

SENSE OF PLACE: A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS

SENSE OF PLACE, SENSE OF TIME:
A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS
IN HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA

By

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ABSTRACT

Sense of place (SoP) refers to the meaning that people attach to their surroundings. It has been speculated that the longer one resides in a particular place, the greater their SoP, however the impact of age and longevity of residence on SoP has yet to be explicitly addressed. Furthermore, previous SoP studies have been conducted in various locales yet none have performed comparison studies at the neighborhood level. A mixed methods study was conducted in two contrasting neighbourhoods in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada – the Northeast Industrial (NEI) and the Southwest Mountain (SWM). The NEI is an older neighbourhood located in a low income, low education area whereas the SWM is just the opposite with newer dwellings, higher incomes and education rates. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between age, length of residence and SoP and to determine whether SoP differs between neighbourhoods. Data were collected as part of a larger project that aimed to operationalize SoP through the development of a valid and reliable survey tool. The first qualitative phase involved conducting focus groups (five groups; $n=31$) followed by thematic analysis of focus group transcripts. The themes and corresponding sub-themes that were generated informed the quantitative phase of the study, which involved analyzing data gathered from the survey ($n=404$). The results show that SoP perceptions do indeed vary as a function of residents' age, their longevity of residence and based on the characteristics of the neighbourhood in which they live, depending on the SoP theme (and corresponding sub-theme) in question.

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A life without places is as unimaginable as a life without other people. We all were born, live and will die in towns, neighborhoods, villages or cities that have names and which are filled with memories, associations and meanings. Places are so completely taken for granted that they need no definition. They are the complex, obvious contexts of daily life, filled with buildings, cars, relatives, plants, smells, sounds, friends, strangers, obligations and possibilities (p. 17-18).

Edward Relph (2007)

1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Foreword

The present study is examined as part of a larger multi-phase pilot project. In the broadest sense, the aim of the following study is to understand the relationship between people and places through the lens of sense of place (SoP). At its simplest, SoP is understood as the meaning that individuals attach to places. The most comprehensive conceptualization of SoP was found in the edited volume titled *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, SoP was defined as:

A central concept in humanistic geography, intended to describe the particular ways in which human beings invest their surroundings with meaning. SoP is seen to be elusive concept, yet human geographers seek to find its traces in a variety of texts and representations, including paintings, poetry, prose and cinema (Hubbard, Kitchin & Valentine, 2004, p. 351).

In effect, the study will trace and elucidate SoP at the level of neighbourhood through the use of mixed sources, including: focus groups; observations, and; both Census and survey data.

1.1.1 Introduction to the Larger Multi-Phase Project

“Some places are romantic, and some places are depressing. There are places that are confusing, places that are peaceful, places that are frightening, and places that are safe. We like some places better than others. Place matters” (Frumkin, 2003, p. 1451). This quote appears in an article written by public health expert, Howard Frumkin, who proposes SoP as a public health construct. In doing so, he acknowledges the fact that the concept remains loosely defined. In fact, the representation of SoP as a vague concept was found to be a recurring theme in the literature. In effect, Kaltenborn (1998) sums up, “... sense of place is more of an idea than a well defined construct” (p. 172). The larger multi-phase project, on which the present study draws upon, intended to add clarity to the SoP construct by developing a valid and reliable survey tool that operationalized SoP. The overarching goal of the larger project, which was completed in March 2008, was to investigate the relationship between SoP and health at the local level.

1.1.2 Study Rationale

SoP has been examined in a wide variety of spatial and cultural contexts and across a range of scales including: ethnic enclaves (Mazumdar, Mazumdar, Docuyanán & McLaughlin, 2000); public places (Ortiz, Garcia-Ramon & Prats, 2004); heritage sites (Puren, Drewes & Roos, 2007); states (Nanzer, 2004); leisure sites (Kyle & Chick, 2007); seasonal properties (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Stedman, 2003; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006); city, province and country (Shamai, 1991); town, region and state (Shamai & Ilatov, 2004) and even airports (Rowley & Slack, 1999). Despite this plethora of SoP studies encompassing a wide range of physical and social settings and stemming from diverse fields, the review of literature demonstrates a dearth of empirical research specific to SoP at the local community and neighbourhood level and even more so, within a Canadian context. This is disconcerting since the experience of individuals in their neighbourhoods is notably important; Nanzer (2004) affirms, “certain aspects of the places in which we live begin to take on meanings beyond a shared space. For example, individuals become part of their neighborhood rather than merely residing there” (p. 363). SoP emanates from the experiences of residents while other place-related concepts such as place identity are more than often established and extrapolated on by external structures, forces and outsiders (Carter, Dyer & Sharma, 2007). Furthermore, it is assumed that the experiences of residents in their neighbourhood will vary depending on personal, social and environmental variables. More specifically, the personal, social and environmental variables of interest in this study are, age of resident, resident’s length of residency in the neighbourhood and neighbourhood characteristics (i.e. both social and physical), respectively. Although there is some evidence that SoP is influenced by age and longevity of residence (e.g. Hay 1998a, 1998b; Taylor and Townsend; 1976), little has been done to connect age, length of residence and type of neighbourhood together as variables that influence SoP. Moreover, the study offers a novel approach to examine SoP at the neighbourhood level and in a Canadian context, with the mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.

1.1.3 Research Question

The research question guiding this study examines how the three variables of interest, discussed above, shape SoP. The research question explored in this study is:

How do age and longevity of residence contribute to residents’ perceptions of SoP in two contrasting neighbourhoods in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada?

1.1.4 Research Objectives

The three objectives of this research study are:

1. To learn about how residents think, feel and describe their neighbourhood as a basis of describing their perceptions of SoP.

The next objective is informed by the first objective:

2. To evaluate residents' SoP perceptions based on their age and length of residence and the characteristics of the neighbourhood in which they live.

In order to meet these two objectives, the researcher is required to learn more about the two study neighbourhoods, which encompasses the third and final objective of the study:

3. To use mixed methods as a means of gathering and analyzing data for the study.

1.2 Reader's Guide to the Study

This study consists of ten chapters. The remainder of Chapter One will examine the literature on SoP. The literature review begins with a broad perspective on the SoP concept. Next, the limited SoP studies conducted at the community and neighbourhood level are examined in addition to specific variables that influence SoP.

Chapter Two: Methodology

This chapter provides detailed background information about the larger multi-phase project which provided the basis for the study. The research questions and objectives are revisited prior to outlining the research framework and design. Here, information is provided about the sources of data, the selection of the study sites and the study's ethics protocol. Furthermore, this chapter also provides an in-depth overview of how mixed methods were employed in a *Sequential Exploratory Design*.

Chapter Three: Case Profiles

This short chapter begins with background information about the study sites within the wider community of Hamilton, Ontario. Here, the two study sites are differentiated not only based on spatial location but also in terms of physical environment and socio-demographic variables using information gathered from the City of Hamilton and Census data.

Chapter Four: Qualitative Phase

The steps involved in the qualitative phase of study are outlined in this chapter. First, detailed information is provided about the focus group sessions in both study neighbourhoods. The dynamics of each focus group are outlined in order to build a context for the analytical results presented in the following two chapters. The final section of this chapter presents and examines the SoP themes and corresponding sub-themes which are the basis for the qualitative and quantitative analyses.

Chapter Five (Results of the Qualitative Phase for Case NEI) & Chapter Six (Results of the Qualitative Phase for Case SWM)

These two chapters summarize the results of the qualitative analysis for the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods, respectively. The results are organized by theme/sub-theme and assessed, based on the participant's age and length of residency in the neighbourhood. Excerpts from focus group participants that capture the essence of each theme/sub-theme are included in these sections.

Chapter Seven: Survey Results

Chapter Seven provides an overview of the quantitative phase of the study. The results of the survey are examined in terms of response rate and the representativeness of the sample. In addition, the survey sample is evaluated based on the two variables of interest: (1) age group and; (2) length of residence categories. The final section of the chapter provides an overview of the integration of the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study.

Chapter Eight (Results of the Quantitative Analysis for Case NEI) & Chapter Nine (Results of the Quantitative Analysis for Case SWM)

These two chapters examine the results of the analysis of survey data for the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods, respectively. Survey items corresponding to themes/sub-themes are analyzed according to age groups and length of residency categories. The findings are organized according to themes and corresponding sub-themes.

Chapter Ten: Discussion and Conclusions

This final chapter provides a cross-case analysis of the results from the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study for both neighbourhoods. In effect, the goal of the chapter is to integrate the findings in a coherent manner. Conclusions and the limitations of the study are also addressed, in addition to future research directions.

1.3 A Review of the Literature

The following section provides a review of the literature on SoP. To begin with, an overview of the SoP concept will be provided to highlight how it is used and interpreted in a wide range of disciplines. In the second section of the literature review, the components of *sense* and *place* will be further discussed to help differentiate the multiple interpretations of the SoP concept. Finally, a number of studies that illustrate the relationship between people and places at the community and neighbourhood level will be explored. Furthermore, the variables that influence SoP will be discussed in this final section; these are mainly a combination of individual and place characteristics.

1.3.1 Making Sense of SoP

Although geographers have studied SoP for decades, defining or explaining the concept remains a difficult endeavor. One of the earliest scholarly references to SoP dates back to a 1965 report prepared by a group of American geographers, summoned by the chairman of the Earth Sciences Division of the National Academy of Sciences – National Research Council, to evaluate the prospect of the discipline of geography as a scientific research field. In their report, under the section titled, *A Place for the Unusual Idea*, the committee acknowledged the need for more research into the concept. The following excerpt suggests that the committee's view of SoP is from a neurological or biological perspective. As such, SoP is regarded as being similar to the five human senses (i.e. sight, hearing, smell, taste & touch), which enables individuals to gain an awareness of the world around them or *to make sense of the world around them*:

... little is known as yet about what we earlier called the 'sense of place' in man. Its secrets are still locked from us in our inadequate knowledge of nervous systems. Someday, when the study of nervous systems has advanced sufficiently, a startling and perhaps revolutionary new input may reach geographical study in a full descriptive analysis of the sense of place. We hope that if a geographer has an interesting opportunity with the proper collaboration to delve into the mysteries of the sense of place, he may somewhere find a sympathetic ear among those who have funding responsibilities (pp.67-68).

In the forty-some years that have passed since the publication of the Earth Sciences Division of the National Academy of Sciences – National Research Council report, many have attempted to develop the concept of SoP and research is currently underway to determine the location of the SoP in the brain (Bond, 2006). SoP has been widely theorized by more than one particular scholar, including several geographers (e.g. Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1980; Eyles, 1985; Jackson, 1994) and some have even attempted to measure the concept through survey tools and questionnaires (e.g. Shamai & Kellerman, 1985,

Shamai, 1991; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Stedman, 2003; Shamai & Ilatov, 2004; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006).

The Dictionary of Human Geography (2000) recognizes SoP as the product of the relationship that individuals form with place:

Originating in studies of the physical characteristics and qualities of geographical locations as appropriated in human experience and imagination, SoP has increasingly been examined in human geography as an outcome of interconnected psychoanalytic, social and environmental processes, creating and manipulating quite flexible relations with physical place (Cosgrove, p. 731).

From this excerpt, it is also evident that the field of human geography acknowledges that SoP, although rooted in geography, is a multifaceted construct. As such, many of the numerous efforts to elucidate and to further develop the SoP concept have been set forth by scholars from a number of different fields outside of geography. SoP has been explored through the lens of numerous disciplines, including: architecture (e.g. Ouf, 2001; Jiven & Larkham, 2003), psychology (e.g. Steele, 1981; Hay, 1998a, 1998b), sociology (Hummon, 1992), anthropology (e.g. Altman & Low 1992), environmental science (e.g. Williams & Stewart, 1998), travel writing (e.g. Mayes, 1997) and even public health (e.g. Frumkin, 2003).

As a result of the multidisciplinary interest in the SoP concept, it has been defined and approached in many different ways and within a variety of contexts. For instance, the scale of place in SoP studies is often dictated by the parameters of the study area and, as Manzo (2003) explains, is most commonly investigated at the residential or household level. Patterson & Williams (2005) add that SoP and place attachment are often used interchangeably as is the case in Altman and Low's (1992), *Place Attachment* and this is also commonplace in the environmental psychology field.

In addition to scholarly research on SoP, the term itself is often used as a catchphrase and informally in everyday conversation, which may inadvertently have caused Lewis (1979) to ask, "Does [SoP] really exist, apart from a rather trendy phrase that seems to be on everyone's lips these days?" (p. 26). Similarly, Jackson (1994) stated that the term SoP "is a much used expression, chiefly by architects but taken over by urban planners and interior decorators and the promoters of condominiums, so that now it means very little" (p. 157).

Notwithstanding, the utility of SoP has not waned; this is evidenced by its ever-increasing use across disciplines. SoP continues to be a significant concept in geography, so much so that it was included in Hanson's (1997) edited volume, *10 Geographic Ideas that Changed the World*. Yet, given its versatility as a construct, it is apparent that SoP has been interpreted in many ways. The following section on *genius loci*, which is cited

in accordance with SoP, evidences the lack of consistency in the interpretation of the SoP concept. More often than not, interpretations of SoP are discipline-specific and they will be presented and discussed further herein.

1.3.2 Genius Loci

The term *genius loci*¹ or *spirit of place* is sometimes cited as the precursor to SoP. According to the Romans, *genius loci* meant that places were safeguarded by spirits (Relph, 1976; Lewis, 1979 & Jackson, 1994). Citizens and visitors paid homage to these guardian spirits through ceremonial celebrations but, by the 1700's, the idea of spirits safeguarding places was no longer part of the interpretation of the term (Jackson, 1994). Yet, it should be noted that the notion of spirits safeguarding places still appears in some cultures today; many still gather to celebrate these spirits (e.g. Aboriginal peoples). However, Jackson (1994) points out that although many do not directly associate SoP with spirits as a modern day equivalent of *genius loci*, a spiritual undertone remains a part of the concept:

We now use the current version to describe the *atmosphere* to a place, the quality of its *environment*. Nevertheless, we recognize that certain localities have an attraction which gives us a certain indefinable sense of well-being and which we want to return to, time and again. So that original notion of ritual, of repeated celebration or reverence, is still inherent in the phrase. It is not a temporary response, for it persists and brings us back, reminding us of previous visits (p. 158).

