed consent form was obtained from all participants over the age of 18 and from parents of participants under the age of 18; minors also signed a form indicating their assent to participate. Per Wang and Redwood-Jones' (2001) ethical guidelines, due to the nature of Photovoice methodology, two additional informed consent forms were explained to participants and parents. 1) Participants were provided with informed consent forms that they needed to explain and disseminate to any subjects in their photographs, unless participants were photographing a large group where individual faces were unrecognizable or when focusing on an object (e.g., a building) in a public space and a passerby entered the photo. 2) Participants and parents signed a separate consent form allowing the researcher to disseminate their selected photos (i.e., the two photos chosen for display).

Participants attended a total of six sessions (one per week) which consisted of one introductory session, four sessions discussing photos, and one public display of photos. All sessions were audio recorded. All nine participants attended the first session and the public display. Eight participants completed all six sessions, and all nine participants completed at least five sessions. Participants were divided into two groups for the photography sessions to both maximize the odds that participants could attend at least one of the meeting times and to help ensure that all participants felt that they had a chance to speak. Group 1 comprised four participants, and Group 2 comprised five participants. Unintentionally, there was an age difference between groups, such that older participants in Group 1 were no longer high school

age and three of the four participants in this group had children. Four of five participants in Group 2 were currently in high school and did not have children.

Photovoice sessions lasted approximately one hour each, and they took place in a private room at the YOP building. The public display of participants' photographs was held at a local YMCA. The principal investigator facilitated all group discussions and coordinated the public display of photographs. An undergraduate research assistant also attended sessions to help facilitate group discussions. Participants were given Apple iPods (8GB 4th Generation iPod Touch) to take photographs, and participants also occasionally used their personal cellular phones to take photographs. Participants were able to keep their iPods at the end of the study as a token of appreciation (current retail value on Amazon.com is $130). Additionally, youth were given a $10 at the end of each group discussion that they attended; youth could choose a gift card to Walmart, Kroger, McDonalds, City Trends, or Family Dollar.

Photovoice Sessions

The first Photovoice session ("Introduction and Favorite Places") included an overview of the project, introductions to other group members, training, and a discussion to prepare participants to begin thinking of their favorite places. During this session, the group agreed upon ground rules for discussions. Training briefly addressed topics such as ways to approach possible subjects, contexts in which people may not want to have their picture taken (even if it is a photo being taken legally in a public space), and ways to minimize any potential risks. Training also included a brief introduction to the use of iPods, composition of photographs, and sample discussion of an existing image; participants were also given handouts to supplement the brief discussion of photography tips. The second part of the session used a guided discussion to prime participants to begin thinking about their neighborhoods' assets. At the end of the first session,

participants were given the following assignment: “Take 5-10 pictures that show us your favorite places.” All assignments concluded with the following instructions: “Write down any notes/thoughts you have while taking pictures. Choose your favorite 3 to discuss in the group discussion next week. Give these three pictures a title and write 3-5 sentences about what this picture means to you, why you took it, and why you chose to share it.”

Sessions two through four had a similar structure. The sessions began with a group discussion of each photographer’s selected photographs from the prior week. Then, each session ended with a guided discussion preparing participants for the next photography assignment. Session two (“Favorite People”) prepared participants to focus on their meaningful relationships (note that this session reiterated the importance of obtaining informed consent from any photographed subjects); participants were instructed: “Take 5-10 pictures that show us your favorite people.” Session three (“Magic Wand”) prepared participants to focus on their neighborhood’s needs; participants were instructed: “Imagine that you have a magic wand. Take 5 – 10 pictures that show us things you would change.” Session four (“What Would You Like Us to Know”) asked participants to focus on aspects of their experience that were not captured in the prior three sessions; participants were instructed: “Now that you have taken pictures of things that you like and things that you would change, show us anything else that we should know about your life.” At the end of session four, participants were instructed to “Brainstorm who you would like to see your photos and how we should show them. Select your favorite two photos that you would like to share. Provide a title and short description of each of your chosen photos.”

At the end of each of the first four sessions, participants were given a photography assignment, and they then chose three digital images to bring to the group discussion at the start of the next session. Group discussions of photographs were broadly guided by the SHOWeD

method, (Shaffer, 1985). This method asks participants: 1. What do you see here? 2. What is really happening here? 3. How does this relate to our lives? 4. Why does this problem, concern, or strength exist? 5. What can we do about it? See Appendix A for an outline of the curriculum.

Session five included a group discussion of photographs from the session four assignment and focused on an analysis of photographs chosen for dissemination. Participants introduced their two chosen photographs, and a group discussion identified themes and organized photos. Participants also reviewed their final selection of photographs and comments before they were printed. Participants arranged a time to meet with the researcher to participate in an individual interview about the process of participating.

The public display of participants' photographs was held at a local YMCA. Immediately prior to the display, participants helped prepare for the event by arranging and hanging photographs and preparing the room. Community members and members of the local press were invited to attend. Participants and community partners helped decide the target audience and format of data dissemination.

Program Evaluation Interview

After the conclusion of the Photovoice sessions and public display, youth participated in individual interviews with the researcher to assess their views of the program. Interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes each. Six interviews took place at the YOP building; three interviews took place in a public location to accommodate participants' transportation limitations. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Participants were given a $10 gift card at the end of the individual interviews.

All participants completed a semi-structured interview with questions designed to address hypothesized benefits of participation. Youth were first asked to report their age, gender, current

grade in school, and race/ethnicity on a questionnaire. Interview questions were open-ended and were occasionally followed by specific prompts to clarify questions or to expand upon responses. Interviews covered topics such as perceived individual changes, communal changes, challenges, and suggestions. For example, to assess participants' level of self-reflection, participants were asked "What types of things have you learned about yourself by being part of this project?" Similarly, to assess level of neighborhood awareness, participants were asked "What types of things have you learned about your neighborhood by being part of this project?" See Appendix B for program evaluation interview protocol.

Data Analyses

To analyze the photographic data, participants and researcher together took part in a Participatory Visual Analysis (Wang & Burris, 1997) during each of the four Photovoice sessions (sessions two through five). There were three primary components to this analysis: 1. Selecting photographs that most accurately capture the community's needs and assets 2. Contextualizing and telling stories about the meaning behind the photographs and 3. Identifying and codifying issues, themes, and theories that emerge.

All group discussions were transcribed verbatim and entered into ATLAS.ti for analysis. Content analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) was used to characterize participants' group discussions. Methodologically, content analysis is typically used to identify patterns and themes across responses. Codes were derived from common topics that emerged while reviewing transcripts, and a coding manual was developed. Following coding, responses were analyzed for common themes across participants' responses.

CHAPTER III. RESULTS

Across the four sessions that included photography assignments, participants provided a total of 99 photographs and descriptions. A total of 250 unique quotes from participants during the four sessions were transcribed and coded. A total of ten codes were created and applied to photographs, descriptions, and group discussions. Table 2 provides a summary of coding categories, operational definitions, and exemplar quotes from group discussions; Figures 1 to 10 provide sample photographs and descriptions for each coding category. Photographs and group discussion quotes could be coded under more than one category. Therefore, after the final round of coding, there were 125 codes applied to photographs and 254 codes applied to group discussion quotes, creating a total of 379 coded utterances.

In their discussion of naturalistic methods, Lincoln & Guba (1986) introduce the concept of dependability. Broadly, dependability demonstrates that findings are consistent and could be repeated. To address dependability, a second independent rater was given a subset (25%; $n = 24$) of pictures (with participants' descriptions) across ten themes and asked to create and classify pictures into ten groups, and both coders compared their coding schemes to discuss agreement and discrepancies. Overall, the categories created by a second coder largely captured the same constructs as the original coding scheme, with discrepancies primarily due to the second coder only receiving a subset of photographic data; see Appendix C for independent coder's created categories. Additionally, to establish interrater reliability, a second independent rater was trained on the coding scheme and asked to classify a subset of quotes into existing codes. This coder was given 10% ($n = 25$) of randomly-selected quotes at once. To account for chance agreement, Mezzich's κ was calculated per guidelines described by Eccleston and colleagues (2001). After

three rounds of coding and comparison, raters established a κ of .75, which represents substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Ten total themes were generated from participants' photographs, descriptions, and group discussions. These themes largely reflect three primary aspects of participants' experiences: adolescence, their environment, and their social roles. Youth described typical developmental processes, including an emerging sense of identity and accompanying self-expression ("Identity and Expression"), developing goals of autonomy and independence ("Growth and Development"), a desire for positive adult mentors and role mentors ("Mentors and Role Models"), and a drive to create positive change through their lives ("Catalysts"). Youth also described aspects of their setting, including important places where they may feel an emotional connection ("Place Attachment"), quality of and access to community resources ("Resources"), and safety ("Safety"). Lastly, youth also described the social aspects of their lives, including their relationships with children ("Children"), their experiences with ageism, racism, and classism ("Facing Oppression"), and the different people who comprise their social communities ("Social Communities"). Table 3 and Figure 11 illustrate the distribution of themes across Photovoice topics.

Adolescence

Youth shared photographs that reflected their age, and they verbally described multiple experiences that reflected experiences commonly associated with adolescence. Youth's photographs and discussions captured typical developmental processes, including an emerging sense of identity and accompanying self-expression, developing goals such as autonomy and independence, a desire for positive adult mentors and role mentors, and a drive to create positive

change through their lives. These developmental processes are seen across four themes: Identity and Expression, Growth and Development, Mentors and Role Models, and Catalysts.

Identity and Expression. Youth's pictures illustrated the importance of shaping and expressing their identity. Although this theme was seen in both groups' pictures, it was far more prevalent in Group 2, which primarily comprised younger participants who did not yet have their own children. Similarly, while it was represented in all Photovoice sessions, it mostly occurred when discussing favorite places and in the open Photovoice topic sessions. Participants' photographs reflected individual hobbies, interests, challenges, methods of coping, and motivations. Photographs showed varied hobbies, including basketball, video games, shopping, and photography. Similarly, participants' photographs and discussions included different methods of forming their own opinions and coping with challenges, such as writing music, spending time in quiet places, attending church, and through creating art. For instance, one participant (P6) asked *"Without art, who would even have an imagination?"* while another explained:

> *You can literally just put what you feel into your art... You just write what you feel, whatever you feel at the time. You don't have to pay for a canvas. Whatever you want, you can get your feelings, you've got to let them back out.* –P4

Participants' photographs illustrated that art, especially visual art, could be an important means of sharing experiences and opinions. The prevalence of this theme likely reflects that participants who are interested in taking and sharing photographs as a means of self-expression were selected to take part in the project. Many participants also appreciated others' works of self-expression and found value in exploring others' art. When discussing a photo of a mural, one participant noted:

> *The fact that something that someone else put on the wall, or they're experiencing an emotion or wanted to put something out, is still affecting other people's lives when they*

> *pass by it, and that other person doesn't even know. I want to know what they're thinking. It's sparking you to talk.* –P9

Another participant also suggested that adding more art throughout Toledo would help improve the city's aesthetic.