From this excerpt, it is evident that *SoP* has the ability to impart a sense of well-being. Still, not all places exude a sense of comfort or well-being; SoP can be either positive or negative (Relph, 1976; Eyles, 1985; Manzo, 2003). Moreover, Jackson (1994) states that *SoP* is synonymous with *atmosphere* and, as such, SoP is established by the type of association individuals form between a place and its character. Jackson's interpretation of SoP as 'the atmosphere to a place' corresponds to one of three interpretations of SoP offered by Williams (2007) – all of which will be discussed in the following section.

Tuan (1996) adds, "place may be said to have 'spirit' or 'personality', but only human beings can have a SoP" (p. 446); here Tuan is referring to SoP as a faculty of perception or interpretation, which also corresponds to one of Williams' (2007) viewpoints (outlined in the following section). Relph (2006) also differentiates spirit of place from SoP in a similar manner, he posits, "spirit of place, the inherent properties that

¹ The terms *SoP*, *genius loci*, *character*, and *appearance*, have been used interchangeably in the field of urban planning and design according to Jiven & Larkham (2003). However, they do note that architect Norberg-Schulz (1980) advised against using *SoP* and *genius loci* interchangeably.

lend identity to somewhere, can be distinguished from SoP, - the faculty by which that identity is perceived” (p. 19). Relph would later (2008) use the term “sense of a place” to denote the faculty of perception as opposed to the term SoP. The following section will examine the terms *sense* and *place* and demonstrate how their meanings influence the interpretation of the SoP concept.

1.3.3 *Sense and Place*

According to Pred (1983), it is both possible for individuals to share a common SoP (i.e. for the same physical place) or for it to be an individually distinctive construction. In the same regard, it is possible for individuals to share the same interpretation for the words *sense* and *place* or for their interpretations to be entirely different. In terms of semantics, the words *sense* and *place* themselves have multiple meanings. Taken together, the various interpretations of *sense* and *place* in turn will influence the understanding of SoP.

In accordance, Williams (2007) offers three different viewpoints of *SoP*, the first of which parallels the interpretation offered by the National Academy of Sciences:

- i. *SoP* as a faculty or capacity (e.g. a keen SoP similar to a keen sense of humour or a keen sense of smell)
- ii. *SoP* as cognitions of place (e.g. knowledge and awareness of place)
- iii. *SoP* as the character of a place (e.g. atmosphere of place)

Environmental psychologist Fritz Steele’s (1981) definition of SoP aligns itself with all three of Williams’ (2007) aforementioned viewpoints:

The sense of place, ... is the particular experience of a person in a particular setting, (feeling stimulated, excited, joyous, expansive, and so forth)... [it] is the pattern of reactions that a setting stimulates for a person. These reactions are a product of both features of the setting and aspects the person brings to it.. [it] is an interactional concept: a person comes into contact with a setting, which produces reactions. These include feelings, perceptions, behaviours, and outcomes associated with one’s being in that location (pp. 11-12)

Similar to the term *sense*, the term *place* is interpreted in a number of different ways. In describing place, human geographers often recall Tuan’s (1977) notion that indiscriminate space turns into place “as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (p.6). According to Tuan (1980), there is a component of awareness attached to SoP and, as such, it can be “achieved and maintained” (p.4). Years earlier, architect, Norberg-Schulz (1969) emphasized the importance of imbuing places with meaning; he

wrote, “when we are traveling in a foreign country, space is ‘neutral’, that is, not yet connected with joys and sorrows. Only when it becomes *a system of meaningful places*, does it become alive to us” (p. 224).

Unlike other potentially place-related terms (e.g. social capital, social cohesion), SoP is exclusively place-based; for this reason, the properties of the environment contribute to it. Jackson (1994, p.158) also acknowledges that SoP is largely influenced by the ‘quality of [the] environment’. Hence, SoP is interpreted as a formulated response towards the characteristics or aspects of the environment (i.e. natural, built and social).

Although we understand what is meant by SoP, it remains a difficult concept to express (Beatley, 2003). Buttimer (1980) recalls her SoP of Ireland based on her early-life experiences and affirms that, indeed, SoP is difficult to describe; her SoP is perceived using combination of the five human senses:

I recall the feel of grass on bare feet, the smells and sounds of various seasons, the places and times I meet friends on walks, the daily ebb and flow of milking time, meals, reading and thinking, sleeping and walking. Most of this experience is not consciously processed through my head – that is why words are so hard to find – for this place allows head and heart, body and spirit, imagination and will to become harmonized and creative (pp. 172-173).

Buttimer’s description corresponds to urban planner Kevin Lynch’s (1976) concept of the *sensed quality of a place*, which is the overall perception of a place based on the summation of separate sensations. He maintains that the sensed quality of a place has an effect on wellbeing since many physical processes (e.g. breathing and hearing) are mediated by sensory cues. According to Lynch, the sensed quality of a place encompasses:

...what one can see, how it feels underfoot, the smell of the air, the sounds of bells and motorcycles, how patterns of these sensations make up the quality of places, and how that quality affects our immediate well-being, our actions, our feelings and our understandings... What is sensed has fundamental and pervasive effects on well-being (pp. 8-9).

For this reason he proposes several guidelines for planners to employ to help improve the sensory experience of an environment (e.g. controlling noise pollution). Frumkin (2003) agrees that the characteristics of places have the ability to influence health. He recognizes SoP as a potential contributing factor to well-being within the field of public health; he wrote, “if SoP has benefits for health and well-being, then understanding how to design for it may have real public health value” (p. 1452). Therefore, it is clear that

SoP, although complex in nature, is a significant concept. The following section highlights SoP as the vital product of the relationship between people and places.

1.3.4 SoP: A Significant Concept

Despite his aforementioned uncertainty, Lewis (1979) went on to endorse SoP as an essential for life and as a need that is necessary to fulfill in order to sustain personal well-being:

To have a sense of place – to sense the spirit of place – one’s own place – is as indispensable to the human experience as our basic urges for food, or for sex. Indeed, we even use similar words to describe our emotions. We speak of “hunger” to return home, just as we speak of hungering for food. Our affection for certain beloved places is as intense, perhaps as our affection for people we love. To be sure, one can overindulge one’s hunger for food: that is gluttony. One can overindulge one’s sexual urge, and that is debauchery. So also, one can overindulge a love a place, and more than a few wars have been fought “in defense of homeland, or fatherland,” or what have you, and they were murderous wars indeed. But I do not think that one can survive as a humane creature on this earth without special attachments to special places (p. 29).

Years earlier, Ian Nairn (1965), an architectural critic, expressed a similar viewpoint:

I am not setting up as a psychologist, but it seems a commonplace that almost everyone is born with the need for identification with his surroundings and a relationship to them – with the need to be in a recognizable place. So sense of place is not a fine art extra, it is something we cannot afford to do without (p.6).

From these excerpts, it is evident that SoP is an important aspect of everyday life. Forestry scientists Williams and Stewart (1998) realized the significance of SoP and synthesized the work of scholars from a variety of fields to better define the concept. Based on their comprehensive definition, SoP is an umbrella concept that captures the essence of the relationship people form with places; as such it encompasses:

- i. the emotional bonds that people form with places (at various geographic scales) over time and with familiarity with those places;
- ii. the strongly felt values, meanings, and symbols that are hard to identify or know (and hard to quantify), especially if one is an “outsider” or unfamiliar with place;

- iii. the valued qualities of a place that even an “insider” may not be consciously aware of until they are threatened or lost;
- iv. the set of place meanings that are actively and continuously constructed and reconstructed within individual minds, shared cultures, and social practices; and
- v. the awareness of the cultural, historical, and spatial context within which meanings, values, and social interactions are formed (p. 19).

This detailed conceptualization together with those already presented, consistently portrays SoP as the product of the relationship between people and places. As previously outlined, SoP has been examined among various cultural groups and in different types of places. Nevertheless, few SoP studies have been investigated at the community and neighbourhood level as will now be discussed.

1.3.5 SoP at the Community and Neighbourhood Level

It is necessary to recognize that many different senses of place exist, given the inter-subjective nature of the concept. Relph (1976) recognizes that everyone will experience SoP but the degree will vary from person to person. He describes two forms of SoP, “authentic and genuine” and “inauthentic and contrived or artificial” (1976, p. 63). As such, an authentic SoP is experienced by individuals who achieve a sense of belonging to place (e.g. the home, community or country) and thereby contributes to an individual’s identity. In contrast an inauthentic SoP results from the inability to develop a meaningful relationship with the environment.

Eyles (1985) examined the attitudes of residents of Towcester, a small town in Northhamptonshire, England and categorized ten different senses of place². In doing so he offered the following disclaimer:

It will be noted that convenient but sometimes clumsy labels have been used to describe the senses of place... This exercise is not done to suggest that these relationships are in any way categorical or universal. It merely indicates the possibilities of differentiating the sense of place with respect to this particular data-set. Furthermore, it is not suggested that the relative importance of the senses of place can or will be replicated elsewhere. It is just the sense of place categories themselves that may be of wider significance (p. 123).

² The ten SoP categories included: social, apathetic-acquiescent, instrumental, nostalgic, commodity, platform/stage, family, way of life, roots & environmental (Eyles, 1985, p. 122).

Although all people experience some form of SoP, it is obvious that Eyles' comment (1985) clarifies that not all types will be exhibited in any given place. He illustrates that there are many variables that influence SoP and that these variables are characteristic to the place of interest. Shamai (1991) agrees and adds that most SoP studies focus on a certain place and, in doing so, any conclusions that might be drawn will not necessarily be applicable to some other place.

Although Eyles' study (1985) is based on a particular town, his SoP categories are worth noting. The most common categories included "social", "apathetic-acquiescent", "instrumental" and "nostalgic" senses of place. Similar to Relph's inauthentic SoP (1976), Eyles recognized the possibility of being devoid of SoP and referred to it as "apathetic-acquiescent" (1985, pp.122-124). In contrast, individuals with a social SoP regard the place where they reside as important because it is a means of facilitating contact with friends and family whereas those with an instrumental SoP find meaningfulness in what the place offers (e.g. amenities such as shops and employment opportunities). Interestingly, it was noted that there was a negative instrumental SoP due to the perceived inability of Worcester to provide certain goods and services. Eyles also described a nostalgic SoP as the product of recalling past sentiments related to place (e.g. memories). Here, it is obvious that the type of SoP experienced by individuals is truly a reflection of personal views and perceptions. It is also noted that in reflecting about place, some form their opinions based on the present while some recall the past.

Hummon (1992) also examined SoP at the community level, in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts. He discusses different types of senses of place that exist among citizens of the same community; his inventory includes degrees of "rootedness", "alienation", "relativity" and "placelessness" (1992, p. 263). Relph (1976) was first to describe "placelessness" (i.e. when there is no SoP) (p. 79), which occurs when place identity is lost such that places are stripped of their unique attributes, and commonalities between places start to exist. According to Hummon, different "community sentiments" resulting from how people think and feel about their community will evoke a variety of senses of place. He describes various degrees of rootedness but at its simplest, a rooted SoP is feeling an emotional connection to the place where one resides (i.e. both your home and vicinity around your home).

Hummon also describes place alienation, which results from, for instance, the inability to fully experience place due to immobility or the inability to feel or to establish a sense of belonging (i.e. feeling "displaced") (p. 269). In his description of alienation, Hummon offers the example of a woman who still feels a deep connection towards the community where she was raised and fails to develop a sense of belonging to her new/current community more than ten years after moving. In contrast, the notion of placelessness involves the lack of emotional ties to the community or identification with the community. Although the category of place relativity is associated with the lack of feelings towards community, it also involves experiencing a sense of home regardless of the place where it exists. For instance, Hummon refers to the experience of a man who

had lived in a number of different communities; the man revealed that each place became “home” for him after a period of adjustment. From this example, it is clear that SoP may vary over time.

The aforementioned community SoP studies were conducted by Eyles (1985) and Hummon (1992) in the UK and the United States, respectively. In the same regard, the majority of the limited number of studies exploring SoP at the level of neighbourhood have been conducted overseas, outside of North America. A literature search uncovered a single applicable Canadian study; however, SoP was examined as part of a larger research program that investigated quality of life in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in three different neighbourhoods based on socioeconomic characteristics (Williams, Kitchen, Randall & Muhajarine, 2008). The study compared how residents responded to quality of life related questions through a telephone survey administered at two different times – in 2001 and 2004. A composite measure of SoP was devised based on four variables: (1) feeling part of the neighbourhood; (2) comfort in participating in neighbourhood projects; (3) calling on neighbours in a crisis and; (4) volunteering for organizations (Williams et al., 2008, p. 17). Although there were differences in the factors that influenced a strong SoP between survey years, three common factors emerged in both 2001 and 2004: residential longevity (i.e., 10 years or more), participation in volunteer activities, and neighbourhood friendliness. Overall, Williams et al. (2008) found a strong SoP to be contingent on a combination of these individual and environmental (i.e., both social and physical) variables. Interestingly, similar variables³ to those suggested by Williams et al. (2008) were found to identify the SoP for residents from Ramat Gan, Israel in areas where new housing units were built either in or next to old neighbourhoods (Billig, 2005). Overall, SoP varied both among the six neighbourhoods included in the study and between the housing developments within the same neighbourhood:

In residential environments the SoP is established mainly by the residents themselves and is formed at the inter-subjective level, connecting between the behavior of the individual and that of the other residents. The SoP of the residential environment will thus be affected by perceptions of its physical characteristics, by the feeling

³ The variables were determined in an earlier study from the analysis of ethnographic interviews with a group of female residents and are characterized in two categories – variables of behavior and variables of personal feeling (Billig, 2004). Variables of behavior include differences in norms and in life style between population groups, characteristics of relations among the same population group, characteristics of relations with the other population group(s), and use of public space and of public services. Variables of personal feeling include satisfaction, or aversion to the physical environment, feeling of belonging to similar buildings, to the street and to the neighbourhood, feelings of belonging to a community and feeling of security in public space (Billig, 2004, p. 588).

and behavior of its residents, and by the interactions between them (Billig, 2005, p. 118).