Growth and Development. Youth's photos depicted turning points that they have encountered in their lives, places and people that have helped them grow, and goals that promote autonomy and independence. This theme was represented across both groups and across all four Photovoice topic sessions but was most prevalent in the open Photovoice topic session; see Table 3 for distribution. Participants' photographs illustrated a variety of turning points in their lives, including the death of loved ones, a car crash, and for some, the birth of their children. Participants who have had their own children often discussed how they grew as individuals when they became parents. For several participants, growth encompassed learning, appreciating, and being exposed to new perspectives. Several pictures showed youth's goals, which often encompassed themes of autonomy. For instance, multiple participants planned to earn college degrees, begin a career, purchase their own transportation, and live independently. While sharing a picture of an apartment, one participant said:

> *I took this picture because one of my goals is to move out when I graduate. So, this picture is just saying that the goals I've got to do are stay in school, graduate, get a job as well, and save up some money. These are just some goals that I set for myself.* –P6

Regarding places and people that promote growth, two participants described their schools as a place of growth, but seven either did not mention school or described it negatively. Several participants photographed aspects of YOP, and all participants valued that the YOP program has allowed them the resources and space to grow. As one participant described,

> *I like coming here. I've only been here a few times, but I've been with a lot of people since summer time, and they help me with myself. I didn't know who I was before I met Mr. F-. He opened my mind to a lot of things, different things, different ways to look at*

> *things. I feel good when I'm here. Not just by the students, but by the staff. They help me with my work, jobs, experience. I like it here.* -P5

Multiple participants felt that one of the primary resources at YOP was the caring staff; participants believe that staff are truly invested in their success and accomplishment, and participants feel supported in their development. Although it is possible that YOP recurred within this theme because staff selected participants who routinely attend programing, it nonetheless speaks to the importance of community resources that support teenagers during a crucial developmental period.

Mentors and Role Models. Youth's photographs expressed a desire to have strong, positive adult role models. Notably, this theme also includes participants' discussions of how this desire is often left unfulfilled. This theme occurred in both groups' photographs, but was more prevalent in the younger group (Group 2). Similarly, this theme occurred across three Photovoice topic sessions but was not seen in the discussion of favorite places; see Table 3 for distribution. In most youth's pictures, the mentor role was commonly filled by their family members; youth most often looked to their mothers as role models. Other adult role models included a stepfather (one participant), a maternal grandmother (one participant), and an aunt (one participant). Three participants shared photographs of older siblings that they considered role models. When sharing a picture of her older sister's artwork (Figure 1), one participant explained:

> *It's my sister's paintings. They inspire me every day to be everything I can, to go forward in life, because that's basically what she did. She's open like that. She got a scholarship and she wanted to work, you know, she was going to need to work for pay and housing…basically, those pictures basically hold me.* –P8

When describing their role models, youth most often mentioned that their mentors were supportive, determined, educated, and helped them learn. Although family members were the

most common role models, multiple participants also mentioned the positive influence of YOP staff.

Notably, participants in both groups wished that teachers were more able to fill the need for positive adult mentors. They shared photographs of their classroom, school buildings, and technological components of their education. Youth explained that in school, they do not feel that teachers are available for assistance, are not invested in their students' success, and do not encourage students to learn. Multiple participants felt that introducing technology into the classroom detracted from the role of teachers; they felt that their education suffered. One participant—a student who overall felt favorably about his school and listed it as one of his favorite places—shared a picture of a "gizmo" and explained:

> *It's like in school, my school, we get so much homework and we don't, like teachers don't spend enough time to ask if we understand it. They give you homework, and unless you figure it out—that is called a gizmo. We have iPads so you go on the iPad for the gizmo and then they basically try to teach it to you. Like, no machine or nothing can really teach you as much as a human can. So, I wish for teacher to just teach more instead of handing out work. Just, not like hand out work and move on with their days….It's discouraging. If they don't want to be there with you, why would you want to be there with them?* –P7

This sentiment was reflected by students who attended multiple area schools. All participants felt that technology had a similar effect of detracting from potentially meaningful relationships. They all emphasized that there was more to education than simply grasping new material, and they felt that schools failed to provide mentors. One participant did note that her experience changed dramatically when she entered college, as she went from barely passing classes in high school to becoming a straight-A nursing student. She felt that a big difference was the availability and quality of professors who served as role models.

Catalysts. Participants' photographs reflected that as they were becoming more aware of social systems, they were also becoming more driven to enact positive change. This theme was

often tied to other themes, particularly Facing Oppression and Children, but the decision was made to create a distinct category that captured their desire to change. In other words, youth's photographs depicted more than simply the reasons that they wanted to see things changed, as they also showed a desire to contribute to positive change. This theme occurred in both groups, but was more prominent in the younger group (Group 2; see Table 3 for distribution). Similarly, although it did occur across all Photovoice topic sessions, it was most evident during the "magic wand" session that asked participants what they would like to see changed. In the younger group's photographs, this theme was often tied to the systemic oppression that they faced due to race, age, or social class. For both groups, this theme was often seen when discussing photographs of children, as participants felt driven to enact positive change for children (often their own children or younger relatives). Similarly, for both groups, the theme of enacting change was a reflection of attachment to their community and their city. For instance, this discussion occurred while showing a picture of Toledo's skyline (Figure 4):

> *I took it because it represents community. A lot of times people say "well I hate Toledo" or "this place is awful" or whatever. But, I think that if everyone were to work towards changing it and to have a better attitude towards it, things could change in the city. I've lived here my whole life, but I've started to appreciate it more. –P2*

> *At first, it's what I used to think. "Oh, I can't wait to get out of here." Now, I've kind of got the same mindset, but I want to help here more than when I just like, leave it…I want to help it because I know how hard it was for me coming up in Toledo. Well, sometimes hard, sometimes not. But, I know the struggle, so I want to help people so they don't have to go through that or don't have to experience it. –P1*

Participants described varying levels of civic involvement, ranging from trying to be a good role model to taking an active role in politics. The most active older participant described her involvement:

> *I do so much throughout the day, chasing my dreams and making sure that I'm being a good leader for my son. As far as a motivational speaker and then helping out with the YOP, because I volunteer now, and partnering with Ms. L- on some stuff, and then also*

> *I'm still working with my old high school. We actually just met with the Ohio state representatives. We are trying to get funding for [school]*. –P9

Youth held both a drive for change and a mixed sense of optimism. Youth sometimes felt optimistic when they met others in their generation that shared their drive, and youth sometimes felt overwhelmed by scope of injustice that they encountered.

Setting Factors

Youth's photographs displayed aspects of their setting, including important places where they may feel an emotional connection, quality of and access to community resources, and safety. These emerging themes are reflected in: Place Attachment, Resources, and Safety.

Place Attachment. Participants' photographs depicted various reasons that they felt a connection to different places. This theme occurred in both groups and across three Photovoice topic sessions (all except for "Favorite People"); see Table 3 for distribution. Most photographs illustrated an attachment to social places where participants were able to interact with peers, adults, and family. For instance, participants photographed basketball courts, the YOP building, family homes, and parks where they spent time with loved ones. Similarly, youth often valued a place because they had a history with it. For example, one participant photographed a favorite coffee shop that she had visited with her father since she was a child, and that she now visits as a place to study. Or, when describing a picture of a basketball court, one participant shared:

> *That's a favorite place because I grew up around there. That's a basketball court. I love playing basketball… I like playing there because all of my friends go there. Like I said, I grew up around there so I know the place. I know people around there…. I play with the same people, but you know, people have next, and it'll be other people I don't know. So, I meet new people every day, and I play with the same old people every day. –P1*

Notably, this theme also included instances in which participants discussed places that lacked a desired emotional connection (e.g., when describing schools or neighborhoods that participants *wanted* to value). This theme most often came up while discussing the number of abandoned

houses in Toledo, and the various ways that the city is addressing them. Similarly, this lack of place attachment also occurred when participants were discussing ways in which Toledo is growing. While sharing a photo of an empty lot, one participant explained:

> *They're building two more towers onto Toledo Hospital. They were buying people out of the neighborhood. My aunt lives one block down.… But the old lady across the street who was living there since my mom moved there, which was like 12 years, she bought out. She moved. I guess she was sick of that place.* –P4

Resources. As the focus of this project, participants shared photos and discussed many facets of their community resources, including social comparisons, barriers to access, and what they value about resources. This theme was the most prevalent of all ten themes, which simply reflects that it was the primary focus of multiple Photovoice topic sessions. It was equally prevalent across groups, and most often emerged when discussing "Favorite Places" and "Magic Wand" (things to change); see Table 3 for distribution. Photographs referenced several large resources, including transportation, housing, education, and economic opportunities. For both groups, transportation was a primary limitation of accessing other resources, and cost was their primary barrier to transportation. However, they also encountered other issues with public transportation, such as taking multiple busses, waiting for busses in the cold, paying for bus fare, and being unable to rely on the busses. One participant shared his experience with using the bus:

> *I don't have a car….I really don't catch the bus no more. That bus fare is too much for me….I'm not about to pay $1.25 just to go walk places and then pay an extra $1.25 to get back home….I don't have time to be sitting and waiting for a bus. I'd rather walk.* –P3

Older youth also shared pictures of road construction and described that the conditions of the roads in the inner-city make it costly to maintain a car, and they felt that city funds were siphoned into richer areas. Youth in both groups discussed the unequal distribution of resources and how they felt that the economically-disadvantaged areas in Toledo were not maintained or prioritized. An older participant summarized:

> *It's frustrating too. For somebody, we don't have control over it. Like, we can go to the mayor. We can do stuff like that, but when you're seeing money being spent on jails and different stuff like that, or just like stuff that could come after they fix the streets, then it'd be better. Or they'll like tear down something that's completely fine to make it look prettier and then you've got something over here that really needs to be fixed. I feel like they need to work on the inner city a little bit better more, a lot more. They don't touch the inner city for real. When they do, it's like downtown, places that are about to bring in more profit for Toledo.* –P9

Youth noted discrepancies in nearly all community resources, including transportation, housing, and education. Additionally, youth also shared photographs of police cars and commented on how policing in the inner-city is simultaneously unequal and unreliable.

Youth in both groups also described valued qualities in community resources. Participants noted that cost is often a deciding factor when choosing places to eat and shop. For multiple participants, particularly those with children, restaurants and stores in Toledo were prohibitively costly; some participants photographed places that they would like to visit but are unable to due to cost. For parents in the group, their awareness and use of resources changed dramatically when they had children, and they felt that Toledo lacked places that accommodated small children. One participant said:

> *Especially with some of the places, with how much business they get, but yet they still charge so much and make it only for like certain people to be able to come. I don't think that's fair, even though they're already making tons of money.* –P2

Participants of all ages also noted that convenience and accessibility play a large role in their use of resources; for the parents in the group, child care was a crucial facet of accessibility. One mother photographed a YMCA card and stated that it is one of her most valued places because it provides childcare while she exercises. Another participant noted the importance of having access to a public library, especially when he was younger:

> *That's a picture of the main library, which is also downtown. I chose that picture because basically I spend a lot of time down there a lot. Especially when I didn't have a phone, and I didn't have Wi-Fi or anything, because we couldn't afford that or anything. We*

> *always used to go downtown and get on the library, get on a computer. We used to do that almost every weekend.* –P7

Overall, participants' photographs illustrated variability in the quality of resources, with both notable barriers but also positive qualities.