Billig (2005) concluded that the urban form influenced SoP; more specifically, the layout and the organization of the built environment were contributing factors. In addition, due to the diverse population included in the study (i.e., different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and levels of education), Billig posited that these individual attributes mediated the select set of variables that shaped SoP. In effect, the findings from the separate studies conducted by Williams et al. (2008) and Billig (2005) in two different countries demonstrate that SoP is not a homogeneous construct; however, comparable variables play a role in its development.

Several factors are also proposed to explain the heterogeneity of SoP. Forrest, La Grange and Ngai-Ming (2002) studied several place-related concepts in a mixture of neighbourhoods in Hong Kong. The authors suggest that a weak SoP is attributed to “high degree[s] of population churning” (p. 217) possibly due to enhanced mobility patterns. Furthermore, mixed residential environments also result in varying expressions of SoP; “a neighbourhood containing a variety of population groups or a variety of types of buildings in different areas will also have different senses of place in different areas” (Billig, 2005 p. 126-127).

Furthermore, McCreanor, Penney, Jensen, Witten, Kearns and Moewaka Barnes (2006) explored how cultural background has an effect on SoP at a neighbourhood level in their study that included participants from three⁴ different ethnic groups in Oruamo/Beachhaven, a suburb in New Zealand. Similar to the findings of Billig (2005), ethnic background played a role in differentiating the experience of SoP between groups. According to McCreanor and colleagues (2006), “in the literature there has been a lack of critical engagement with the differentiated ways and forms of belonging to the same place, experienced by different cultural groups” (p. 205). Through the analysis of interviews, five overarching themes were found to contribute to neighbourhood SoP including (1) natural environments; (2) social relations; (3) continuity of residence; (4) facilities and organizations; and (5) place transformation (McCreanor et al., 2006, p. 200). The degree to which each theme contributed to SoP varied between the ethnic groups. For instance, the Maori and Pakeha participants regarded features of the natural environment as an important part of their neighbourhood experience; while for the Samoan participants, these features were not as significant to their SoP. Therefore, it is evident that among other variables, cultural background plays a significant role in influencing the dynamics of SoP at the neighbourhood level. The following section will discuss additional variables or factors that mediate the relationship that people form with places and in turn, have an effect on SoP.

⁴ The three ethnic groups included in the study include Maori, Samoan, and Pakeha.

1.3.6 Factors Influencing SoP

A number of factors are highlighted as playing an influential role in the relationship between people and place. Those that will be discussed herein include: the characteristics of the place itself (i.e. social and physical elements), time, residential status and age.

1.3.6.1 Place Characteristics

Through processes such as immigration, relocation and displacement, individuals are often required to rebuild their relationship with place in order to establish a SoP. Mazumdar, Mazumdar, Docuyanan and McLaughlin (2000) explored Vietnamese immigrants living in an ethnic enclave in America and their relationship to place; they found architectural design, socialization and the celebration of rituals to contribute to a SoP. Thus, SoP encompasses aspects of both the social and physical environments. The immigrants established a SoP by incorporating architectural features reminiscent of their homeland in the design of buildings and landscaping within the enclave; the Vietnamese immigrants attempted to build a positive SoP in their new community with elements of the past. Although this study shows the overall experience of immigrants to be positive, it is obvious that this is not the case for all immigrants.

Ortiz, Garcia-Ramon and Prats (2004) uncovered weak senses of place in their study, which explored three different groups of women (i.e. non-immigrants, European immigrants and non-European immigrants) through the use of common public space in a neighbourhood in Barcelona, Spain. SoP differed among the three groups of women, yet it was unclear whether the use of public space had a direct effect on women's SoP. The local women experienced a decline in their sense of belonging in part due to perceptions of neighbourhood change influenced as a result of an influx of immigrants into the area. Both of the immigrant groups were still in the process of developing a SoP.

Other studies show that SoP is more closely associated with personal, social and environmental attributes. For instance, Kianicka, Buchecker, Hunziker and Muller-Boker (2006) examine SoP differences in local citizens and visitors to a Swiss Alpine village. Their findings show that the components that influenced the two groups' SoP were the same but that the level of significance attached to each component varied between groups. For local citizens, SoP was most influenced by personal aspects such as social networks, their homes and their personal histories associated with place. For tourists, SoP was most influenced by aspects of the natural environment that contribute to their recreational experience of place.

1.3.6.2 Time, Residential Status & Age

The relationship between SoP and time is discussed in the work of Taylor and Townsend (1976). Through the administration of a survey, they explored SoP in four towns/clusters located in North-East England. Their findings suggest that elements of the environment (i.e. both physical and built) were not significant to individuals' perceptions of place. Instead, it was amount of experience (i.e. length of residence) that an individual had with the particular place that, in turn, influenced the perception of place; those individuals over the age of 65 expressed a stronger SoP. According to Williams (2002), mental well-being has been attributed to the maintenance of relationships between people and places established through longevity of residence in a certain place. She introduces the mental health concept, "psychological rootedness" (p.146), which is related to a strong SoP and develops through a lengthy experience with place.

Hay (1998a) examined factors contributing to SoP in two different cultural groups, the Maori indigenous peoples and individuals with European backgrounds in Banks Peninsula, New Zealand. He found that longstanding residents in both cultural groups showed a strong SoP. Hay also argues that individuals who are not longstanding residents of a place (e.g. visitors) do not form as strong relationships with place as those who have had a long residential history. He classifies different senses of place based on individual residency and also asserts that SoP is influenced by age.

1.3.7 Literature Review Conclusions

This literature review provides an overview of the SoP construct. Not only does the review examine the multidisciplinary nature of SoP, but it also examines the multiple interpretations of the concept that result from its use in a wide range of disciplines. The factors that influence the relationship between people and places and hence SoP were examined at both the community and neighbourhood level. Together, the research studies show that people establish a SoP with a variety of environments. Additionally, the studies cited show that SoP varies and it is largely based on individual experiences with place and is influenced by a number of factors including time, place characteristics and demographic variables such as, personal history, age and residential status. The literature review also shows that there is still much to be learned about SoP at the neighbourhood level and especially within a Canadian context since much of the cited literature is based on studies conducted in the United States or overseas.

2 CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

The following section begins with background information about the study. The research question and objectives are revisited in order to provide a context for the research framework and design. The study area is introduced and described in addition to the mixed methods that were employed to collect and analyze data.

2.1 Research Context

The study is part of the first phase of a larger multi-phase research program which proposed to examine the relationship between SoP and health. As mentioned, the larger project was completed in March 2008. The first phase of the research program involved operationalizing SoP through the development of a valid and reliable survey tool (see Appendix 1). In order to generate an item pool, focus groups were conducted to compile themes for survey item construction (see Williams et al., 2008, for a detailed account of the survey item construction process). The information gathered through the focus groups was used to construct a survey consisting of 46-items and 13 demographic-related questions. A total of 1250 surveys were distributed to residents in two neighbourhoods in the city of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The two study areas, the NEI and the SWM were selected based on the findings of a previous study by Eyles and colleagues (1999) which differentiated several neighbourhoods in the city of Hamilton based on various methods including Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques in combination with census and health-related data (see Luginaah et al., 2001). The results of the survey were used to devise both a shorter 16-item scale and an equation to measure overall or *Global* SoP (see Williams et al., in progress).

2.2 Research Questions and Objectives

The researcher's involvement in the project began in mid-April of 2006. As a research assistant for the larger project, she played a central role in the submission of the ethics application as well as in the organization and implementation of the focus groups. The researcher remained part of the team of the larger multi-phase project and she

contributed to the development of the survey tool in addition to the preliminary analysis of survey results⁵.

The following research question for the study developed subsequent to the collection of focus group data:

How do age and longevity of residence contribute to residents' perceptions of SoP in two contrasting neighbourhoods in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada?

The research question is comprised of three variables of interest: (i) age; (ii) longevity of residence; and (iii) neighbourhood type. As such, the objectives of the research study are:

To understand, describe and evaluate residents' perceptions of SoP based on their age, longevity of residence and the characteristics of the neighbourhood in which they live, using a mixed methods approach.

2.3 Research Design

This study is based on a case study design which encompasses data collected using a mixed methods approach. According to Yin (2003) a case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). As such, the case study framework is applicable given the objective of the study which includes examining the phenomenon of SoP in the context of neighbourhood living since few attempts have been made to explore this relationship. More specifically, this case study is based on a *multiple-case holistic design* whereby two cases are observed and vary only in terms of contextual information (Yin, 2003). Here, the case is defined as residents' perceptions of SoP (based on age and longevity of residence), with each case having a different context, defined as neighbourhood. Yin (2003) states, “you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (p. 13). The two neighbourhoods were chosen given that they vary in terms of socio-demographic and spatial characteristics (addressed later in more detail) and as a result presented the opportunity for comparison or cross-case analysis. The two neighbourhoods of interest will be treated as two

⁵ As a member of the larger project's team, the researcher was involved in the following tasks: conducting a literature review of related surveys/questionnaires to help inform item construction; researching potential candidates to serve on the expert review panel; conducting cognitive interviews to test survey items; drafting research summaries for participants and; performing preliminary statistical analyses on data including factor analysis to pare down the 46-item survey to the 16-item scale.

separate cases. Case 1 is defined as residents' perceptions of SoP in the Northeast Industrial neighbourhood (NEI). Case 2 is defined as residents' perceptions of SoP in the Southwest Mountain (SWM) neighbourhood. For the purpose of simplicity, Case 1 will be referred to as Case NEI and Case 2 will be referred to as Case SWM.

2.3.1 Data Sources

Mixed methods were used in the data collection process. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) differentiate *mixed methods research* as a *methodology* and as a *method*:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (p. 5).

Here, mixed methods are used as a method of collecting and analyzing different sources of data in order to achieve methodological triangulation. Morse (1991) defines methodological triangulation as the “the use of at least two methods, usually qualitative and quantitative, to address the same research problem” (p. 120). Furthermore, methodological triangulation enables researchers to enhance *confirmation*⁶ as it is considered to be “a method of obtaining complementary findings that strengthen research results and contribute to theory and knowledge development” (Morse, 1991, p. 122). According to Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks (2008) the use of mixed methods also enables researchers to enhance their *comprehension* or understanding of the phenomenon being studied (here, SoP).

The data collection and analysis process follows a *Sequential Exploratory Design* (Creswell, 2003; Creswell et al., 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), whereby data were collected sequentially and where the analysis from the qualitative phase informs the quantitative phase of the study. As mentioned earlier, qualitative data were collected from focus groups to inform the development of the survey tool. The survey tool was then used as a data collection instrument to gather data for the quantitative phase of the study. In this study, the results of the qualitative phase will inform and guide the quantitative analysis. The results of both phases will then be

⁶ *Confirmation* is defined by Dunning et al. (2008) as “the convergence of findings from two different data sets that has been operationalized by two general approaches in the literature” (p. 147).

combined and discussed together in an effort to determine confirmation of findings and to better understand SoP perceptions. Figure 1 illustrates the *Sequential Exploratory Design* implemented in this study (adapted from Creswell, 2003, Figure 11.2b, p. 213) whereby the research findings from both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study are analyzed together (a process also referred to as *merging* by Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). The time period associated with each phase are also noted in Figure 1. More specifically, the information gathered from the analysis of the quantitative data are used to understand the results of the qualitative component of the research; this type of research design is particularly useful in learning more about a phenomenon (e.g. SoP) and in developing research tools such as surveys or questionnaires (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007). The two cases will be presented and analyzed separately followed by cross-case analyses.

QUALitative → QUANTitative				
QUAL → Data Collection [focus groups]	QUAL → Data Analysis [thematic analysis]	QUAN → Data Collection [administration of survey]	QUAN → Data Analysis [survey results]	Interpretation of Entire Analysis [qualitative & quantitative analysis]
May - June 2006	December 2007- March 2008	December 2006- January 2007	May - June 2008	June - July 2008

Figure 1: Sequential Exploratory Design (adapted from Creswell, 2003, p. 213)

Additional data sources include public records, photographs and a reflexive journal (Merriam, 1998; Finlay, 2002). The data included as public records consists of variables extracted from the 2001 Census of Canada. The 2001 Canadian census data for the city of Hamilton and the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods was accessed and extracted from the Statistics Canada’s online E-STAT database. In order to isolate the two neighbourhoods of interest, data from the neighbourhoods’ corresponding census tracts were aggregated. The NEI neighbourhood is comprised of four census tracts (i.e. 53, 54, 58 & 59) whereas the SWM is comprised of two census tracts (i.e. 1.04 & 2.02). A combination of demographic and socioeconomic variables were selected and isolated for analysis. Proportions were tabulated for select variables and converted to percentages while averages and medians were calculated for income-related variables (see Table 1 in Chapter 3).