Safety. Youth in both groups and across Photovoice topic sessions (see Table 3 for distribution) mentioned an awareness of danger and threats to their safety; this theme occurred most prominently during the week when youth were photographing features of their communities that they would change. Youth were often afraid of car accidents, and this fear was often tied to the poor road conditions in their neighborhoods. One participant shared a photograph of her own car after an accident, citing it as a turning point in her life after which she became more appreciative. Other youth were fearful that they would lose loved ones due to substance-impaired drivers. One participant also touched on the theme of safety when she noted that she chose a photograph of her street—rather than her building—because she was unsure whether it was safe to share an identifiable photograph of her home with the group. Safety was also a theme when youth were discussing their neighborhoods. One participant shared a photograph of her family dog (during the "Favorite People" Photovoice topic session), saying that he was her family's protector; the family purchased a pit bull specifically because they lived in an unsafe neighborhood. This same participant later mentioned safety when she was describing walking in her neighborhood:

> *They just leave this dirty, messy looking lot. They took down the fence, so now when I walk to the store from my mom's house, I don't feel safe. Just because of the fence. When I walked back there…I know there isn't anybody coming from this side because of the fence right there….So, I keep my eye on this side. Now, I'm kind of like, I'd rather walk in the street now.* –P4

Similarly, youth photographed the "Eye on the Sky" police camera that was intended to reduce crime in their neighborhoods. Overall, other than minor traffic violations, youth were skeptical

that it reduced crime. They also emphasized that these safety measures were concentrated in the economically-disadvantaged areas of Toledo. Collectively, these findings suggest that youth are aware of their own mortality and are attuned to dangers to their safety. On a positive note, multiple youth mentioned that YOP was such a supportive environment because it was one where they felt physically and emotionally safe to grow.

Social Roles

In addition to themes of adolescence and setting factors, participants' photographs also depicted the social aspects of their lives, including their relationships with children, their experiences with ageism, racism, and classism, and the different people who comprise their social communities. These themes are captured in three codes: Social Communities, Facing Oppression, and Children.

Social Communities. Both groups' photographs depicted their social roles and the people who comprise their varied social communities. This theme occurred approximately equally across groups and Photovoice topic sessions (see Table 3 for distribution); it was least prominent during the Photovoice topic session about what participants would like to see changed. Many youth photographed an adult family member (mother, stepfather, aunt, grandparent) who played a prominent role in their lives. Youth also commonly photographed siblings and nieces/nephews, citing them as people with whom they spend a majority of their time. Youth described varying levels of social involvement, but most youth photographed at least one family member with whom they spent substantial time, suggesting that for many participants, families fill the need for social communities. Youth who had their own children also identified that their children comprise an important part of their social experience, and that their social communities changed and adapted when they became parents. Three youth photographed

an important peer, two of whom participants knew from school and one of whom the participant met through YOP. Although most participants did not bring pictures of their peers, multiple participants found it difficult to get signed parental consent forms to photograph people. Therefore, it is possible that peers are underrepresented in this theme simply because participants were unable to take their photographs.

Multiple youth shared photographs from YOP and emphasized how YOP fills an important role in their lives, primarily through the caring staff and prosocial peers. When sharing a picture during the "Favorite Places" topic, one participant explained:

> *If you need help with homework and stuff, then they'll help you here. There's a lot of friendly people here….When I first started coming here, everybody was so friendly to me, opening up. It's like a family here for real. So, if you need somebody, I mean something, you just got to ask somebody then they go help you. It's social and stuff.* –P6

Several other participants echoed the sentiment, and most used the word 'family' to describe the social environment of the YOP office. Although this perspective may simply represent selection bias, it nonetheless illustrates the multiple important roles that community programs can fill for adolescents.

The positive sentiments about YOP stood in contrast to some of the other social settings that participants described. For some youth, their social settings lacked cohesion. For instance, when sharing a photograph and explaining why she only enjoys her street in the morning, one participant said:

> *It's loud. You could be deaf and you'd know it's loud. There's a lot of people. I wouldn't so much say that they're rude, but they wouldn't be the type of people that you'd want to talk to. And it's very messy because there's a lot of kids. Chips, bags, garbage, everything until the morning, and then that's when it gets clean.* –P5

Participants also felt that fast food restaurants—which they considered their primary opportunity for current employment—and their schools lacked social cohesion. When sharing their

experiences in these spaces, one participant used the word "disrespect," which others felt was a concise description of the atmosphere. However, youth occasionally shared photographs of specific classrooms and described them positively, suggesting that some spaces in schools successfully foster a sense of belonging and cohesion among peers.

Facing Oppression. The younger group of participants (see Table 3 for distribution), shared photographs that depicted various forms of oppression that they face in their lives. This theme occurred most prominently during the Photovoice topic session when they were documenting things they would change if they were given a magic wand. Although this theme did not occur across both groups or across all Photovoice topic sessions, the decision was made to retain this theme as half of the participants described oppression as a common experience that shapes how they interact with their physical and social environment. This theme was often tied to the Catalysts theme, as participants drew on their experiences of discrimination as motivation to enact change.

Youth in Group 2, all of whom identified as Black or multiracial, most prominently identified racism as an oppressive force that they encountered. One participant shared a photograph of a police car to illustrate her fears of police brutality. Another participant photographed an abstract drawing that she created to depict racism; she often encountered racism when she was in public with a White partner. Another participant was called derogatory names by a friend's grandparents. Yet another participant, a young black male, feared for his safety. Other youth were often mislabeled due to their light skin tones, and they were most often not believed when they tried to identify as Black rather than "mixed." Participants connected the current political climate with their increased experiences of racism, and they discussed feeling

both driven to enact change and feeling overwhelmed by the scope of the problem. One participant summarized the inescapable nature of oppression:

> *Every day you hear it on the radio. You hear it on TV, in music. It's just an image that's being put out for everybody living it every day. And just, speaking it, and just unconsciously, in their subconscious, it's taking it in....It's like, to me, being put out in our homes or around our friends.* –P9

Although less prominent than racism, youth also felt that their opinions and experiences were dismissed due to classism and ageism. Participants shared photographs of their homes and neighborhoods, and they felt that they were judged by the appearance of their apartment buildings. One participant shared:

> *My family will be like "oh no," just because of the way it looks. When you step into my house, you wouldn't even think I lived there, but it's just the simple fact that you have to walk in that environment to get to my house. They just don't like it.* –P5

Another participant shared a photograph of her street and echoed that the scenery in her neighborhood was "basic" and that it did not reflect the middle-class ideal that she saw on television. Participants also shared photographs of school buildings and noted that, due to living in economically-distressed neighborhoods, they did not get an adequate education and were unprepared for the academic demands of high school. Lastly, participants occasionally mentioned that they felt that they were dismissed for being young. However, they simultaneously felt that their youth made them optimistic about the future—they were part of a new generation that largely believes in social justice.

Children. As four of the nine participants were parents, and other participants helped raised partners' children or younger family members, the theme of children emerged across groups and across Photovoice topic sessions (see Table 3 for distribution). Most participants photographed children, and for all participants, children were a positive force that shaped their social roles. Participants look to children for motivation to make responsible decisions and to

create positive change. Parents in the group shared pictures depicting several ways that their lives changed when they had children, such as changing their spending habits and where/how they spend their time. Parents also are now more attuned to child-friendly places (e.g., restaurants), and feel that community resources that provide childcare (such as the YMCA) are essential. Participants also described that their attitudes changed when they had children. While sharing a photograph of her own mother, one participant shared how their relationship transformed from strained to appreciative when she had her first child. Several parents felt an increased sense of gratitude when they had their children. Similarly, while showing pictures of their own children, several parents felt a strong sense of pride about their children. As one participant shared when describing a picture of his son:

> *I'm proud of my son, so far, even though he's only 1. Then again, with my little cousin and my little sister, I'm proud of both of them too. Even though they've still got their whole life ahead of them—including me, but my life is half way over—they've still got time to make mistakes, learn from them. I mean, they're still young. I feel like they're important, out of anybody else to me, for real.* –P3

Although parents were primarily describing their own children, other participants shared pictures of children that had a positive, meaningful impact on their lives. Multiple participants were particularly close to nieces and nephews because they had been able to watch them grow since birth. Youth felt that they had meaningful lessons to share with their younger family members. Additionally, youth emphasized that the relationship was bidirectional—they felt that their lives were enriched by children, especially because they cherished children's unconditional love.

Program Evaluation Interviews

All nine participants participated in an individual interview to evaluate the impact of the program. All participant interviews evaluating the Photovoice project were transcribed verbatim and entered into ATLAS.ti, where they were examined and coded using content analysis (Miles

et al., 2014). Codes were derived from common topics that emerged while reviewing interviews, and a coding manual was developed. Six themes emerged during individual interviews and were applied to 233 coded utterances. See Table 4 for coding categories, operational definitions, and exemplar quotes from interviews. See Table 5 for the distribution of codes. To establish interrater reliability, an independent rater was trained on the coding scheme and asked to classify a subset of quotes into existing codes. The second coder was given 10% (n = 23) of quotes at once, and quotes were selected using an online random number generator. After two rounds of coding and comparison, raters established substantial agreement (κ = .77).

When discussing the Photovoice project during individual interviews, youth shared how they accommodated the demands of the project ("Making Space for Photovoice") and their willingness to engage in a new and unfamiliar experience ("Openness to Experience"). Youth also described their experiences of sharing their artwork in both group discussions and with the public ("Sharing"), and what it was like for them to learn about others' photographs ("Expanding Perspectives"). Lastly, participants noted a sense of accomplishment and increased feelings that they could enact change ("Efficacy") and an affinity for photography ("Visual Arts").

Making Space for Photovoice. In individual interviews, participants discussed their motivations to join the project, their overall experiences, and their process of accommodating the Photovoice tasks. Participants were generally unsure of what to expect when they agreed to be part of the project. Participants explained that they joined because they enjoy photography, felt special to be invited, and wanted to be able to help somebody. All youth enjoyed participating. Some participants, particularly those with young children, felt that the most challenging aspect of participating was making the time to take photographs; however, they also noted that these aspects were manageable. When asked about challenges, one mother shared:

> *Just finding the time to actually go take the pictures….just finding the transportation and the time to get there. But yeah, it wasn't that bad. It wasn't that difficult. Just, you know, dragging a cranky 2-year-old with you.* –P4

Some youth were also challenged by time constraints. Some participants noted that if the program were longer, they would have liked to take pictures of more places and people and taken higher quality pictures. Other challenges included taking pictures in the wintery weather, choosing subjects, and arranging transportation to locations. Despite these challenges, youth were able to accommodate the project tasks and said that the challenges did not detract from the overall experience.