In addition, using a direct observation technique, photographs of homes and surrounding infrastructure were taken in both neighbourhoods (see Appendix 2). Photographs are referred to as *researcher-generated documents* (Merriam, 1998) and are used as a form of site documentation. Furthermore, since the assumptions and experiences of the researcher play a role in the research process (Laverly, 2003), a

reflexive journal is used as a means to record and acknowledge biases throughout the course of the study. Since the researcher is considered to act as a research instrument, there exists the potential of error and bias (Merriam, 1998). The reflexive journal was used in the qualitative phase of the study to record focus group interview observations (e.g. types of homes in neighbourhood, feelings experienced while in neighbourhood, thoughts during focus group sessions) as well as any decisions made throughout the study for audit trail purposes. In a qualitative study, confirmability is also achieved through audibility such that “any reader or another researcher can follow the progression of events in the study and understand their logic” (Sandelowski, 1986, p. 34; Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Together, the use of mixed methods and use of a variety of sources contributes to methodological and data triangulation (Farmer, Robinson, Elliott & Eyles, 2006). More specifically, this study involves sequential triangulation, a form of methodological triangulation, given that the quantitative phase was built upon using the results of the qualitative phase (Morse, 1991). Oppermann (2000) defines data triangulation as “using the same approach for different sets of data in order to verify or falsify generalisable trends detected in one data set” (p. 142). Here, methodological triangulation is achieved through the use of focus groups and the survey whereby data triangulation is achieved through the comparison of the two different cases.

2.3.2 Site Selection

The two study neighbourhoods are located in the city of Hamilton. Hamilton is located approximately 70 kilometres southwest of Toronto, with a population of just over 500,000 people⁷. Figure 2 is a map of Hamilton which illustrates the location of the city in relation to Toronto, Ontario and Buffalo, New York. In addition, Figure 2 also depicts four neighbourhoods classified by the aforementioned study conducted by Eyles and colleagues (1999). The yellow and purple highlighted areas correspond to the NEI and SWM, respectively.

⁷ According to the 2001 Census of Canada, the population of the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) was 662,401.

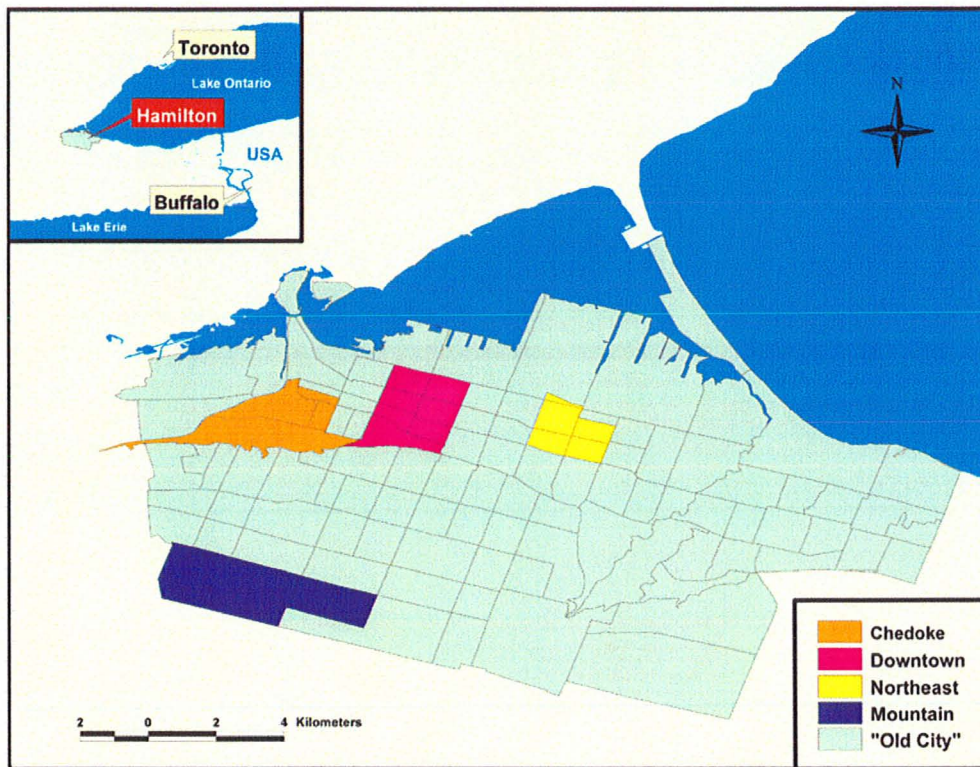


Figure 2: Map of Hamilton and Study Sites (Source: Eyles et al., 1999)

2.3.3 Ethics

Ethical approval from the McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB) was in place before proceeding with the study. As part of the ethics protocol, the following materials were submitted and accepted by the MREB (Appendices 3-6): (1) focus group participant recruitment poster and newspaper ad (Appendix 3); (2) letter of information and consent form for focus group participants (Appendix 4); (3) interview schedule for focus group sessions (Appendix 5) and; (4) letter of information and consent form for survey respondents (Appendix 6). All materials were written using language that was easy to understand and avoided the use of scientific jargon. Focus group participants were verbally reminded of their rights as research participants prior to the start of each focus group session. A confidentiality statement was also read to participants at the start of each session (refer to Appendix 7). To ensure confidentiality, focus group participants' real names are not used in the study. For remuneration, focus group participants received \$25 and survey respondents were entered into a draw for two \$100 gift certificates.

The researcher asked focus group participants for their permission to tape-record interviews. The focus group participants also had the opportunity to indicate whether they would like to receive a summary of the research findings and/or a copy of their transcribed focus group interview. A summary of the study findings and/or a copy of the transcript were sent to those participants who requested them in the summer of 2007

(refer to Appendix 8 for the focus group findings summary). Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to request a copy of the study's findings. A summary of the survey findings (refer to Appendix 9) was mailed to approximately 250 respondents in March 2008. The distribution of research findings to participants contributes to rigour since it acts as a *checking* procedure, thus enhancing the credibility of findings (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2005).

2.4 Phase 1: Collection and Analysis of Qualitative Focus Group Data

Pope and Mays (1995) state “qualitative work can reach aspects of complex behaviours, attitudes and interaction which quantitative methods cannot” (p. 45). Firestone (1993) adds that qualitative research is especially important as the basis for learning more about the views or insights of others. In order to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of SoP based on residents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods, focus groups were conducted in the two study sites. According to Patton (2002), “the object [of focus groups] is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others” (p. 386). Focus group sessions were conducted in May and June 2006. Optimally, focus groups should consist of six to ten individuals and run between 60 to 120 minutes in length (Morse and Richards, 2002; Patton, 2002; Cameron 2005). In this case, focus groups averaged six to eight participants and ran on average between 60 to 90 minutes.

2.4.1 Sampling & Recruitment

A purposeful sampling strategy was used for this study in order to obtain information-rich sources (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) explains that “information-rich [sources] are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry” (p. 230). Since the purpose is to learn more about residents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods, those participants who were both living in the two neighbourhoods of interest and were willing to discuss their experiences were recruited. Participants were required to be 18 years of age or older and lived in their neighbourhood for two or more years. The rationale behind these criteria is that it helps to obtain information-rich sources in addition to recruiting individuals who are not minors and therefore unable to give informed consent.

The specific type of purposive sampling commonly used in the organization of focus groups is referred to as a *homogeneous sampling strategy* (Kuzel, 1999; Patton, 2002). Homogeneous sampling, according to Patton, “...typically involves bringing together people of similar backgrounds and experiences to participate in a group interview about major issues that affect them” (p. 236). Kuzel (1999) adds that homogenous sampling is also used as a means to control for context (i.e. here, context is neighbourhood). In order to recruit focus group participants using a homogenous sampling technique, efforts were made to organize focus group sessions with the help of local neighbourhood associations.

The organization of focus groups in the NEI neighbourhood was facilitated through contact with two members of the local neighbourhood association. The contact information of these individuals was obtained via the City of Hamilton's website⁸, specifically the neighbourhood association page. These individuals distributed information by word of mouth to recruit neighbourhood residents. It is recognized that such a recruitment strategy is laden with bias as many of the participants were familiar with each other. For this reason, it is possible that some participants may not have felt comfortable sharing their true feelings about their neighbourhood during the focus group sessions. In addition, it is possible that some of these individuals were heavily involved in their neighbourhood and, as such, their perceptions or attitudes would differ from those with a lesser form of civic responsibility to their neighbourhood. Three focus groups were conducted in the NEI neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood council listings for the SWM were not available on the city's website. For this reason, participants were recruited using various means including placing ads in the local newspaper, named *Mountain News* (see Appendix 3). *Mountain News* is delivered to all residents in the SWM area. Additional recruitment strategies included running ads on the community television channel (i.e. Channel 14) and placing recruitment posters at local grocery stores. Despite these recruitment efforts, the response rate from residents in the SWM neighbourhood was quite low. For this reason, additional recruitment efforts involved contacting the Ward Councilor (i.e. member of Municipal Government) for assistance. This initiative led to an invitation to join the Councilor during an organized 'open-office' forum at the local mall (i.e. The West Cliff mall). A display table with recruitment posters was set-up next to the Councilor's display table. This latter strategy did not prove to be successful and as a result, the neighbourhood boundaries were extended in an effort to enhance recruitment. In sum, two focus groups were conducted in the SWM neighbourhood.

2.4.2 Interview Schedule

The focus group interviews were semi-structured and an interview schedule was used by the researcher. Interview schedules consist of questions to help guide the focus group and are usually informed by relevant literature (Dunn, 2005). In this case, the interview schedule (see Appendix 5) consisted of ten questions developed by two members of the research team and based on their knowledge of the SoP construct. For instance, participants were asked, *If you were to describe your neighbourhood, what would enter your mind?* and *Do you think your neighbourhood is different from others? If so, how is it different?*. The questions were designed to stimulate participants to discuss how they feel and think about their neighbourhoods. The focus group sessions were tape-recorded (i.e. with permission of participants) and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then analyzed by the researcher.

⁸ The City of Hamilton's website is www.myhamilton.ca.

2.4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis was the selected method of data analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (p. 1278). Here, the method employed for the focus group interview transcripts adapts the framework of thematic content analysis as suggested by Burnard (1991) whereby “the aim is to produce a detailed and systematic recording of the themes and issues addressed in the interviews and to link themes and interviews together under a reasonably exhaustive category system” (p. 462). The coding process involves the connecting similar views and ideas into wider groups (Creswell, 2003). The process of analysis adapted Burnard’s (1991, p. 462-464) fourteen-stage process, collapsed below into 7 stages:

1. Field notes were made after focus group interview sessions (i.e. as part of reflexive journal).
2. Transcripts were read in order to become *immersed* in the data. Notes were jotted in the margins.
3. Transcripts were read a second time. An open coding strategy was used to assign initial codes to data as a starting point for categorization. Irrelevant information was marked as a means to exclude it from further analysis.
4. The categories from Stage 3 were organized on separate sheets of paper and reviewed in an attempt to group similar categories/themes together (referred to as *collapsing*).
5. A list of categories/themes and sub-categories/sub-themes were developed.
6. The transcripts were revisited a third time and coded using the list of categories and sub-categories determined in Stage 5. Different colours of markers were used as a means of differentiating categories/themes and sub-categories/sub-themes.

The disadvantage of using a coding technique is *decontextualization* whereby contextual information is often (& erroneously) disregarded or ignored (Ayres, Kavanaugh & Knafl, 2003). In order to avoid misinterpretation a final *recontextualization* step was followed in the analysis of transcripts:

7. The transcripts were revisited a fourth time to identify/distinguish older respondents from younger respondents and longevity of residence using coloured pens and symbols.

Case NWI and Case SWM were analyzed separately (i.e. within-case analysis) in Chapters Four and Five, respectively and then compared for further analysis (cross-case analysis) in Chapter Ten.

2.5 Phase 2: Collection and Analysis of Quantitative Data

2.5.1 Survey Tool

The survey titled *Defining 'SoP': A Survey of Hamilton Residents*, was sent to residents in both study neighbourhoods (see Appendix 1). The survey consisted of 46 items that related to how people felt about their neighbourhood. The 46 items were grouped into the following four sections:

1. Items that have to do with your feelings about your neighbourhood ($n=24$)
2. Items about your experiences with and feelings about your neighbours ($n=6$)
3. Items concerning feelings about moving away from your neighbourhood ($n=9$)
4. Items concerning feelings about how neighbourhood influences your health ($n=7$)

Four additional questions were included, three of which asked participants to rate their health and one which asked participants to either select from a list or provide an answer about how they perceived their neighbourhood. A series of demographic background questions were included in the final section of the survey ($n=13$). The following demographic questions pertaining to age and residential longevity were used in the analysis: (1) *In what year were you born?* and; (2) *How many years have you lived in this, or a nearby neighbourhood?*

2.5.2 Survey Sampling

The Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University assisted in the data collection process by sending the survey via mail to a random sample of 1250 households in the two study neighbourhoods in December 2006. The survey sampling was conducted in three stages:

1. A letter was sent to participants to inform them that they had been randomly selected to be a survey respondent.
2. The survey was sent one week later with a letter of information, consent form and a pre-paid return envelope.
3. Reminder and/or thank-you notes were sent to all households.

Survey packages were sent to all households that failed to respond in the first three stages of the mail out. Ineligible survey respondents were defined as those living in households outside the boundaries of the study neighbourhoods (i.e. delineated by census tract) and those under the age of 18. For test-retest reliability purposes a second wave of the survey was sent to a smaller sample of households in both study neighbourhoods in June 2007. Data entry of individual survey responses was conducted by ISR and a final SPSS dataset was sent to the research team.

2.5.3 Survey Data

The results of the qualitative analysis of focus group transcripts were used to build upon the quantitative investigation. As mentioned, the *Sequential Exploratory Design* framework (Creswell, 2003) dictates that the results of qualitative analysis guide the quantitative phase of the study.

The survey, titled “Defining ‘SoP’: A Survey of Hamilton Residents” was mailed to 1250 randomly selected households in both study neighbourhoods over a three month period (i.e. December 2006 - February 2007). Six months later, a second wave of survey mailouts was conducted for test-retest reliability purposes. This study used the first wave of the survey for analysis. The dataset was analyzed using both SPSS 15.0 and Excel for Windows. Prior to analyses, missing values from the dataset were imputed using a computer software program, *Amelia* (Honaker, King & Blackwell, 2007).