Openness to Experience. During individual interviews, participants discussed a willingness to try new experiences, their hesitations, and their feelings of vulnerability. Youth generally were unsure what to expect from the project, but that they were initially hesitant to share personal pictures and stories in group discussions. However, youth explained that, due primarily to others' openness, they quickly became comfortable and trusting. One participant also commented that holding group discussions at the YOP office, rather than a public location, facilitated a trusting atmosphere where youth were willing to be open and fully participate. One participant prided herself on being open, saying:

> *I like to be challenged with different things. I like to do different things… It's kind of like testing the waters with something new. I might actually like that. I might want to get into that—that might be my minor in college, photography….I'm all for trying things at least once. That's the kind of attitude I try to walk into things with, just try one thing. —P4*

Overall, although they were unsure what to expect when beginning the project, participants were glad that they were open and willing to participate, as they all enjoyed the experience.

Sharing. During individual interviews, youth described their experiences of visually and verbally communicating their own ideas and experiences with both other group members and with the public. When asked about group discussions, youth felt that the process of sharing

personal experiences with peers was unusual and had the potential to be challenging. However, they were willing to be vulnerable and share their experiences because others in the group were also willing to do so. Participants often felt that sharing left them vulnerable because they were unsure how others were going to interpret their images and stories. One participant explained that the experience of sharing challenged him to communicate clearly:

> *Once you take a picture, you already know the reason you took the picture, how it makes you feel, and stuff like that. But, then when it comes down to talking about it or writing about it, you'd be lost for words. Do I want to put this? Do I want to add that? Do I want to take this out or put that in? –P3*

Other participants found it initially challenging to share because they viewed themselves as shy, quiet or "closed" people. However, even when it was challenging, all participants found it rewarding to share in group discussions. One particularly quiet participant noted that she would like to see the program last longer (she proposed for an entire semester), as it would allow her to share more of her experiences with her peers. One participant (P7) succinctly summarized his experience of sharing in the group discussions, "*I found my point of view about stuff and how I would express it, or express other things."* Collectively, youth felt that they benefited from being able to share with a group, as it challenged them to be vulnerable and to communicate clearly across multiple modalities.

Youth were also individually asked to share their experiences of showing and discussing their art with strangers, often adults, during the public display. Their responses were similar to their experiences of the group discussions in that it was initially challenging but became easier as they became more accustomed to the task. One participant felt that sharing his pictures at the display was different than in the group discussions because he was optimistic that the audience may be able to help him enact his proposed changes in different ways. Multiple participants enjoyed being able to share and discuss their work. One participant was surprised to find a sense

of pride when sharing her photographs with others at the display. She explained her motivation for sharing in spite of her fear of public speaking:

> *I would have a chance to get my voice heard so that other people could learn from what me and the other people that were involved had to say about the things that we wanted to show them and just things that we liked. Our ideas of how we could make a difference in our own community. –P2*

Another participant was particularly pleased to see that the local newspaper, the Toledo Blade, was reporting on the event, as she hoped that increased visibility would help to expand the potential impact of the display. Overall, youth experienced varying levels of difficulty sharing with strangers, but all participants ultimately enjoyed being able to discuss their ideas and art with different community members.

Expanding Perspectives. In individual interviews, youth discussed their exposure to others' perspectives, ideas, and experiences. Overall, all youth enjoyed being able to learn more about their peers' lives. For many participants, they found that their peers' experiences were similar to their own. Despite similar experiences, many participants also were exposed to new ideas. As one participant mused,

> *"You never even think about half of this stuff until somebody puts in on your mind…Just to see other people's conditions, that's the big way it impacts you because you don't really know what's going on with other people. So, different things are show to you that you didn't know…You never really think about that type of stuff until it's in your face. Everybody's different points of view and stuff, you can learn from that. Once you learn somebody else's point of view, take it from their perspective, you view it differently."* –P7

Many participants echoed the sentiment, as thinking about the assignments and hearing about others' photographs made them consider issues and solutions in a new light. Almost all participants emphasized how learning about others' experiences helped them to connect to their peers by appreciating that they often shared challenges and joys.

In addition to being exposed to others' experiences, multiple youth felt that after participating, they were more observant and more often thought about being able to affect change. One participant shared:

> "*I felt like I just stopped and looked the neighborhood a little more, tried to evaluate it and whatnot, tried to figure out was going on in the neighborhood, what could you point out, what was some of the flaws that you might have overlooked before."*—P4

Multiple participants noted that the photographic assignments required them to interact with their neighborhood in new ways.

Efficacy. During individual interviews, participants discussed accomplishment, self-reflections, and sense of agency. For many participants, this theme manifested as personal growth—things that were hard at the beginning of project became easier through practice. Often, youth initially found it difficult to share their experiences in both group discussions and with the public, but they became more comfortable speaking in front of others the more that they engaged. Many participants' growth went even further as they felt proud of what they had accomplished. Participants were most often proud when they were reflecting on the public display of their photographs.

In addition to gaining skills, multiple participants gained a sense of gratitude and appreciation. One participant learned that he wanted to help people and that he could enact change. Similarly, many youth felt driven and able to make small changes in their communities. As one participant summarized,

> "*You're giving your neighborhood a voice…. I'm 19 years old. Who's going to listen to me? I'm still just a kid basically, So, things like this, and then having the Blade and everybody there taking pictures and taking statements, it was really nice. It was kind of like just giving ourselves a voice for our neighborhood."* –P4

Another participant echoed the sentiment, saying,

> "*I think more than anything I learned that even just small things that I can do have a big impact on the community because I really want to be able to eventually do things to help out other young, single moms in the community."* –P2

Broadly, youth began to consider that their small actions, including simply being courageous enough to share their stories with others, could enact change.

Visual Arts. Lastly, throughout the individual interviews, youth discussed their experiences using visual art. For many participants, the opportunity to take photographs was an appealing aspect of the program that motivated them to join the project. Many youth self-identified as artists, often in other forms of visual art such as drawing or painting, and felt that the project would allow them to expand their talents. Other youth simply enjoyed taking photographs, and they therefore found this aspect of the project especially enjoyable. Some participants who were less comfortable taking photographs explained that they felt that they may have been able to express more through visual arts if the project had lasted longer and if there had been more weeks of group discussion. Interestingly, multiple participants also noted the potential expressive power of visual arts when they were recalling how multiple people took photos of murals and art around the city. Youth felt that these murals (and photographs of them) were an effective means of sparking a conversation. Some youth felt that the ambiguity of visual art helped make it more powerful, while others felt that it made their art open to misinterpretation, which in turn made them feel vulnerable. Overall, the majority of participants were drawn to the artistic nature of the project, and they further enjoyed using imagery to share their experiences.

CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION

Photovoice Sessions

During the Photovoice sessions, participants shared photographs and discussed many different features of their experiences, including social and environmental aspects of their neighborhood and aspects of adolescent developmental processes. Youth's photographs and discussions highlighted important ways in which their neighborhoods function as social spaces and influence their access to institutional resources. Their photographs and discussions displayed the complex ways in which their perceptions of their environment impact how they interact with it. Additionally, developmental differences emerged between younger and older participants, many of whom had children of their own.

Social Spaces and Resources. Collectively, results align with much of the previous literature that suggests that neighborhoods function as social spaces. For decades, researchers have posited that socialization is a key factor linking neighborhood effects to individual outcomes (Browning & Soller, 2014; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Throughout multiple themes, youth's photographs and discussions depicted how their neighborhoods function as social spaces. Youth illustrated that even when focusing on tangible resources, such as schools, their primary interactions are social. For instance, participants' critiques of schools were tied to social themes, such as the Mentors and Role Models theme, where youth depicted a lack of caring adults who were invested in their academic success. This finding aligns with existing literature that suggests that access to caring, prosocial adults can serve as a protective factor for adolescents (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Hurd et al., 2009). As one younger participant noted when sharing a picture of a "gizmo," tangible resources did not compensate for social deficiencies inherent in overcrowded classrooms. Instead, he felt that

"gizmos" exacerbated his challenges by reducing opportunities to form meaningful connections with adults. In other words, adding expensive technology did not enhance youth's education because it made it increasingly challenging to form relationships with teachers. Increasing quality of and access to tangible resources was not sufficient to create meaningful educational experiences. Instead, consistent with previous literature, results indicated that having access to positive role models, particularly adults, was especially important in creating positive outcomes for individual youth in a high-risk neighborhood (Dubow et al., 1997; Hurd et al., 2009; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

When discussing neighborhood assets, youth most often identified places with an emotional connection based largely on a history of social connections. For example, within the Place Attachment theme, participants photographed places such as parks and coffee shops that were special *because* they visited with their families. To use Browning and Soller's (2014) terminology, youth's social connections strongly influenced their activity spaces, and the other actors in their ecological networks were primarily family members. In some instances, youth only used certain resources because of their social nature, and in other instances, participants' experiences were enhanced by spaces that provided safe places in which to share time with peers or family members. Notably, for nearly all participants, family members primarily filled varied social roles. Youth spent significant time with adult family members, siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, and their own children. Participants with their own children noted that they use their neighborhood spaces differently since having children. For instance, they now choose shops or restaurants that are both cost effective and family friendly. Therefore, consistent with Browning and Soller (2014), both social ties and access to resources affected how youth interact with their neighborhood spaces.

All participants depicted YOP as an especially important place. Youth discussed how YOP provided a safe space in which they felt valued by both adults and peers. They shared that they felt that community members at YOP truly cared about their experiences and success, and that these relationships inspired them to work hard and make positive choices. Although it is certainly possible that these results simply reflect a sampling bias, participants nonetheless conveyed the importance of having community resources that fostered meaningful social connections with caring adults and peers. Prior research suggests that having access to prosocial adult role models are especially important in high-risk urban environments (Hurd et al., 2009). Further, youth's perceptions of YOP align with many of the characteristics that Eccles and Gootman (2002) identified as universal indicators of success across positive youth development (PYD) programs. The authors posit that regardless of setting, programs that successfully promote PYD help youth feel valued and respected, form social connections, develop a sense of self-efficacy, and meet youth's physical and emotional needs. Four participants photographed YOP and shared that it was one of their favorite places because they felt respected and valued, and they noted that this quality was often difficult for them to find elsewhere. Lastly, Eccles and Gootman (2002) also noted that a positive sense of attachment to social institutions enhanced youth programming outcomes; participants, even those who were initially required to attend programming, frequently and emphatically demonstrated a positive attachment to YOP.

Although youth highlighted positive community resources, youth also emphasized the discrepancies that they saw between their neighborhoods and wealthier neighborhoods. Youth are both directly and indirectly affected by the quality of and access to institutional resources, such as jobs, transportation, schools, and police presence (Browning & Soller, 2014). Frank (2006) further notes that youth's interactions with neighborhood resources differs from adults, as

youth are often excluded from the planning process; as a result, she argues, youth are socially isolated and feel alienated from communities. One younger participant shared a photograph of a bus, sparking a discussion about how the design of the city created a reliance on transportation and left them dependent on unreliable public transit systems. Another participant photographed potholes in the street, sparking a discussion about how the poor maintenance of roads in the inner-city contributes to unsafe driving conditions and also stands in stark contrast to road conditions in wealthier suburbs. Notably, four youth were not yet old enough to drive or pay taxes, yet even younger participants commented on how institutional resources, such as road conditions, varied by tax district. Youth also commented on differences in quality of schools, sense of security, and policing. Participants' photographs underscored that adolescents are aware of issues pertaining to both personal safety and maintenance (Gearin & Kahle, 2006), and that Photovoice may be used to understand residents' perceptions of the built and social environment (Nykiforuk, Vallianatos, & Nieuwendyk, 2011). Collectively, participants' photographs and discussions illustrated how the quality of and access to institutional resources is tied to their neighborhood and socioeconomic status. Overwhelmingly, the neighborhood resources that youth photographed were viewed as areas that needed to be addressed.

Half of participants also documented instances of systemic social injustice that serve as a barrier to accessing resources. Many Black or biracial youth noted that racism impacts their relationships with police, peers, adults, family members, and neighbors. An older participant noted that she encounters racism when in public with a White boyfriend, and that she often considers how it will impact her young son. Additionally, two participants also noted that they feel limited by their age, as they feel that their opinions and experiences are sometimes dismissed due to their youth. Participants in both discussion groups mentioned that their socioeconomic

status dictated which community resources they accessed. Although younger participants noted multiple structural social barriers that they encounter daily, they also emphasized how these barriers motivate them to create positive change for themselves and for future generations. These findings align with existing research that also suggests that youth can use negative perceptions of systemic injustice to drive a desire to enact positive change (Messias et al., 2008). Youth voiced a sense of optimism about the future, particularly since they believed that most of their peers shared their drive to create a more accepting environment. Although Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) proposed that seeing signs of disorder would reinforce residents' stereotypes and discourage them from bettering their neighborhoods, participants largely stated the opposite. Seeing everything from litter to systemic injustice inspired youth to work to solve problems and to improve multiple aspects of their world.

Overall, youth's photographs and discussions in the present study illustrate the dynamic and varied ways in which youth interact with their neighborhoods. The varied nature of present results aligns well with Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory, which argues that youth interact within several different systems, including families, peers, schools, and neighborhoods. Youth photographed their friends, children, parents, extended family, classrooms, streets, and homes. Further, consistent with Browning and Soller's (2014) work, youth's photographs depicted how their social ties are closely related to their use of neighborhood spaces and resources. For instance, one participant photographed a public basketball court where he was able to meet new people and spend time with his friends. Four different participants shared pictures from YOP, and all discussed how they valued the space because the people involved made them feel safe and valued. These are just two examples of how youth described how they used their use of these neighborhood places intersected with

specific people, and how these spaces helped them fill different social roles. Browning and Soller (2014) argue that exposure to organizations and settings within youth's routine activity spaces is a key way in which neighborhoods influence youth outcomes. Programs such as the YOP can promote a sense of physical and emotional safety, foster prosocial relationships with peers and adults, and encourage youth to develop and practice skills. Results of the present study align with their assertion that youth's social ties strongly influence their use of neighborhood spaces, and, more specifically, discussions of YOP illustrate ways in which prosocial neighborhood organizations can promote positive youth outcomes.

Present results also support prior assertions that even risky neighborhoods can contain protective factors promoting resilience among young residents (Dubow et al., 1997), and depicted how individual and systemic factors influence how youth interact with their environments. Photographs highlighted the varied quality of neighborhood resources—several photographs focused on deficits, and simultaneously, several others depicted positive aspects to be found even within taxed resources. Youth, particularly in the younger group, discussed their experiences of classism, racism, and ageism, and described how systemic oppression affected their neighborhood interactions. One participant shared that she does not bring friends to her home because she is embarrassed by the appearance of her building. Deficit models of youth development would likely focus on how her socioeconomic status places her at higher risk for negative outcomes (e.g., Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; South et al., 2005). However, that same participant also photographed facets of her experiences that promoted positive development; she shared pictures of a supportive brother who helped her feel understood and a niece who motivated her to be a role model. The contrasts in her photographs illustrated an awareness of systems larger than herself and a desire to contribute to social well-being, both of

which are key aspects to positive youth development and thriving (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003).

Developmental Differences. Although unintentional, Photovoice groups comprised different age participants that in turn reflected different stages of adolescent development. Group 1 comprised older youth, three of whom had at least one of their own children, and one of whom was helping raise a partner's child. Most members in group 1 no longer attended high school as they had either graduated or dropped out. Conversely, with only one exception, participants in Photovoice group 2 were generally younger high school students who did not yet have their own children. Notably, the older parent in group 2 described experiences that aligned more closely with those of the other group. As a result of different developmental stages, group differences emerged between the older and younger participants.

Collectively, the group differences among the younger and older groups reflect the different developmental stages that participants encountered between early and late adolescence. Broadly, during adolescence, individuals move from childhood towards adulthood while undergoing rapid physical changes, developing increased abilities to think abstractly, address increasingly complex problems, and navigate a changing social landscape (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner et al., 2003; Ozer, 2017). Eccles and Gootman (2002) note that given the massive social changes over the past few decades, adolescence now varies widely across settings, and youth are faced with numerous choices and opportunities that can shape their future in many ways, and that the challenges of adolescence are amplified among poor and minority youth. Results of the present study suggest that older participants were working to become more self-sufficient and to acquire employment-related skills in order to provide for others, while younger

participants were navigating issues such as identity development and developing individual values.

Compared to younger participants, older participants talked more about their experiences of having children. Although parents noted concrete ways that having children changed their social circles and which qualities they valued in resources, they primarily discussed how they felt that the birth of their children was a turning point in their lives that spurred personal growth. Therefore, for older participants, photographs and discussions of their children co-occurred often with the themes of Resources and Growth and Development. Notably, viewing early motherhood as a negative outcome is a largely middle and upper class viewpoint (Edin & Kefalas, 2011), and the discussion of children largely presumed parenthood, even in adolescence, to be a positive life event. By sharing photographs of their children with positive descriptions, young parents are challenging the deficit-focused, adult-driven narrative and encouraging a paradigm shift in which risk-taking can also be viewed as a critical aspect of adolescent identity development (Messias et al., 2008). Further, parents' depictions of how they have adapted to new demands also illustrate plasticity, which Lerner and colleagues (2003) argue is a critical feature of positive youth development. Youth are sharing their own perspectives on parenthood, and their photographs and discussions depict that although they view parenthood as challenging, they also have gained flexibility, maturity, and love. Although two younger participants also described a close personal relationship with young children, they did not describe the changes in social circles or growth in the same manner as the four older participants. Overall, the significance of children differed between younger and older group members and represented a difference in developmental stages.

Conversely, the Identity and Expression theme was most represented among the younger group. Compared to older participants, younger participants were more likely to photograph and discuss issues that pertained to developing their own identity. For instance, two young participants photographed art and discussed how they felt art was an important form of self-expression that subsequently helped them both develop a sense of identify and share it with important others. Notably, youth's drive to use their art to shape public discourse fits well with Lerner and colleagues' assertion that "adaptive developmental regulation involves mutually beneficial and sustaining changes between individuals and contexts" (Lerner et al., 2003; p. 174). Younger participants expressed a desire to both learn from and contribute to their cultural narratives. Further, among younger participants, the Growth and Development theme was prominently tied to future goals and attaining independence, rather than being tied to entering parenthood. For example, younger members of Group 2 discussed growth through their goals of graduating high school, attending college, and moving out independently. These goals aligned closely with those noted in Sirin and colleagues' (2004) research on urban adolescents. Although older participants shared some of these same goals, they were more likely to discuss goals related to raising their children; older participants were less likely to discuss issues of self-expression. When the Identity and Expression theme occurred in the older group, it was often tied to hobbies or ways that youth overcame challenges, rather than tied to discovering and fostering one's individuality. Overall, compared to older participants, younger participants more often shared experiences related to shaping and sharing identity.

Lastly, younger and older participants discussed different systemic and social barriers that they faced. The older group discussed how having children influenced their use of resources, while the younger group discussed how racism and systemic injustice worked to oppress

minorities. Older participants often raised issues such as transportation and finances as their primary challenges. Although the younger participants also shared photographs and discussed barriers such as transportation, they were more likely to discuss abstract, systemic barriers. The Facing Oppression theme only appeared in Group 2, and it illustrated the nature of many systemic barriers that youth face daily. Additionally, the challenges that youth reported were consistent with those reported in other studies. For instance, youth photographed and discussed the impact of substandard housing and substance abuse, which Dubow and colleagues (1997) identified as chronic neighborhood stressors that directly affect youth. Similarly, Valaitis (2002) discussed how youth felt that adults mistrusted them and that adults dismissed and undervalued their experiences. Similarly, Messias and colleagues (2008) also found that youth felt that adults perceived them negatively. In response, youth were driven to counter this negative image and actively worked to convey their prosocial, civic engagement (Messias et al., 2008). Youth in the present study responded similarly--their encounters with oppression were often tied to their desire to enact positive change and address the injustice that they saw in the world. In the present study, these findings were only present among the younger group, which stands somewhat in contrast to prior Photovoice studies which suggested that older youth were more likely than younger participants to show increased civic engagement after using Photovoice to examine systemic barriers (Gant et al., 2009). Although the older group very likely encounters the same challenges, in the current study, older youth were less likely than younger participants to express encounters with structural injustice and to consequently act to change those systems.

Research Participation

During the individual interviews assessing the process of participating in research, youth shared their experiences of the Photovoice process. When discussing the perceived benefits of

the projects, participants most prominently noted how they felt that the project benefited them individually. Consistent with hypotheses, results indicated that youth noted numerous individual benefits that included increased environmental awareness, socialization, and communication. Lastly, youth discussed challenges that they encountered and changes that they would suggest.

Benefits to Youth. Consistent with prior studies using Photovoice with youth (e.g., Findholt et al., 2011; Necheles et al., 2007), participants in the present study reported that they felt that they paid more attention to their surroundings after taking photographs of their neighborhood. In the Expanding Perspectives theme, youth reported that when given specific prompts for photographs, they were required to consider and interact with their neighborhood in novel ways. Many participants noted that because they were asked to share their experiences, they noticed aspects of their environment that they had not previously considered. Additionally, multiple participants stated that they considered their own neighborhood differently after viewing and hearing about others' neighborhoods. Further, youth also reported that they considered new ways that they may be able to enact changes in their neighborhood after participating in the Photovoice sessions. These findings align with Frank's (2006) conclusion that participating in research helps youth learn about their community and with Santo and colleagues' (2010) finding that participating in Photovoice can increase civic engagement among youth. In the Efficacy theme, participants shared that after engaging in the project, they were more confident that small changes could positively affect their neighborhood. These results echo those found by Findholdt and colleagues (2011), who noted that youth engaged in Photovoice felt a sense of ownership over outcomes. Some participants (particularly younger ones) in the study noted that they learned more about how abstract and complex issues, such as taxes, that affect their neighborhood in concrete ways that they were able to observe. These findings align

with those of Chonody and colleagues (2013), who found that Photovoice helped youth understand their neighborhoods with more complexity. Overall, results of the present study are consistent with those of prior studies using a Photovoice intervention with youth, and they support the hypothesis that youth would demonstrate an increased awareness of neighborhood surroundings and a systemic view of neighborhood issues.