2.5.4 Survey / Quantitative Data Analysis

The survey sample was first compared to data obtained from the 2001 Census, for both study neighbourhoods, in order to determine whether the sample reflected the population. A series of two-sample difference of proportions tests were conducted to evaluate statistically significant differences between selected survey and census variables. Test statistics (Z_p) were computed for each variable of interest by first calculating the pooled estimate followed by the standard error of the difference of proportions (see McGrew & Monroe, 2000, p. 138 for a complete list of formulas). The null hypothesis for the problems is that there is no difference in proportion between the two samples. A two-tailed procedure was applied with $\alpha=.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected with Z_p values greater than or equal to ± 1.96 .

Next, using the results of the thematic analysis as a guide, survey items corresponding to each of the 12 sub-themes were selected for further analysis. A series of two-sample difference of proportions tests were conducted to assess statistically significant differences between the following pairs based on (1) age and (2) length of residence (i.e. in order to determine whether SoP perceptions vary according to these two variables):

(1) Age Groups:

- i. 18-34 years & 60+ years (i.e. Young vs. Older respondents)
- ii. 35-59 years & 60+ years (i.e. Middle-aged vs. Older respondents)
- iv. 18-34 years. & 35-49 (Young vs. Middle-aged respondents)

(2) Length of Residence Categories:

- i. 0-10 years vs. 21+ years
- ii. 11-20 vs. 21+ years
- iii. 0-10 years vs. 11-20 years

The null hypothesis for the problems is that there is no difference in proportion between the two samples. Since the two-sample difference of proportions test is appropriate for variables with two possible responses, a common practice is to collapse the response categories (McGrew & Monroe, 2000). The possible responses that made up the 5-point Likert scale - strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree - were collapsed into two response categories: strongly agree/agree and neutral/disagree/strongly disagree. The variable of interest here is the strongly agree/agree category. A two-tailed procedure was applied with $\alpha=.05$ and as such, the null hypothesis is rejected with Z_p values greater than or equal to ± 1.96 . Given the exploratory nature of the study, bivariate analyses were conducted as opposed to multivariate analyses. In addition, some of the age groups and length of residence categories of interest were small in terms of sample size counts and for this reason, multivariate analyses were not feasible⁹. Both cases were assessed separately according to each of the themes. The results of the two cases are assessed together (i.e. across case analysis) in Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusions.

2.6 Summary of Research Methods

This study is part of a larger multi-phase project, which operationalized SoP through the development of a valid and reliable survey measurement tool. The first part of the project involved conducting focus groups in two separate neighbourhoods in order to generate themes for the construction of survey items. This study is based on a case study design and uses a mixed methods approach to collect and analyze data gathered from the two study sites. More specifically, the collection of data and the analysis process followed a *Sequential Exploratory Design*, whereby the qualitative results were used to guide the quantitative phase of the study. The qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed according to three variables of interest: (1) age; (2) length of residence and; (3) neighbourhood type.

⁹ Sample sizes of less than 30 are considered to be small (McGrew & Monroe, 2000).

3 CHAPTER THREE: CASE PROFILES

The following section provides an overview of the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods in the context of the wider Hamilton community. Using a combination of Census data in addition to information gathered from books about the history of Hamilton, the *Hamilton Spectator* newspaper and City of Hamilton webpage¹⁰, the two study sites are compared in order to highlight their differences.

3.1 Study Area Background: Past to Present

Cities are often identified by their monikers; Hamilton has been characterized by several monikers including *the Ambitious city*, *the Birmingham of Canada*, *the Lunch bucket city*, *the Pittsburgh of Canada*, *the Steel town* and less affectionately as *the Mistake by the Lake* or *the Armpit of Ontario*. These labels acknowledge that industry, mainly steel manufacturing, helped to shape Hamilton's identity on both local and national scales. However, Hamilton's image is currently in the process of transition; many of the aforementioned monikers are beginning to lose their significance. Specifically, Hamilton is reinventing itself through economic activity; the city once recognized primarily as a manufacturing centre is now regarded for its strides in healthcare and education (Barber 2004; Eyles, 2007; Rusk, 2007). Historian, Bill Freeman (2001) agrees, "the city has evolved from a one industry 'Steeltown' into a more diversified city" (p. 178). Yet, the diversification of Hamilton is not without consequence; the once robust industrial core has experienced a decline. The impact of industrial activity has manifested itself in its surrounding residential area, including the NEI neighbourhood, where development began around 1904. A 1994 *Hamilton Spectator* article profiled the development of part of the NEI neighbourhood (see Henley, 1994). The article cited a *Hamilton Herald* reporter, who in 1925, illustrated the evolution of the area as follows:

It seems but yesterday that the district around Barton and Ottawa streets were referred to as Crown Point and other folks laughed at tales of the muddy clay down there. But some of those same folks who laughed have since moved there because of what Crown point is now. It is a revelation to see the change from a mere mudhole to a section of the city equal to the finest city blocks uptown (as quoted in the *Hamilton Spectator*, 8 January 1994, p. 18).

The article went on to mention the present day efforts of residents to reinvigorate the area and to "re-establish the community pride which was so much a factor in the early history of the area" (p.18). Today, the area that defines the NEI neighbourhood falls into two

¹⁰ Parks, recreational listings, and maps were examined using the City of Hamilton's webpage: www.myhamilton.ca.

municipal government wards – Wards 3 and 4. During the 2006 municipal elections, the *Hamilton Spectator* described the state of Ward 4 as follows:

Known for its concentration of heavy industry, this east end ward [Ward 4] has a mix of income levels and housing. Its largest retail focus, the Centre Mall, is set to be redeveloped after years of decline. Pollution from factories continues to be a concern for residents, who experienced soot fallout on their homes this year. The area has also suffered from flooding during major storms because of insufficient infrastructure, which is set to be replaced over the next decade (28 October 2006, p. A15).

The *Hamilton Spectator* described the part of Ward 3 that comprises the NEI neighbourhood as experiencing a similar level of decline:

Its retail strips along Barton, Ottawa, King and Main streets continue to struggle with abandoned storefronts. Residents are concerned about property standards and crime, particularly drugs and prostitution (27 October 2006, p. A11).

Population statistics calculated using data from several Canadian census files confirms that the area that Hamilton once prided itself upon has also experienced a steady decline in population. In 1951, the population of the NEI neighbourhood was 18,266, decreasing to 17,829 in 1961, to 17,235 in 1971 and to 13,303 in 1981 and finally to 12,169 in 2001. This trend is attributed to industry; as industry occupied the north end of the city, the residential area expanded south of the city proper (Nader, 1976). Between 1996 and 2001, the population in the SWM increased by approximately 2,300. The population in the NEI neighbourhood showed a meager increase of less than 40 people during that same period. The population statistics concur with the following statement by Freeman (2001):

The numbers living on the mountain have been increasing rapidly, but the lower city has been stagnant or even shrinking. It is almost as if two cities have developed in Hamilton. The mountain is a city of suburbs, and shopping malls where most people get around by car ... the lower city, by contrast, has much older housing stock (p. 179).

Accordingly, the area that defines the SWM neighbourhood is part of two municipal wards (i.e. Ward 7 & Ward 8) and is classified as residential but in close proximity to an abundance of retail services (31 October 2006, *Hamilton Spectator*, A10; 1 November 2006, *Hamilton Spectator*, A13).

3.2 Differentiation Using Census Data for the NEI and SWM Neighbourhoods

The two study areas are further differentiated in terms of physical environment and socio-demographic characteristics. Socio-demographic data were extracted from the 2001 Canadian census¹¹ and information related to the availability of parks/green space and/or recreation facilities was gathered from the City of Hamilton webpage. Table 1 provides a summary of select variables for the city of Hamilton and both study neighbourhoods¹².

3.2.1 Physical Environment

The population of Hamilton increased from 624,360 to 662,401 between 1996 and 2001 (i.e. 6.1% population percentage change). The 2001 statistics show that the total land area of Hamilton is 1371.8 square kilometers with a population density of 482.9 persons per square kilometer. The SWM is categorized as having a low population density (2003.5 persons per square kilometer) in contrast to the high-density NEI neighbourhood, which boasts 5070.4 persons per square kilometer. The variation in population density between the two study areas results from differences in total land area. In 2001, the population of the NEI area was 12,169 and the total land area was 2.4 square kilometers whereas the SWM consisted of a slightly larger population (i.e. 12,422 persons) distributed over a total land area of 6.2 square kilometers. However, it should be noted that the two census tracts that comprise the SWM are different sizes; census tract 2.02 (see Appendix 10) has a total land area of 4.5 square kilometers while census tract 1.04 cover 1.7 square kilometers. In contrast, the four census tracts of the NEI area are proportionally equal in size.

¹¹ 2001 Census statistics were used as the study was conducted prior to the release of the 2006 data.

¹² The 2001 Canadian census data for the city of Hamilton and both the NEI and SWM census tracts were accessed and extracted from the Statistics Canada online E-STAT database. This study classifies the two study neighbourhoods based on census tracts using Figure 2 (Eyles et al., 1999) and census tract maps as guides. The NEI is comprised of four census tracts (i.e. 53, 54, 58 & 59) whereas the SWM consists of two (i.e. 1.04 & 2.02). Individual census tracts were aggregated to formulate two study neighbourhoods. Proportions were tabulated for select variables and converted to percentages while averages and medians were calculated for income-related variables. Variables were grouped into two categories: physical environment and socio-demographics.

Table 1: Socio-demographic variables for the City of Hamilton and Both Study Areas in 2001 (Source: Statistics Canada, 2001).

Variables	Hamilton	SWM	NEI
<i>Physical Environment</i>			
Population, 1996	624360	10070	12135
Population, 2001	662401	12422	12169
Total land area in square kilometers	1371.8	6.2	2.4
Population density (persons per square kilometer)	482.9	2003.5	5070.4
<i>Demographics</i>			
Population, 65 years + (%)	14.3	12.2	10.5
Legally married (%)	53.5	60.7	40.8
Lone-parent families (%)	15.3	15.1	26.2
<i>Employment</i>			
Unemployment rate (%)	5.7	6.6	6.5
<i>Education</i>			
Persons with less than high school education (%)	8.6	8.9	14.7
Persons with some high school education (%)	18.3	14.2	29.2
Persons with high school graduation certificate (%)	14.3	13.3	17.3
Persons with some university (%)	22.6	22.1	6.3
With bachelor's degree or higher (%)	16.2	15.9	3.0
<i>Income</i>			
Composition of total income %			
- Employment income	78	81.2	76.6
- Government transfer payments	10.5	9.4	17.4
Average income \$, population 15 yrs. +	32379	31769	22881
Median income \$, population 15 yrs. +	24987	28204	18963
Average family income \$	73364	72251	47338
Median family income \$	63031	70976	42835
Incidence of low income % - economic families	13.4	12.9	24.5
Incidence of low income % - population in private households	16.7	13.5	28.7
Average household income \$	64080	70528	42090
Median household income \$	52786	68645	36975
<i>Housing</i>			
Average value of dwelling \$	183113	187711	96984
Owned, dwelling (%)	68.3	81.1	69.9
Rented, dwelling (%)	31.7	18.9	29.8
Persons with one year mobility status (movers) (%)	13.0	11.1	12.7
Period of construction, before 1946 (%)	16.7	0.88	67.0
Period of construction, 1946-1960, dwelling (%)	20.4	4.9	24.5
Period of construction, 1961-1970 (%)	18.4	3.7	3.8
Period of construction, 1971-1980 (%)	17.4	10.1	3.0
Period of construction, 1981-1990 (%)	14.2	43.7	1.4
Period of construction, 1991-1996 (%)	5.7	17.3	0.20
Period of construction, 1996-2001 (%)	7.1	19.4	0.21

3.2.1.1 Parks/Green Spaces and Recreational Facilities

In terms of parks/green space and/or recreational facilities, the two neighbourhoods were compared using information gathered from the City of Hamilton webpage. According to its website, the City of Hamilton boasts 3100 acres of parkland spread across 457 locations. The NE neighbourhood is comprised of the Crown Point East Park in addition to Dofasco property that was donated to Hamilton to be used as green space. Part of the Pipeline Park, which is a large grassy path, runs through the neighbourhood. A single recreational facility is located in the neighbourhood, including the Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club, which houses a pool and runs programs for children, youth and adults. Nearby recreational and park facilities include the Ivor Wynne Stadium and Gage Park. In contrast, the SWM neighbourhood offers its residents access to a number of multipurpose parks including: (1) William Schwenger Park; (2) Garth Street Reservoir (2 full-size regulation soccer fields); (3) William Connell Park; (4) Elmar Park; (5) Turner Park; (6) Dr. William Bethune Park (outdoor pool); (7) Ryckman's Neighbourhood Park (bocce courts); (8) Falkirk West Park; (9) Carpenter Neighbourhood Park; and (10) Kennedy East Park. In terms of recreational facilities, SWM residents must rely on nearby arenas and stadiums located in adjacent neighbourhoods such as the Mountain Arena and Skating Centre and the Westmount Recreation Centre.

The surplus of green space/parks in the SWM in comparison to the NEI neighbourhood may be due to the fact that, in general, the SWM neighbourhood is younger (i.e. in terms of housing development). As such, the SWM may have benefited from improvements to neighbourhood design and zoning plans that allotted space for parks. These zoning plans may not have existed prior to 1946 (i.e. when the majority of homes were built in the NEI neighbourhood) and thus were not applied in the design of the NEI neighbourhood. The following housing statistics concur with Freeman's (2001) abovementioned quote. From Table 1, it is evident that the houses in the NEI area are very old in comparison to those located in the SWM area. As mentioned, the majority of homes in the NEI area were built before 1946 (i.e. 67.0%) and virtually no homes were built in the SWM area before 1946. Less than 9% of houses in the NEI area have been constructed between 1961 and 2001. Conversely, the majority of homes (i.e. 80.4%) were constructed in the SWM area between 1981 and 2001. Moreover, the average dwelling value of a house in the NEI neighbourhood in 2001 was \$96,984, whereas the average value of a dwelling in the SWM area is almost twice as much at \$187,711. In addition, more dwellings are owned in the SWM (i.e. 81.1% owned & 18.9% rented) than in the NEI neighbourhood (i.e. 69.9% owned vs. 29.8% rented).