Youth also reported that as a result of participating, they felt that they were able to communicate their experiences to their peers and other people, many of whom they did not know prior to the project. Youth underscored Calsson's (2001) assertion that photography allowed them to represent their complex realities in creative and accessible ways, and that their pictures enhanced their emotional expression. Youth shared that they felt closer to their peers as a result of both hearing about peers' experiences and being able to communicate their own. The Expanding Perspectives theme captures youth's experiences of learning more about others, and aligned with prior findings that photography provides a valuable pedagogical tool that can foster engaged learning (Chio & Fandt, 2007). Additionally, nearly all participants discussed how they enjoyed being creatively challenged to represent their neighborhood and views, which was primarily captured in the Sharing and Visual Arts themes. The findings that youth were both challenged to creatively and effectively communicate their own experiences while also being open to learning about others' experiences were consistent with existing literature. Others have also found that photography was especially engaging for young people (Dennis et al., 2009) and have underscored how the use of visual arts allowed youth to express themselves creatively (Chonody et al., 2013).

Youth also noted that they enjoyed sharing their pictures both in group discussions and during the public display, as they felt it allowed them to communicate their ideas to a wider

audience, and they were optimistic that others may be able to help enact youth's goals. Overall, these results reflect those of a substantial number of studies that suggested that Photovoice allows marginalized groups a creative and effective way to communicate with an audience that they otherwise may not be able to reach (Kramer et al., 2010; Palibroda et al., 2009; Walton et al., 2012; Wang et al., 1998). Collectively, results of the current study also support hypotheses that after participating in the project, youth would be able to participate in a group discussion with peers about sensitive topics, appreciate that others have different and valuable experiences, and use photographs to communicate with others.

During individual interviews, participants described how they felt more efficacious after participating in the Photovoice process. Youth noted that even if they were initially hesitant or anxious, they were all able to share their art, speak to an audience of strangers, and felt that they were in a position to help enact positive change. Participants also described that they felt proud of their accomplishments. These findings are primarily encompassed in the Efficacy theme, but also appear in the Openness to Experience theme, as youth noted that they were willing to engage in actions that initially made them nervous. Frank (2006) noted that after participating in research that youth felt more confident and assertive. Santo and colleagues (2010) argued that an emergent sense of efficacy in youth can be especially beneficial to communities, as youth who are invested in their communities and feel empowered to enact change can improve sustainability of community initiatives and can provide long-term benefits as youth age and acquire more social and economic influence. Additionally, Ozer (2017) contends that promoting a sense of efficacy and agency can be especially important for systematically-disadvantaged youth as they learn to navigate structural barriers such as racism, sexism, and classism; results of the Photovoice project illustrated that participants encounter these structural barriers. In conclusion,

results indicate that after participating, youth reported an increased sense of agency and efficacy, which could benefit both individual participants and their communities.

Challenges. During individual interviews, youth shared both challenges and suggestions for improving the Photovoice project experience. Participants most often mentioned that obtaining consent forms to photograph identifiable others was a primary challenge that limited how they were able to represent their social communities. Youth described how they had difficulty obtaining consent to photograph both adults and peers, and that as a result, they were either required to find creative ways to obscure identity or they simply photographed somebody else. Youth also noted that they were sometimes limited because they did not always have their iPods available. Participants generally dealt with this challenge by using their cellular phones to take photographs instead. Both of these issues have been noted by other Photovoice researchers (Rudkin & Davis, 2007). It is possible that increased technology may be able to minimize these concerns. For instance, electronic consent forms that could be instantly available on a phone or iPod may facilitate participants getting signed consent forms. Additionally, it may help to devote more time during orientation to training youth in how to approach others, explain the project, and ask for consent; although some time was devoted to this process, it is possible that emphasizing this aspect may help mitigate concerns. However, neither proposed solution would address others' hesitation to be photographed, and ultimately, if people did not consent to be the subject of a photograph, youth were given explicit instructions to respect their wishes. Participants offered other suggestions for improving their experience that included conducting the project in a warmer season, extending the weekly group discussions for an entire semester, and enabling more photographs to be displayed publicly.

Researcher Positionality and Power Sharing

Bias is inherent in all research. As a researcher and facilitator of the Photovoice sessions, an examination of my positionality to the project and its participants is particularly important. As an adult, middle-class, White female, I differed from participants developmentally, economically, racially, and culturally. I was raised knowing that I would have the privilege of continuing my education beyond high school and choosing a career without being geographically restricted by transportation. I was also raised with White privilege, which comes with innumerable benefits, such as the knowledge that the police will most likely protect me and that schools and employers will not discriminate based on my race, to name just a very few. My race, sex, age, and economic standing are all outwardly visible, and likely affected how participants interacted with me, both overtly and (likely) covertly. Less overtly obvious is my cultural background. I was raised in the Deep South and many of my most cherished moments occurred in rural areas, which were quite different than the neighborhoods that participants were photographing. I grew up in a household with two parents and having much of my extended family in walking distance meant that I was never lacking for social support. These experiences, among many others, inevitably shaped my values and also positioned me as a cultural outsider. For example, the foreignness of an urban setting influenced my understanding of participants' descriptions of their neighborhood. Occasionally, I intentionally drew attention to this position, such as when asking participants to explain their experiences of living in the neighborhood ("I didn't grow up here, can you tell me what that was like?"). However, it also served as another front on which I was separate from participants. Other prior experiences, such as having excellent non-parental role models, likely also contributed to my interpretation of participants' experiences.

Throughout the present study, I retained not only cultural and economic power but also much of the decision-making power. Wong and colleagues' (2010) introduced a pyramidal typology of youth participation in which power sharing ranges from one party (either adults or youth) completely controlling decisions to a pluralistic design in which both parties equally share control. In their typology, youth empowerment increases as you move from the base of the pyramid towards a pluralistic design. The present study could be best described as a "Symbolic" sharing of power. A symbolic sharing of power occurs in the middle rung of their pyramid—it is neither a completely equitable sharing of power nor a completely unilateral process.

As the researcher, I retained control of structural decisions about the study design. For instance, during the first session, I introduced the number of sessions, type/amount of incentives, and topics. These methodological choices were deliberate and facilitated both the scientific nature of the project and youth outcomes. Wong and colleagues (2010) argue that all parties contribute important knowledge to the research process. Additionally, as other authors have noted, institutional constraints commonly impose limitations to including youth in all aspects of the research process (Langhout & Thomas, 2010). The present study navigated financial and time constraints by having the researcher contribute expertise to the structure and design of the project and choosing to focus youth's contributions to implementation of the project. For instance, the researcher was able to obtain funding from institutions (i.e., a university and mini-grant) that youth would have been unable to access. By retaining power over the structural elements of the project, I contributed my expertise in research design, and in doing so, created a space in which youth were able to focus on their unique contributions (e.g., creative implementation).

Complementarily, youth were given decision-making power in the implementation of the project. For example, youth made decisions about the public display of photographs. Youth and community partners chose a date and location for the display. Youth made creative decisions for the display, such as how to print and display photographs, how to arrange the room, and where to hang photographs. These choices occurred within some predetermined constraints, but youth were able to contribute creatively throughout the process. Notably, as the researcher, I *gave* youth these decisions; power was within my control, and at my discretion, I chose to share it. Therefore, youth were given the space to share their voice, but as an adult with institutional power and goals, I retained structural control throughout the project. In doing so, the present study created a space for youth who might otherwise have been excluded from traditional research methodologies to share their experiences, which in and of itself can contest the traditional knowledge of "experts" (Cornwall, 2004). Youth creatively shared their subjective truths, which are a valuable source of knowledge (e.g., Walter, 2009), and rather than being the object of a study, were community members participating in their own inquiry (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008). Further, in line with the goals of action research, the present study aimed to create positive social change by collaboratively engaging youth who have a stake in the change (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008).

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The present study used Photovoice, a community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodology, with adolescents in an urban neighborhood in Toledo, Ohio. Additionally, the present study conducted a qualitative program evaluation, using semi-structured individual interviews to learn more about youth's experiences of participating in a research project. Photovoice enabled youth to share their experiences in a rich, detailed way that is often not

available in many quantitative designs. The use of open-ended topics, visual art, written expression, and group discussions provided youth the chance to share their experiences in numerous and varied ways. By incorporating photographs, youth were required to intentionally consider their environment and make creative choices to express their experiences. Further, not only did photography challenge participants to interact with their environment in novel ways, but it also allowed youth a visual alternative to verbal communication. Youth who may not have been comfortable or confident to verbally state their experiences were able to share their experiences in an accessible format.

As photography is a fairly ubiquitous format in today's society, participants likely felt at ease taking and sharing their pictures. Similarly, by combining both photography and group discussions, youth were able to explain their photographs and offer data that may have been otherwise unavailable (e.g., through a survey). By having youth discuss their photographs with their peers, Photovoice also enabled youth to hear others' perspectives in a manner that is not present in many other research designs. Equally importantly, youth were included in multiple phases of the research process, including collecting and analyzing data. In both the Photovoice portion and the individual interviews, participants were also given the chance to add anything that they felt was important for the interviewer to understand but was not captured in the structured design, allowing them to highlight what they believe are the most important aspects of their experience. These aspects of the methodology are all significant strengths to the study. Overall, Photovoice allowed youth to communicate their opinions of their neighborhood's strengths and weaknesses in a creative, accessible manner that yielded rich and detailed data.

Although the present study provided important insights about participants' views of their neighborhood, as always, limitations to the data should be acknowledged. The youth who

participated in the project were chosen because they were exemplary and were most likely to put forth effort to attend all group discussion sessions. YOP leaders intentionally offered the opportunity to participate to those youth who were consistent, reliable, responsible, and actively engaged in other YOP programming. Although results support that participating in Photovoice helped foster positive youth development, the selection process means that the current research is unable to conclude to what extent youth who are already connected to their community and committed to positive change are drawn to and self-select into such projects. Further, these results were largely obtained through the work of one institutional researcher. In some ways, having a single researcher was a strength of the study, as it allowed for rapport, consistency among interviews, and created a relationship with community members. However, it also excluded extensive collaboration with colleagues when analyzing data and allowed more room for the researcher to guide the creation, application, and interpretation of the coding scheme.

After conducting individual interviews with participants, and with the benefit of hindsight, minor design changes might have improved the present research. Devoting more time in the introductory phase to the actual process of photography may have improved the quality of some of the photographs, and past research has suggested that the actual process of framing a photograph requires youth to interact with their environment in novel ways (Dennis et al., 2009). Additionally, youth had difficulty keeping their iPod available and instead used their personal phones to take pictures, many of which had higher resolution than the provided iPods. The present study could have capitalized on youth's personal phones and instead allocated funds and incentives differently. For instance, the present study could have dedicated more funding to expanding the public display of photographs, as it may have had farther-reaching effects if more people were able to attend the final display. The event was announced locally, but it may have

been beneficial to announce the event in more ways and with a wider targeted audience (e.g., police officers, health care providers). Similarly, it may have been beneficial to hold multiple events in different locations to expand the audience.

Despite study limitations, the current study offers a rich view into the experiences of teenagers living in an urban neighborhood in Toledo, Ohio. Future research could consider various other innovative methods to engage youth in neighborhood needs assessments and could compare whether different methodologies yield different data. Additionally, youth in the present study emphatically expressed a desire to contribute to their neighborhood. Future research should further consider the impact of youth's prosocial community contributions. More detailed studies could examine how youth contributions impact individual youth development, adult perceptions of youth, and the broader environmental settings. Similarly, the present study identified ways that even brief engagement in research had a positive impact on youth development. Longitudinal studies could offer insight into whether youth participation in research projects contributes to sustainable individual and communal changes. Similarly, to maximize impact while operating within institutional constraints (e.g., time and money), future research could examine how certain elements to the Photovoice process, such as the number of sessions or size of groups, improve outcomes for youth or communities. Perhaps most importantly, in the spirit of community psychology, future research could also study the most effective and sustainable ways to engage community partners in long-term use of participatory research methodologies. Sharing the research process with community partners has the potential to create systemic change that extends far beyond the results of a single project.

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APPENDIX A. OUTLINE OF PHOTOVOICE SESSIONS

Session 1: Training and Introduction to Favorite Places

Goal: To introduce the group members and prepare youth researchers to engage in the research process

Objectives:

1. Obtain informed consent from youth researchers
2. Introduce group members to one another (ice breaker game)
3. Brainstorm/establish ground rules for meetings—what will make this a safe space where you feel comfortable sharing your opinions?
4. Introduce youth researchers to photovoice discussions
    a. Use SHOWED method to talk about existing images in order to illustrate what discussions of their pictures will look like
5. Discuss ethics of taking pictures
6. Introduce basics of photography and cover specifics of using iPods

Goal: Prime youth to think about their favorite places in their neighborhood

Assignment: Take 5 - 10 pictures that show us your favorite places. Write down any notes/thoughts you have while taking pictures. Choose your favorite 3 to discuss in the group discussion next week. Give these 3 pictures a title and write 3 - 5 sentences about what this picture means to you, why you took it, and why you chose to share it.

Session 2: Discuss Favorite Places, Introduce Favorite People

Goal: Use SHOWeD to discuss photos from prior week

Goal: Prime youth to focus on their relationships and reiterate consent for photographing people

Assignment: Take 5 - 10 pictures that show us your favorite people. Write down any notes/thoughts you have while taking pictures. Choose your favorite 3 to discuss in the group discussion next week. Give these 3 pictures a title and write 3 - 5 sentences about what this picture means to you, why you took it, and why you chose to share it. *Make sure you bring a signed release for all of the pictures that you choose to discuss.*

Session 3: Discuss Favorite People, Introduce Magic Wand

Goal: Use SHOWeD to discuss photos from prior week (Favorite People)

Goal: Prime youth to focus on things that they would like to change

Assignment: Imagine that you have a magic wand. Take 5 - 10 pictures that show us things you would change. Write down any notes/thoughts you have while taking pictures. Choose your favorite 3 to discuss in the group discussion next week. Give these 3 pictures a title and write 3-5 sentences about what this picture means to you, why you took it, and why you chose to share it.

Session 4: Discuss Magic Wand, Introduce What You Would Like to Show

Goal: Use SHOWeD to discuss photos from prior week (Magic Wand)

Goal: Prime youth to reflect on uncovered aspects of their experience

Assignment 1: Now that you have taken pictures of things that you like and things that you would change, show me anything else that I should know about your life. Take 5 - 10 pictures that show us anything you would like. Write down any notes/thoughts you have while taking pictures. Choose your favorite 3 to discuss in the group discussion next week. Give these three pictures a title and write 3-5 sentences about what this picture means to you, why you took it, and why you chose to share it.

Assignment 2: After taking all of your photographs, select your 2 favorite photos that you would like to share. Provide a title and short description of each of your chosen photos. Send me your final selection of photos and captions so that I may have them printed. Brainstorm who you would like to see your photos, and how we should show them.

Session 5: Analysis

Goal: Use SHOWeD to discuss photos from prior week (What You'd Like to Show)

Goal: Explore themes that occurred across weeks and begin planning for dissemination

Assignment 1: Participate in a short, private interview to tell me about what it was like to be a part of this project.

Assignment 2: Review your final 2 photographs and comments and make sure that I have a copy of them to print.

Session 6: Planning for Dissemination

Goal: Practical tasks to prepare for dissemination, including obtaining consent from participants to use/display their photos

APPENDIX B. OUTLINE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

It is important to understand what it was like for you to be a part of this project. Please be honest. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will **not** be shared with the other people in your group.

1. What was it like to participate in this project?
    - What was your favorite part?
    - What was your least favorite part?

2. Imagine you were telling a friend about this project. How would you describe what you did?
    - What parts of the project did you like the most?
    - What parts of the project did you not like doing?

3. What types of things have you learned about yourself by being part of this project?

4. What types of things have you learned about your neighborhood by being part of this project?

5. What was it like to talk about your photos with other photographers in the group?

6. What was it like to hear about others' photos?
    - What types of things did you learn from them?

7. What was it like to talk about your photos with adults?

8. What was it like to have your photos on display?

APPENDIX C. CATEGORIES CREATED BY INDEPENDENT CODER TO ASSESS DEPENDABILITY

Community Beautification [a, b]**:** These photos all propose strategies to improve the physical appearance of the community.

Adolescence [c]**:** This category encompasses beliefs and aspirations typical of adolescence, including the importance of school, focus on grades, college plans, and limitless future dreams.

Coping [d]**:** Each of these three photos involves something that allows the person to escape from their stress and achieve a sense of calm.

Important Children [e]**:** These are children who play an important role in the photographer's life, specifically providing joy.

Social Justice [f]**:** Each of these photos strives to reduce social injustices of unfairness and inequality. This includes racism, classism, and systems affected by these social inequalities such as policing and transportation.

Transportation reform [a, g]**:** These photos emphasize shortcomings of the current transportation system, including the danger of motor vehicles and the prohibitive cost of public transit.

Important places [h]**:** These photos each represent a location that plays an important role in the photographer's life. These places provide a safe place that provides a helpful, supportive, and calm environment.

Places/people that shaped them [i]**:** Each of these are role models or establishments that helped provide support and opportunities for the photographers to "shape" who they are and enable to photographer to reach their goals.

Peer support [j]**:** These are same-aged individuals who provide support. These are people who they report really understand and unconditionally support them.

Art [b, d]**:** Each of these pictures emphasizes the power of art to bring change. For example, the art provides calm, visual appeal, and motivation to each photographer.

Notes: Superscript letters denote similarities to original themes. [a] Resources, [b] Catalysts, [c] Growth and Development, [d] Identity and Expression, [e] Children, [f] Facing Oppression, [g] Safety, [h] Place Attachment, [i] Mentors and Role Models, [j] Social Communities

APPENDIX D. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

BGSU
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of Research Compliance

DATE:	October 18, 2017
TO:	Lindsey Roberts
FROM:	Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board
PROJECT TITLE:	[1062805-3] Youth Views of Neighborhood Needs: A Photovoice Collaboration
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Revision
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	October 17, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE:	September 17, 2018
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the IRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on September 17, 2018. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

APPENDIX E. TABLES

Table 1. *Demographic Information*

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Living Situation	Children	Education
P1	20	Male	Black	Grandparent	0	High School Diploma
P2	20	Female	White	Both Biological Parents	2	Some College
P3	20	Male	Black	Mother	1	11th Grade*
P4	19	Female	Black	Independent	1	Some College
P5	17	Female	Black/Hispanic	Mother	0	12th Grade
P6	16	Female	Black	Bio Parent & Stepparent	0	10th Grade
P7	16	Male	Black	Bio Parent & Stepparent	0	10th Grade
P8	17	Female	Black	Mother	0	12th Grade
P9	20	Female	Black	Independent	1	Some College

Notes. P2, P7, and P9 also live with their biological children. Group 1 = P1 – P4; Group 2 = P5 – P9.; Education = highest level of education attained; *participant is no longer enrolled in high school.

Table 2. *Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes from Group Discussions*

Theme	Definition	*N*	Image	Representative quote
Adolescence				
Identity & Expression	Types and benefits of self-expression; process of discovering or shaping individual identity; individual hobbies, interests, challenges, and ways of coping.	8/9	Fig. 1	"Art inspires me…because there's so many ways you can do it and so many ways you can express yourself." –P7
Growth & Development	Places and people that promote independence, autonomy, or growth; goals for the future; turning points in participants' lives.	7/9	Fig. 2	"I took advantage of a lot of things. I have grown to appreciate home more now that I've aged, especially with having kids." –P2
Mentors & Role Models	People who are past or current role models; includes the desire to have strong role models; *also includes lack of fulfilment.*	9/9	Fig. 3	"He helps me with stuff, even if he doesn't realize it. He gives advice that I think about, or says something that I think about." –P7
Catalysts	Drive to create positive change, including promoting social justice; factors and circumstances that spark and sustain participants' desire to enact positive change in their communities.	6/9	Fig. 4	"I feel sorry for all of them. But, we can feel sorry, but we don't have to be that way. We've got to make a change." –P9
Setting Factors				
Place Attachment	Places that participants value; places with an emotional connection; *also includes a lack of place attachment.*	7/9	Fig. 5	"My family is easily one of the most important things in my life, so I value the places that I get to spend a lot of time with them." –P2

Table 2 (Continued).