3.2.2 Demographics: Age Composition

Table 2 presents data on the representation of age groups as a percentage of total population in each of the two study neighbourhoods and for the City of Hamilton. The

following Table 3 collapses the age groups into four groups: (1) young (0-19); (2) young adults (20-34 years); (3) middle-aged adults (35-59 years); and (4) seniors (60+ years). Table 2 shows that age composition of residents in the SWM and NEI neighbourhoods are similar. In addition, the age compositions of both neighbourhoods are comparable to the City of Hamilton averages. When the age groups are collapsed into four categories differences arise between the two neighbourhoods and the City. Table 3 below shows a slight overrepresentation of young residents (i.e. 0-19 years) in the SWM in comparison to the City and the NEI neighbourhood. There is also an overrepresentation of young adults (i.e. 20-34 years) and an under-representation of middle-aged adults (i.e. 35-59) in both neighbourhoods in contrast to the City averages. In terms of seniors (i.e. 60+ years), the NEI neighbourhood shows to have the lowest proportion in comparison to the SWM and the City.

Table 2: Age Groups as a Percentage of Population

Age Group (years)	Hamilton (%)	SWM (%)	NEI (%)
0-9	12.4	15.5	14.4
10-19	13.5	16.4	13.9
20-29	12.4	10.7	13.6
30-39	15.4	16.2	18.0
40-49	15.7	16.1	15.8
50-59	12.0	9.5	10.3
60-69	8.3	5.8	6.6
70-79	7.0	5.7	5.2
80+	3.2	3.7	2.2

Table 3: Collapsed Age Groups as a Percentage of Population

Age Group (years)	Hamilton (%)	SWM (%)	NEI (%)
0-19	25.9	31.9	28.3
20-34	19.4	26.8	31.6
35-59	36.1	26.1	26.1
60+	18.6	15.2	13.9

3.2.3 Socio-demographics

The socio-demographic variables that will be explored in this section include: (1) employment; (2) education and; (3) income.

3.2.3.1 Employment

The 2001 unemployment rate in the NEI area is 6.5% and 6.6% for the SWM. The unemployment rate for both neighbourhoods is higher than Hamilton's rate of 5.7%.

3.2.3.2 Education

The education-related variables were based on the highest level of schooling achieved by individuals 20 years and over. A high proportion of people in the NEI neighbourhood reported having either 'less than high school education' or 'some high school education'. Only 6.3% of the population in the NEI neighbourhood reported having some post-secondary education, while even less (i.e. 3.0%) reported obtaining a Bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, 22.1% of the SWM population reported having some post-secondary education and 15.9% of the population hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. The proportions for the City of Hamilton are similar to those of the SWM, with 22.6% of the population reporting some university education and 16.2% of the population attaining a bachelor's degree. Therefore, the NEI neighbourhood is classified as "low education" whereas the SWM is classified as "high education".

3.2.3.3 Income

The 2001 statistics show that the incidence of low-income¹³ economic families¹⁴ in the NEI neighbourhood is almost double that of the SWM and above the average for the city of Hamilton. In the NEI neighbourhood, the incidence of low income for economic families (i.e. 24.5%) and incidence of low income in private households¹⁵ (i.e. 28.7%) is nearly twice as large as the SWM incidence of low income values (i.e. 12.9% for economic families and 13.5% in private households). Table 1 also shows that a larger percentage of the NEI population rely on government transfer payments. In terms of poverty rates, it should be noted that Hamilton's rate of poverty (i.e. just over 18%) is higher than Ontario's rate of 14.7% (Borcea, 2008). More so, income averages and medians reported for the SWM are larger than the NEI neighbourhood. For instance, the median household income in 2001 for the SWM was \$68,645 in contrast to \$36,975 for the NEI area.

¹³ The low-income cut-off (LICO) for an area the size of Hamilton in 2000 and for an economic family of four was \$34,572, according to the 2001 Census Dictionary.

¹⁴ An 'economic family' is defined in the 2001 Census Dictionary as "a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption" (p. 153).

¹⁵ According to the 2001 Census Dictionary, a 'private household' is defined as "a person or group of persons occupying the same dwelling" (p. 175).

3.3 Chapter Summary: NEI versus SWM

The case profiles demonstrate that the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods not only differ in terms of spatial location but also in terms of a number of physical environment and socio-demographic variables. The NEI neighbourhood is therefore characterized as a high density area comprised of older homes and properties that lack green/park and recreational spaces. In contrast, the SWM is a low-density area comprised of newer homes with a surplus of green/park and recreational spaces. The residents of the SWM neighbourhood are well-educated and have higher incomes in comparison to those in the NEI neighbourhood. Lastly, in terms of age composition, the two neighbourhoods are fairly similar.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: QUALITATIVE PHASE

4.1 Focus Groups and Thematic Analysis

The scope of the following chapter is based on the results of the analysis of focus group sessions. The first section of the chapter provides a detailed overview of the focus group sessions including information about participants. Next, the results of the thematic analysis is presented in order to underline the emerging themes and sub-themes. The cases are presented separately in accordance to themes and sub-themes. Excerpts from focus group participants are included as part of the results to illustrate the meaning and interpretation of each theme and its related sub-theme. The results of the analysis will begin to demonstrate how individuals communicate their SoP. The themes and sub-themes are considered as components of SoP. The results suggest that individuals formulate a SoP towards their neighbourhoods through various combinations of SoP components. An equation may be used to understand the conceptual framework presented in the following chapter whereby SoP is the sum of component parts (i.e. themes and sub-themes). The SoP equation is not uniform given that the component parts may be arranged and weighted in various ways. The combinations will differ between individuals according to a number of extraneous demographic variables. Here, the variables of interest are age of respondent, length of residency in neighbourhood and type of neighbourhood.

4.1.1 Summary of Focus Group Sessions

Three focus group sessions were conducted in the NEI neighbourhood in late May and early June of 2006. A total of 18 residents participated (i.e. 16 females and 2 males). Two focus group sessions were conducted with a total of 13 residents from the SWM neighbourhood (i.e. 9 females and 4 males) in June of 2006 (see Tables 4 and 5 for details about focus group participants). Since participants were not asked to disclose their age, it was not possible to group participants into distinct age-specific groups. Instead, the participants have been categorized into two broad groups: (1) younger participants and (2) older participants. The groupings imply an age-related component but were determined based on several factors. The researcher combined information gained through participant observation and demographic information that was voluntarily provided by participants during the interview process to determine group assignment. For instance, during the interview process, participants often made reference to their employment history, which helped to distinguish retirees from non-retirees. In addition, at the start of each focus group session, participants were asked to provide details about the number of years they lived in their neighbourhood. Several participants lived in the study neighbourhood for their entire lives but moved to different homes within the neighbourhood during the course of their lives or left the neighbourhood for a period of time to return later. As a result, these participants noted the number of years lived in their last home/residence within the neighbourhood and will be identified using an asterisk (*) in Tables 4 and 5. Therefore, the *younger participants* group consists of

residents who are non-retirees and through visual observation either young or middle-aged adults. The *older participants* group is comprised of retired individuals, many of whom acknowledged their senior citizen status as well as identification by the researcher through visual observation. As a result, there were 12 young and 6 older participants in the NEI focus groups while the SWM focus groups were comprised of 8 young and 5 older participants. Table 4 and Table 5 summarize details about focus group participants in the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods, respectively

Table 4: NEI Focus Group Participants Details

Name of Participant	Group Y=Younger; O=Older	Length of Residence # of Yrs.	Sex M = Male; F= Female
Beth	Y	11*	F
Christa	Y	22	F
Denise	Y	25*	F
Danielle	Y	19	F
Gemma	Y	30	F
Julia	Y	16*	F
Kacey	Y	5-6	F
Karen	Y	8	F
Noreen	Y	15*	F
Roger	Y	5-6	M
Sarah	Y	8	F
Selma	Y	19	F
Angela	O	41	F
Dottie	O	61	F
Hettie	O	5.5	F
Jessie	O	25*	F
Jane	O	41	F
Jon	O	5.5.	M

Table 5: SWM Focus Group Participants Details

Name of Participant	Group Y=Younger; O=Older	Length of Residence # of Yrs.	Sex M = Male; F= Female
Aaron	Y	21	M
Belinda	Y	24	F
Dorinda	Y	7	F
Diane	Y	16	F
Gary	Y	7	M
Joseph	Y	20*	M
Marnie	Y	3*	F
Sandra	Y	20	F
Gladys	O	13*	F
Polly	O	50	F
Peter	O	7	M
Sally	O	50	F
Valerie	O	20	F

4.2 Focus Group Sketches

In the larger scheme of the pilot study, the purpose of the focus group sessions was to gain an understanding about how people think and feel about their neighbourhood. It was surmised that participant responses would be mainly based on individual experiences. Yet, through the process of reflexive journaling, it was noted that the personal background or biographies of participants informed and were reflected in their statements. More specifically, participants' personal contexts permeated the discussions. Thus it is important to provide details with regard to participants' personal contexts as a basis of understanding responses more thoroughly. The information summarized in this section provides details about focus group dynamics in addition to individual sketches. The sketches are presented in an effort to assist in the interpretation of interview excerpts included as part of this chapter, which outlines the results of the thematic analysis.

4.2.1 NEI Focus Groups

The three focus group sessions were organized by the researcher with the help of two members of the Crown Point neighbourhood association, Beth and Noreen. All of the focus groups were held in Noreen's home. The first focus group session took place in the evening on May 30th, 2006 and six individuals participated in the discussion: Roger, Kacey, Jon, Hettie, Angela and Jane. Roger and Kacey were a middle-aged married couple who lived in the neighbourhood for 5-6 years, previously residing in Stoney Creek. Roger was well-known in the neighbourhood because he drove a taxi. Kacey had a quiet demeanor and commented that she was known in the neighbourhood as being "Roger's wife". The couple enjoyed living in the neighbourhood but were contemplating

moving out of the area because Roger was experiencing health problems, which he attributed to dust and pollution being released from the nearby industries. Roger expressed his strong desire to remain in the neighbourhood despite his health issues. Hettie and Jon were a retired married couple who lived in the neighbourhood for approximately 5.5 years. They had previously lived on the West Mountain in a larger home but they wanted to downsize to a smaller home for their retirement. Although Hettie spoke very highly about the neighbourhood, she expressed a deep connection to her previous home on the West Mountain. She said, “Give me my house back on the Mountain and I’ll go up there... That was the one I was emotionally attached to”. Later, Hettie shared her that her desire to return to the West Mountain was largely based on its location as her children and grandchildren lived nearby. Jon agreed and shared, “That’s one thing about it. Coming down here. I wish that I had stayed close to the kids”. The couple found themselves leaving the neighbourhood up to three times a week for volunteer commitments at a nursing home on the West Mountain. Angela and Jane were also retired senior citizens, however, they both had resided in the neighbourhood for over forty years. As long-time residents of the neighbourhood, Angela and Jane were quite knowledgeable about neighbourhood history, residents and happenings. Jane commented that her longevity of residence had led her to become quite involved in neighbourhood activities such as street sales and as such she was regarded by her neighbours as a ‘go to’ person. She explained, “I don’t know if I’d call it ‘leader’ [her role], but somebody to start what they [the neighbours] want to start or do something”.

The second focus group took place on May 31st, 2006. The six participants were all female: Beth, Karen, Noreen, Selma, Danielle and Christa. As mentioned, Beth and Noreen assisted in the organization of focus groups. Beth lived in the NEI area since 1964 and moved to Calgary as a young adult but returned to the neighbourhood with her husband, who was employed by Dofasco. She and her family have since resided in the neighbourhood for 11 years. Noreen lived in the Crown Point neighbourhood all of her life. Her great grandfather built houses in the area in the 1940s and many of her family members still resided in these homes, which were dispersed throughout the neighbourhood. She and her family lived in their current home, which was purchased from her mother, for 15 years. Both women were homemakers and spearheaded the Crown Point neighbourhood association in their spare time. In 2004, Noreen and the Crown Point Community Group were awarded a Sustainable Community Recognition award from the City of Hamilton for their dedication to the neighbourhood. The City of Hamilton acknowledged that the closure of the neighbourhood school, Lloyd George, led to the loss of the group’s meeting space, however, Noreen opted to continue the group from her basement. Noreen confirmed the ongoing work of the group despite the loss of its official headquarters, however a recent flood (which occur frequently in the Crown Point area) had damaged much of the group’s materials. Without a designated space, the group was operating on an informal basis but still organizing events such as the annual Easter egg hunt.

The closure of Lloyd George school caused the children in the neighbourhood to be transferred to several schools in the surrounding area. According to Noreen's daughter Christa, who was in her early twenties, the closure of the school had a negative effect on the cohesiveness of neighbourhood residents:

Everybody, we all used to meet and walk to Lloyd George... we were all kinda together... Beth's child goes to a different school, my brothers all go to a different school, it's kinda hard [when] everybody knows each other, the kids knew each other more because they went to school together now there's kids that you know but you don't know too much about them because if they went to the same school you'd know the parents more and you'd know a little more about them.

Christa was a professional athlete, pursuing a career in boxing and her training had led her to Chicago for training on several occasions.

Karen also participated in the second focus group session. She lived in the neighbourhood for eight years and worked at the Hamilton General Hospital. Karen, had a quiet demeanor and although the interviewer prompted her to elaborate on responses, she remained reserved with her answers, offering little or no elaboration on statements. Selma was a homemaker and resided in the area for 19 years. Her family had previously lived in Toronto and moved to Hamilton in order to find affordable housing. Her daughter, Danielle, in her twenties, an electrical wholesaler, also resided in the neighbourhood for 19 years. Danielle had recently moved into a home on the same block as her mother and although she had previously moved out of the neighbourhood a few times with friends, she always managed to stay in the Northeast area of the city. It was important for Danielle to live close to her family:

Well, I think the umbilical cord is still attached to my mother, I've never lived more than five minutes away from her... I just can't. I can't move, I don't know what it is, so wherever she is, I belong.

The third and final focus group session took place on June 1st, 2006 with six female participants: Julia, Jessie, Denise, Gemma, Dottie and Sarah. Julia grew up in general vicinity of the neighbourhood and lived in her current home for sixteen years. The move to the NEI neighbourhood was prompted by her ex-husband's employment at Dofasco. Jessie, Beth's mother, arrived in Canada in 1950 and lived in the area for twenty-five years. She settled in the area and later moved to Calgary for 19 years but returned to the neighbourhood for retirement. Her other daughter, Denise, followed her to Calgary but also returned to the area to raise her family and has been there for 25 years. Gemma, a middle-aged woman, settled in the neighbourhood thirty years ago after moving to Hamilton from the East Coast. Dottie, who is Noreen's aunt, was born and raised in the neighbourhood; she has resided there for 61 years. Dottie's vast experience

in the neighbourhood enabled her to provide rich information about the evolution of the neighbourhood. Dottie was proud to acknowledge her long-time residence in the area and noted that she was there 'before the foundry'. In contrast, Sarah grew up in downtown Hamilton and moved to the neighbourhood eight years ago with her young family. She shared that at first she was quite reluctant to move to the area but has since grown to appreciate what the neighbourhood has to offer her family.

4.2.2 SWM Focus Groups

Two focus group sessions were held on June 15th, 2006 in the community room of the Fortino's Grocery store on the SWM. Seven individuals participated in the first focus group: Peter, Dorinda, Gary, Marnie, Diane, Valerie and Gladys. Dorinda and Gary were a married couple and had resided in the SWM neighbourhood for 7 years with Gary's father, Peter, a senior citizen, aged 84. The family moved to their home from Guelph after the passing of Peter's wife. Dorinda, unlike the majority of SWM focus group participants, expressed that she did not feel connected to her neighbourhood nor did she feel the need to be connected:

I never really looked to belong to a neighbourhood. For me a home is just where you live... If you're lucky your neighbours are friendly. If you're lucky they're also quiet and nobody's into drugs or anything or crime. And basically you belong at work or you better belong at work or you're in a lot of trouble. Or you belong to a club but you don't... your neighbourhood is just where you live. That's how I've always seen it.

Marnie lived in the West Mountain area for most of her life but resided in her present neighbourhood for three years. She and her family wanted to live in a smaller home but with more green space. Unlike Dorinda, Marnie and her family moved from their previous neighbourhood because they were eager to gain a sense of connection to neighbours with similar values:

I felt that the neighbourhood itself... I just had ... some sense of disappointment with the surroundings of other people. I didn't feel that we shared the same beliefs and support group type things for the atmosphere for the children to grow up. People around me were much more... their children were all over the street and they just didn't seem focused on the children. I didn't really feel that we had a lot in common that way.

Diane and her family lived in the neighbourhood for 16 years. Valerie and Gladys, both retired, lived in the neighbourhood for 20 and 13 years, respectively. Gladys resided in the West Mountain area since 1958, according to Gladys, "it's my area [the West Mountain] and it's what I like".

There were six participants in the second SWM focus group: Sandra, Belinda, Joseph, Aaron, Sally and Polly. Sandra and Belinda were middle-aged adults who resided in their neighbourhood for 20 and 24 years, respectively. Joseph and his son Aaron lived in their neighbourhood for just over 20 years. Joseph had his house torn down in order to rebuild a new house on the same property. During the construction process, Joseph had moved to the East Mountain for a period of one year. Aaron had recently graduated from teacher's college in Ottawa and was living at home for the summer while searching for employment. Sally and Polly were retired women who had both lived in the area for 50 years.

4.2.3 NEI Focus Groups vs. SWM Focus Groups

Through the process of reflexive journaling, reference was made to the difference in focus group dynamics between neighbourhoods. The NEI residents seemed to be more involved in their neighbourhood in comparison to SWM residents. The researcher noted several reasons that may account for this distinction. First, the NEI participants belonged to the same neighbourhood association and lived in close proximity to one another. Second, many of the NEI participants were neighbours. The SWM neighbourhood did not have neighbourhood associations and although some of the participants knew each other, many were strangers. Also, the NEI area covers a smaller area and has a high population density whereas the SWM neighbourhood spans a larger area with a lower population density.

4.3 Qualitative Results

The results of the thematic content analysis are summarized in Table 6 below. The grouping of similar sub-themes led to the development of thematic category labels. The following five overarching themes were identified as:

1. Attachment
2. Emotions
3. Physical Environments
4. Significance
5. Social Environments

Each theme encompasses several related sub-themes as illustrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6: *Theme* and Corresponding *Sub-themes*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>
1. <i>Attachment</i>	i. <i>Belonging</i> ii. <i>History</i> iii. <i>Rootedness</i>
2. <i>Emotions</i>	i. <i>Concern</i> ii. <i>Familiarity</i> iii. <i>Pride</i>
3. <i>Physical Environments</i>	i. <i>Built Environments</i> ii. <i>Natural Environments</i>
4. <i>Significance</i>	i. <i>Evaluation</i> ii. <i>Reputation</i>
5. <i>Social environments</i>	i. <i>Sense of Community</i> ii. <i>Neighbours</i>

4.3.1 An Overview of Themes & Sub-Themes

4.3.1.1 Attachment

The *attachment* theme explores variables that influence the bond forged between people and place. Here, the relationship of interest is that which exists between people and their neighbourhood. The sub-themes included as part of this category are: *belonging*, *history* and *rootedness*. *Belonging* is described as feeling comfortable in one's surroundings. When one belongs, he or she experiences the feelings associated with 'fitting-in' as opposed to those associated with being 'out of place'. *History* captures the passage of time and the process of developing strong feelings towards place through experiences acquired over time. *Rootedness* implies being settled, inertia or 'staying put' and can be visualized as a tree rooted in soil as seen below in Figure 3. The expression 'putting down roots' is often used to describe the process of settling into a particular place.



Figure 3: A 'rooted' tree

4.3.1.2 *Emotions*

The thematic category *emotions* encompassed expressions of affect and types of feelings associated with neighbourhood living. The category consists of three sub-themes, which include: *concern*, *familiarity*, and *pride*. Feelings of *concern* varied from worries about personal and/or material safety to uncertainties about the future of the neighbourhood. *Familiarity* is closely linked to the satisfaction gained from the ability to identify one's surrounding neighbourhood with ease or neighbours themselves both by face and by name. *Familiarity* also involves the satisfaction one gains being identified by or well-known to others in the neighbourhood. Expressions of *pride* often involved reference to the reputation of the neighbourhood within the Hamilton community. Residents acknowledged the stereotypes about their neighbourhoods that were both positive and negative in nature and in turn, how these stereotypes affected their self-respect and self-worth. The sub-theme, *pride*, captures the feelings associated with pride and is separate from the sub-theme, *reputation*, which is part of *significance* theme (see below). *Reputation* is perceived as an awareness rather than a feeling.

4.3.1.3 *Physical Environments*

Here the *physical environments* theme includes perceptions about the *built* and *natural environments*. Aspects of the *built environment* include infrastructure such as dwellings and amenities in addition to neighbourhood layout and location. The *natural environment* encompasses perceptions related to the availability of green space and threats to the natural environment such as pollution.

4.3.1.4 *Significance*

The theme *significance* refers to the basis of meaning associated to neighbourhood living. Here, expressions of meaningfulness were manifested through two sub-themes including: *evaluation* and *reputation*. *Evaluations* often involved comparison of one's neighbourhood to other neighbourhoods. It also refers to the significance attached to one's neighbourhood based on past experiences in other neighbourhoods, often childhood experiences. The significance attached to one's neighbourhood was often based on one's awareness of the area's reputation or the overall perceived knowledge of the area's reputation in the Hamilton community. Therefore, *reputation* is understood to be an awareness rather than a feeling (i.e. *pride*).

4.3.1.5 *Social Environments*

The *social environments* theme focuses on the types of relationships formed within neighbourhoods. The sub-themes in this category include: *sense of community* and *neighbours*. *Sense of community* encompasses activities that promote camaraderie among residents or venues that provide the opportunity or a meeting place for residents to

congregate. The sub-theme, *neighbours*, includes reference to the bonds between neighbours and how relationships with neighbours influence one's experience in their neighbourhood.

4.4 Chapter Conclusions

The first part of this chapter provided a detailed overview of the five focus group sessions including information about the participants. In particular, participants were grouped into two broad age groups (i.e. older or younger). In addition, details were provided about each participant's length of residency in the neighbourhood. Next, the results of the thematic analysis were outlined including an overview of each theme and corresponding sub-themes. The five themes and twelve sub-themes provide the framework for the organization and presentation of findings in the following two chapters; the results of the qualitative analysis for Case NEI and Case SWM are presented in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, respectively.

5 CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR CASE NEI

5.1 Attachment

5.1.1 Belonging

Christa, a younger resident, illustrated her sense of belonging to the NEI neighbourhood by recounting her short-term experience living in Chicago for athletic training. Although the neighbourhood in Chicago was upscale in comparison to the NEI neighbourhood, she did not feel as though she fit in. Her sense of belonging was marked by feeling accepted by those around her and for this reason, her SoP was not influenced by the reputation or outward physical appearance of the neighbourhood. She was reluctant to leave her home and neighbourhood because she realized that in doing so, her sense of comfort and belonging was compromised in the process.

I leave right and I'm gone for a few months. So it's tough. It's just the area. When I run in Chicago in my area, you know I don't even put my headphones in, I put them on my shirt and I'm always... it's not that I'm in a bad neighbourhood... **I'm in the suburbs now but it's totally different like people just look at you.** It's just way different out there. **And I thought the suburbs you know fancy richer people because that's a little further away from the city but they area not very kind out there.** Even though, I stay at a condo, and the older ladies in there are so rude, I'm like okay, "I'll just take the stairs instead of the elevator". So yeah, it's different, way different. I say I'm pretty attached over here [NEI neighbourhood]. **I don't want to leave, I don't want to go anywhere else. I'm tall and different anyways so I already get looked at, I'm already judged before I even have to say anything you know what I mean? It's different when you leave like cause now I've had the experience of leaving so I don't want to do it too often.** CHRISTA

Like Christa, Danielle also experienced living outside of the neighbourhood. She explained that it is important for her to be comfortable in an area. She gained the sense of comfort through friendly exchanges with neighbours who she considered as extended family members. For Danielle, being a younger member of the neighbourhood was like being a member of a large family and for her this imbues a sense of belonging.

I've moved to a couple of different places on my own, with a friend and for the most part it's been in the same area between Main and Ottawa... and then **I always tend to migrate back here because you get to know everybody and because the majority of people**

have lived here for years on end you know it is kinda an extended family. You may not talk to everybody but just knowing that they are there and that it is the same people. It's pretty comforting... I know people who have lived here for multiple years but I've never talked to them. But if they are going for a late night walk to the store or just around the block you still say "hi" or they just say something like "nice weather" so even though they've been here for awhile you might not talk to them but you know that they've just been there and it's comfort. DANIELLE

It is possible that the sense of belonging that Christa and Danielle, both in their 20s, referred to developed over time, as they were both born and raised in the neighbourhood. Yet, Roger, who lived in the neighbourhood for just over five years, described a similar sense of belonging and comfort. Like Christa and Danielle, Roger was reluctant to leave the neighbourhood despite health problems that he attributed to poor air quality in the area. From Roger's description, it was evident that belonging was a difficult concept to describe as he struggled to explain its meaning. He described his short experience in the neighbourhood as evoking a sense of belonging similar to that experienced in the neighbourhood where he was raised.

I think that's one thing that connects me to this neighbourhood is the fact that I feel I belong in this neighbourhood. There's a sense of belonging. My sense of belonging in this neighbourhood is unbelievable. I feel like I belong here, you know? **Actually, I feel like I belong here, like I belonged to the neighbourhood I grew up in.** I grew up... I went to public school, high school... I lived in the same neighbourhood... I wasn't one of these kids that moved around eh? We stayed on the same street, we had a little farm, and we stayed in the same house. We stayed right in the neighbourhood. And that's the way that I feel like in here since I've been here that's how I feel. I feel very comfortable. **And I would like to stay here, but the only thing that would move me away from here is my health. And my wife's health, but other than that... I love it.** ROGER

Selma, a middle-aged participant, viewed the neighbourhood as an extension of her family. Hypothetically speaking, she explained that her sense of belonging would be compromised if her neighbours moved out of the area. For Selma, the sense of comfort and belonging was gained through relationships with her neighbours.

I think if everyone would start moving out then I'd probably wouldn't stay either you know **because it's hard to make a family again... someone you're comfortable with.** So right now I'm attached, I would find it very hard to leave. SELMA

Noreen shared that her husband wanted to live on the West Mountain but that she insisted that they settle in the NEI neighbourhood. Overall, she felt that she would not fit-in on the West Mountain. She felt that she belonged in her neighbourhood because the residents considered each other as equals – no one was superior or inferior, according to Noreen, everyone was “on the same step”.