Resources	Descriptions of community resources, social comparison, accessing resources (convenience, barriers, etc.); may include transportation, housing, education, economic opportunities, etc.	9/9	Fig. 6	"I feel like this a good place to come to, to get interesting information or to be a part of something that will help me." –P3
Safety	Places and people that promote a sense of safety; dangers that participants face; participants' sense of their own mortality.	8/9	Fig. 7	"I would change cars because they're the number one killer in the world…. It's like the number one killer other than drugs, car accidents because of drugs. There's nothing you can do." –P5
Social Roles				
Social Communities	People that participants value; people that make participants feel accepted and cared about; includes family roles; *includes an absence of social communities.*	9/9	Fig. 8	"Those are my brothers and my cousin. That's about as big as my friend circle gets. I don't have high school friends." –P9
Facing Oppression	Systemic oppression due to race, age, gender, socioeconomic class, etc. *Note: often tied to "catalysts" code.*	5/9	Fig. 9	"If I had a wand, I would change police brutality. It's really harsh. They just take a piece of everybody's life." –P6
Children	Ways that children change participants' lives (both positive and negative); includes but is not limited to participants' own children.	7/9	Fig. 10	"My son is my favorite person. He loves me unconditionally. He doesn't see the wrong in the world yet." –P9

Table 3. *Distribution of Codes Across Groups and Topics*

Code	Group 1	Group 2	Favorite places	Favorite People	Magic Wand	Open Topic
Adolescence						
Identity & Expression	2	35	12	2	5	18
Growth & Development	10	19	5	2	1	21
Mentors & Role Models	7	19	0	18	6	2
Catalysts	5	19	1	2	13	8
Setting Factors						
Place Attachment	16	7	14	0	5	6
Resources	41	34	28	2	41	6
Safety	8	10	3	1	12	2
Social Roles						
Social Communities	29	26	19	21	5	11
Facing Oppression	0	27	2	0	25	0
Children	37	20	9	28	4	18

Table 4. *Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes from Individual Program Evaluation Interviews*

Theme	Definition	*N*	Representative quote
Making Space	What it was like to fit this project into everyday life; participants' overall experiences, including challenges and benefits; participants' motivations to participate.	9/9	"The only thing that was hard was just keeping up with everything, with like how busy I am. Just to see everyone else put forth so much effort, that became easier for me." –P9
Openness to Experience	Willingness to try new things; feelings of vulnerability; participants' hesitations and expectations.	8/9	"I like to be challenged with different things. I like to do different things. It's testing the waters with something new." –P4
Sharing	Experiences of visually and verbally communicating their own ideas, opinions, and experiences to others.	9/9	"You don't know what people might say or think about your pictures. It was a good thing to do for people to know more about my life." –P3
Expanding Perspectives	Exposure to others' perspectives, experiences, and ideas; thinking about things in new ways; neighborhood/community awareness (or lack).	9/9	"Different perspective on things, and different problems and solutions that people talk about, and struggles that they've seen. Sometimes they're similar, sometimes they're different." –P7
Efficacy	Participants' accomplishments; things participants learned about themselves; participants' feelings of being able to enact change, achieve goals, etc.	9/9	"It made me proud because I've come so far and to have other people see all the work that I do, it just made me happy." –P4
Visual Arts	Participants' reactions to taking photographs.	8/9	"I like photography and I knew we were going to be taking pictures, so as soon as I heard about it, I wanted to do it." –P8

Table 5. *Distribution of Individual Evaluation Themes Across Participants*

Participant	Making Space	Openness to Experience	Sharing	Expanding Perspectives	Efficacy	Visual Arts
P1	3	2	7	5	7	1
P2	3	3	8	5	7	2
P3	10	3	5	5	5	1
P4	5	5	7	3	7	4
P5	1	4	6	5	2	5
P6	4	0	7	6	6	6
P7	5	1	11	9	5	2
P8	4	1	6	4	4	3
P9	1	1	1	5	4	0

Notes. Group 1 = P1 – P4; Group 2 = P5 – P9.

APPENDIX F. FIGURES

Figure 1. Sample photograph for the “Identity & Expression” theme. Title: Sister's Painting. Description: This photo is important to me because it inspires me to do better and be better. My sister's art work in my room makes me follow my dreams. When I look at those pictures it reminds me of all the things she accomplished and makes me know I can do anything I put my mind to.

Figure 2. Sample photograph for the "Growth & Development" theme. Title: Car Goal. Description: This picture represents a goal that I have for myself next year. Getting a car is a big priority I need for things I need or want to do. Having one car for four people who are all busy doesn't work.

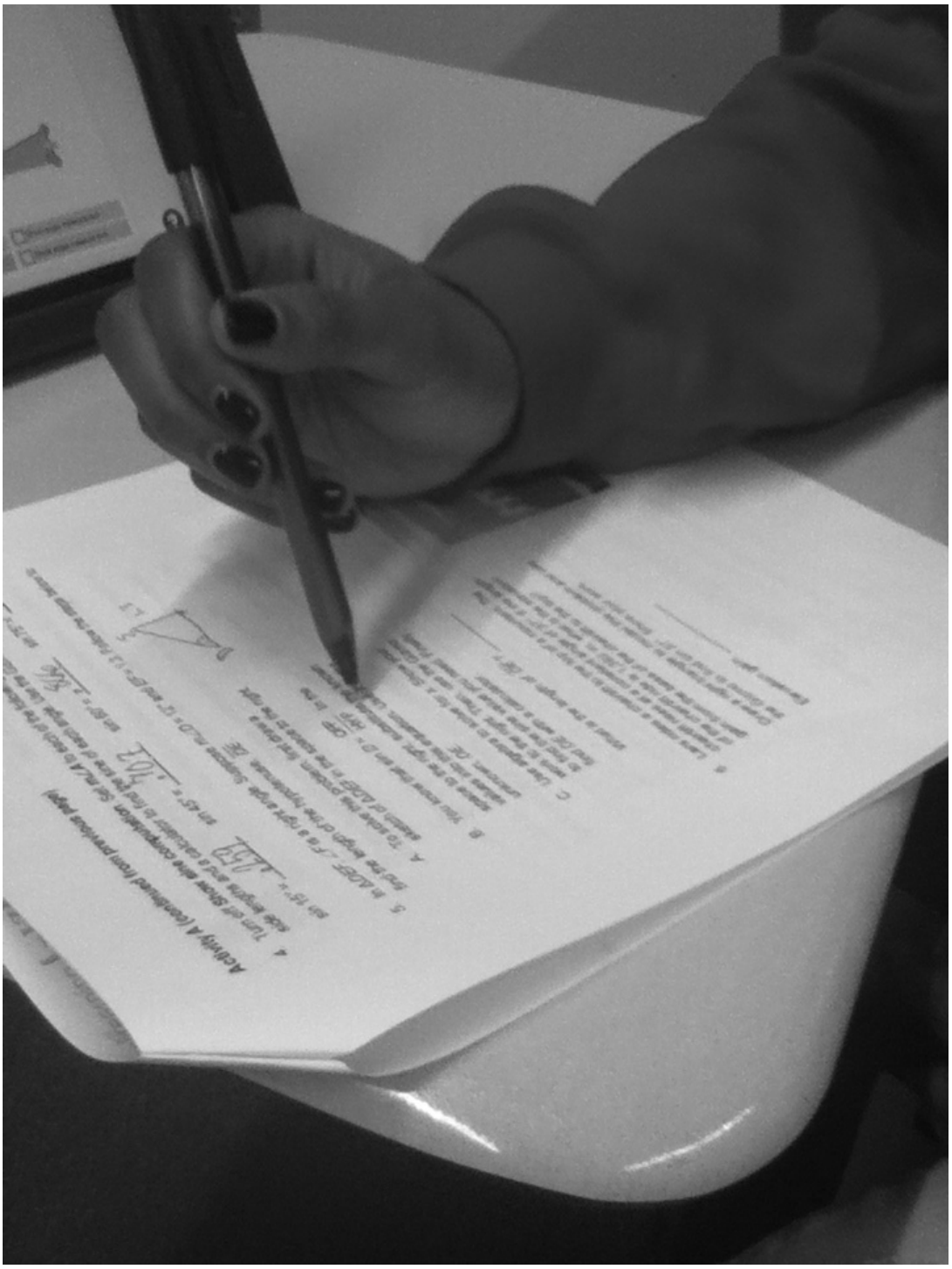

Figure 3. Sample photograph for the “Mentors & Role Models” theme. Title: School Struggles. Description: School work and home work is given so much at my school. Most teachers don't actually teach that much. They hand work out and expect you to learn yourself and fully understand in one day. I wish for less work and more teaching.

Figure 4. Sample photograph for the "Catalysts" theme. Untitled. Description: Community is very important to me. I constantly hear people talking negatively about Toledo. I have started to appreciate my city, which is the place I have started to set my roots down in. I believe if people work together we could change the community to an even better place. Toledo is my home and has a special place in my heart.

Figure 5. Sample photograph for the "Place Attachment" theme. Title: My Favorite Coffee Shop. Description: Bigby holds a special place in my heart. My dad has been taking me there since I was a little kid. Now I stop there before class every week or use it as a place to get away and study.

Figure 6. Sample photograph for the “Resources” theme. Title: Abandonment. Description: The city has a habit of tearing down abandoned buildings instead of fixing them back up. Why tear down a house that has the potential to be great?

Figure 7. Sample photograph for the “Safety” theme. Untitled. Description: To me this picture means home. It's home to me because this is the "safe place" I've been and known all my life. It's where my family is, and with my family, it means home.

Figure 8. Sample photograph for the "Social Communities" theme. Title: Morning in my Neighborhood. Description: The quietest it will ever be. No one around. No trash thrown anywhere. Everyone is either at work or at school. No loud outbursts, fights, or negativity going on. The street is as quiet as it looks.

Figure 9. Sample photograph for the "Facing Oppression" theme. Title: The School Systems. Description: I think the schools should provide a better education system. Some people including myself like to learn and get into groups and surround myself around people that like to learn too. But with the education schools offer in the state of Ohio, it's not possible for me and others like me to put myself in academic situations if I won't learn anything within them.

Figure 10. Sample photograph for the "Children" theme. Title: Akeem. Description: My son is my favorite person because he is the most curious little boy ever. I chose to take his picture because he is my better half and I love him to death.

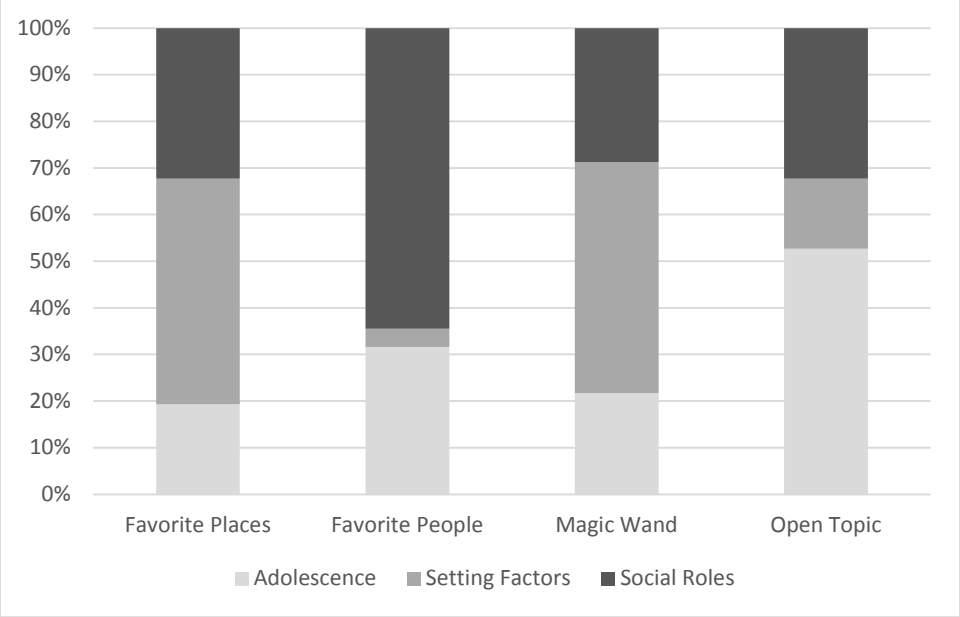

Figure 11. Percentage of themes by topic