For me, no... [moving to West Mountain] I didn't think I'd fit in. I even said it to my husband. My husband was brought up there. His parents made the big fancy Italian home and stuff. I've just always lived down here and to be honest, I've always... **I can open my door and yell at my kids. Up there, I couldn't picture myself doing that, I would be looked upon as – ohmigod there's that crazy mother – I hate that. I feel comfortable here, I always did. It took a long time for my husband to, with Dofasco and the kids and the dirt and the whole bit – no big Italian gardens in the backyard but hey... this is home and I don't plan on going anywhere... I think that we're all on the same step. Nobody is better or no one is below us. We're all equals around here. I think we're all the same and we just kinda fit.** NOREEN

Noreen, a long-time resident, explained that her sense of belonging was partly gained through her involvement in activities at Lloyd George Elementary School. That sense of belonging was lost when the neighbourhood school, which was built in 1917, closed in 2003. Noreen explained that many residents were connected to the neighbourhood through the elementary school. Many residents were either alumni of Lloyd George School or had children who attended the school.

We all went to the same school that closed [Lloyd George School] and our parents went to that school, so it was emotional after when Lloyd George closed because we all kinda felt that it was our school and that they took it away from our kids but such is life and you just move on. NOREEN

Similar to Noreen, Christa was concerned about the impact of the school closure on not only the neighbourhood children but on the neighbourhood as a whole. According to Christa, the school fostered relationships and connections among residents.

Everybody, we all used to meet and walk to Lloyd George or we'd walk to Queen Mary... we were all kinda together and now that school being closed... It's kinda hard where everybody knew each other... The kids knew each other more because they went to school together now there's kids that you know but you don't know too much about them because if they went to the same school you'd

know the parents more and you'd know a little more about them.
CHRISTA

From these excerpts, it is evident that a sense of belonging develops in different ways for neighbourhood residents. For some, feeling comfortable in one's surroundings and accepted by others leads to belonging. For others, belonging develops with the help of tangible structures. Here, the school provided a means of establishing a sense of belonging and connectedness among residents. In addition, short-term and long-term residents as well as younger and older residents expressed a similar sense of belonging.

5.1.2 History

According to several residents, attachment to their neighbourhood developed through an accumulation of experiences over the years. For some, longevity of residence played a role in establishing a strong connection to their neighbourhood. Others, including Denise, noted that personal family histories tied many individuals to the neighbourhood. She explained that many individuals who were raised in the neighbourhood either remained there or returned later to raise their own families.

I think it's because we have generation after generation living here. Like I said, I went to school with Julia, I went to school with Dottie's sisters and brothers and they moved here. We don't live in the same houses, maybe not even on the same block but if you go up any of these side streets, you'll see people or people's family, children of people that we went to school with, living and still coming back into this area. I ran into two people in the last three months that just moved down the street here, moving back into the area after 25, 35 years. DENISE

Similar to Denise, Noreen recalled her own personal familial connection to the neighbourhood. Her children were the fourth generation to reside in the area. Her home and the neighbourhood itself was a storehouse of memories. She also pointed out that her family settled in the area before industry. Her intention to continue living in the neighbourhood emphasized her attachment to the area.

I think this area since I've been here has always been family. I mean half of us have family here. **Like I mean this house my grandfather built, we bought it off my mother and you know he built homes on this street. My aunt still lives down the street since like the 40s. We all grew up here and its been family... Even before Dofasco. Our, I mean their homes were right there. Our roots are better than Dofasco... so we're not leaving.** NOREEN

Many of the older focus group participants expressed attachment to the area by quantifying their longevity of residence. In Angela's opinion, the number of years that she resided in the neighbourhood justified her attachment to the area. On the other hand, Jessie and her daughter, Beth, explained that their choice to return to the area after years of living in Calgary confirmed their attachment to the neighbourhood.

Well obviously, I like it [the neighbourhood] because **I've been there for 41 years**, so I mean I really like my neighbourhood.
ANGELA

You know like I moved away and I still come back to the same place. And there's all sorts of places that I could have moved to but ah, I just liked it down this way. JESSIE

Oh yeah, I own it [the neighbourhood] (laughter). I've been here for a long time since 1964... you know, I went to kindergarten down here. I've lived in Calgary in between and in other areas but I always come back, it's familiar. And it's the same people out here.
BETH

In sum, it is evident that for the majority of focus group participants, attachment to the NEI neighbourhood also involves a temporal component. This temporal component includes an accumulation of experiences over the years (i.e. through longevity of residency) and/or memories associated with living in the neighbourhood.

5.1.3 *Rootedness*

Many residents illustrated their attachment to the neighbourhood through the desire to remain in the area. The older participants often used their life stage as a rationale since many were retired and aging-in-place (i.e. opting to reside in their homes into old age). Jessie confirmed that given her age, she did not foresee herself moving out of the neighbourhood unless it was for a health-related reason.

At 70 years old, no I don't think so [with regards to moving]. Only one way I'll be moving now... Unless I fall and break my hip again.
JESSIE

Angela outlined her options as a senior citizen to either remain in her home or to downsize to an apartment. Angela was adamant about staying in her neighbourhood as long as possible and she took comfort in having immediate neighbours who were also in the same stage in life.

I'm happy where I am. I would not move. When you get up in years, well am I going to sell my house or go into an apartment?

But you try to hold onto it as long as you can and I really like where I am and I like, as I said, a senior on one side, a senior on the other [ref. to her immediate neighbours]. ANGELA

Later, Angela added that her rootedness would only be compromised by her and her husband's inability to care for their home in the neighbourhood. She explained that her husband was beginning to experience health problems and that he was finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with chores and outdoor maintenance.

I wouldn't want to move. I only, as I said, the move that we will make, we'll have to go into an apartment because I don't know how long my husband's going to be able to do work [mowing the lawn, etc.]. **He's having problems with his back, and so you sit back and think to yourself how long are you going to be able to stay there? We hope we can stay there, we hope that for a few more years yet, but you never know!** But, yes, we really like it there. ANGELA

Jane, an older participant, voiced her strong intention to remain in her neighbourhood. She shared the details of a dream about moving and the feelings of dismay that followed. Having lived in the neighbourhood for 41 years, she witnessed the evolution of the area. She explained that although many of the shops on Kenilworth Avenue closed or relocated, she was still pleased with the amenities that were offered. Moving out of the area, according to Jane, would involve leaving her neighbours who she considered as friends. In closing, Jane alluded to the fact that despite being rooted, leaving the area is inevitable, especially for those individuals in the late stages of life.

I wouldn't want to move anywhere else. I think I've had a few dreams where I've moved and then I saw what the people had done to the house or something and I went 'No! I want to move back there, I don't like what I moved into'. No, I like being there because it's close to the Center [Mall], Ottawa Street, Kenilworth, not that there's as much on Kenilworth as there used to be... Like I said, I wouldn't want to leave my friends, my neighbours. **Even though, people shall go when they... [pass away].** JANE

Another older participant, Dottie, explained how she responded to her family's suggestion to move into an apartment. It was evident that Dottie was attached to her home and her neighbourhood. Her description not only underlined her rootedness but also exemplified her SoP. For Dottie, the neighbourhood was an important part of her daily life. She enjoyed being outdoors and visiting with neighbours. She felt that an apartment would confine her to an indoor life, which would lead to seclusion.

I said do you want me to go crazy? I said because if I have to live in an apartment, I'll go crazy. I said I like my little house. I can go out and cut the grass, I can sit on the verandah, I can go visit this and that. I said what am I going to do in an apartment? I'd go stir crazy.
DOTTIE

Unlike Angela, Jane and Dottie, Jon only lived in the neighbourhood for 5.5 years. From his explanation, it seemed that his intention to remain in the neighbourhood was less about the neighbourhood itself but rather the effort involved in relocating. He recounted his recent experience of moving from the Mountain to the NEI neighbourhood. In terms of rootedness, it appeared that Jon was still attached to his previous home on the Mountain.

Yeah, I wouldn't want to move now. I would if I had to, but I wouldn't want to. I think more so since I moved from the Mountain... we did a lot of work on the house on the Mountain. And after we got it all done and that, and I retired and decided well I'm going to sell it and move to an apartment. So I sold it. I had a beautiful backyard too. And after I got it all done and then moved, about 3 weeks after we sold the house, we went over to the next door neighbour's and stood in the doorstep and she [his wife] cried. I wouldn't move again. Not after the other one's all set up. JON

Jon's wife, Hettie, highlighted the affordability of the NEI neighbourhood for those receiving pensions as the main reason for remaining in the area. During the focus group discussion, it became clear that Hettie was still attached to her previous home and neighbourhood on the Mountain. Her rootedness was influenced by external factors such as finances, whereas this was not the case for the other older respondents, who were long-time residents (i.e. Angela, Jane & Dottie).

Like I said before, the house is paid for, that's enough to keep me there. Because when you're living... I don't care who it is... And when you're living on senior pensions, you can't always afford to live on the Mountain or wherever you want to live. You live within your means. And with what you've got. I know some people who have better pensions than others, but ours is not bad. But I don't want to... I wouldn't want to move from where I'm at. I'm there for the duration. The house is paid for. I wouldn't want to move. HETTIE

The young participants had difficulty explaining the reasons behind their intention to remain in the neighbourhood. Unlike the older participants, it seemed that the younger participants lacked the type of investment in the neighbourhood that is acquired over time. Beth and Christa stated their intention to remain in the neighbourhood but failed to

provide a rationale. Beth shared that although her husband preferred to live in a rural area, she refused to move. Christa was uncertain about where the future would lead her; however, she stated that she planned to return to the neighbourhood.

My husband always says ‘Okay I’m going to move out to the country’ and it’s like... ‘Don’t let the door hit you on the way out’ like ‘Have fun’, you know I wouldn’t go. BETH

I wouldn’t go far... maybe the beach and Main Street – that’s as far as I would travel... unless I find somebody rich and famous in Chicago, I’d probably drag him here anyway. So I don’t see myself going so far. CHRISTA

Roger’s health issues (i.e. breathing problems) compromised his ability to become fully immersed in neighbourhood living. Although he expressed that he was indeed rooted, he noted that moving was imminent given his health problems. For Roger, the relationships with neighbours that he built over the last five years contributed to his rootedness.

Well I definitely feel rooted. **Once you’re in the neighbourhood and you live in the neighbourhood, and the neighbours are good and you feel like you’re yourself in the neighbourhood. I think you tend to... you don’t want to move anywhere else, you know? So I guess... I think it definitely would be hard to move.** But, I think with me more so than my wife, my wife... she’s the one that has a real hard time with moving anywhere. She doesn’t like moving... when she’s somewhere she likes to stay there eh? **Whereas me, I figure I probably could, because of the environment... Definitely have a hard time because our neighbours are so great.** ROGER

It seems as though there is a temporal process associated with rootedness given the responses from both older participants and those with long-time residency in the neighbourhood. The short-term residents did not seem to be rooted given that their impetus for remaining in the NEI neighbourhood was more or less based on the stress involved with moving. Roger alluded to the fact that his wife did not particularly enjoy the process of packing and moving. However, from Roger’s comments it also seems plausible that one is able to accelerate the process of becoming rooted if the surroundings (e.g. friendly neighbours) are favourable.

5.2 *Emotions*

5.2.1 *Concern*

The focus group participants shared their concerns about the present state of the neighbourhood in addition to concerns about its future. Overall, residents acknowledged that they did not have immediate concerns about their personal or material safety. Yet the evaluation of concerns demonstrates that issues or things that cause residents to become concerned skew perceptions of place in a negative way.

Hettie and Jon expressed that they had initial concerns about safety when they first moved into the neighbourhood from the Mountain 5.5 years earlier.

I feel comfortable and safe. Uh-huh. Even though I have complaints about... I don't like dirt and I have complaints about... I like everything to be clean and – but I'm comfortable living there. I do have ADT [home alarm system]. That's my own choice. It's just that I... **I don't think I need ADT down here, but we put it in when we moved down here because we didn't know what it was like being around Center Mall. Because we came from the Mountain when we moved down here.** HETTIE

Jon acknowledged that despite the neighbourhood's reputation for being unsafe, the area was just the opposite.

The crime rate is very low for an area you'd think the crime rate would be high – the crime rate is low. JON

The lack of concern about personal or material safety contributed to Selma's feeling of safety and comfort. She explained that feeling safe and comfortable were part of the reasons why she and her family have remained in the area for 19 years.

It's been 19 years and we're still here, umm, it's a good neighbourhood. I'm comfortable here. **To me it's a good neighbourhood, safe neighbourhood that's why we're still here, there is nothing chasing us out.** SELMA

Christa also perceived the neighbourhood as being safe and she pointed out that she had no concerns about running around the neighbourhood while listening to music. In contrast, she expressed that she did not feel comfortable doing so in the upscale neighbourhood where she had lived while training in Chicago. She pointed out that the older neighbourhood residents 'kept an eye' on the neighbourhood and she often encountered them while running in the evenings.

I'm looked out for, if I'm running at night, I'll always see, there will be a few old ladies and they'll wave down McNulty and I feel comfortable... I can have my earphones loud and I don't have to worry that someone is going to come out from the bushes or something. CHRISTA

Sarah shared concerns about residents who rented properties in the neighbourhood. She viewed the behaviour of renters as troublesome; in particular, she noted that rented properties lacked upkeep. In her opinion, these properties were 'eyesores' in terms of neighbourhood aesthetics.

I don't know if it's home or maintenance, in my neighbourhood, **it's the renters**. The homeowners are the only ones that keep their house nice... they [renters] don't care if the bushes don't get trimmed down, if their grass grows through its highest bushes. The garbage stays there for three weeks... SARAH

Beth agreed about the lack of effort by renters to maintain their properties. In Beth's opinion, "when you rent something you really don't care as much".

Jessie's concern was based on her knowledge of the neighbourhood's evolution. Having been a long-time resident of the neighbourhood, she was able to comment on neighbourhood changes and progression. The basis of her concern stemmed from the closure of small shops due to the popularity of the Center Mall. In Jessie's opinion, the character of the neighbourhood was compromised with the closure of the shops.

I'm very disappointed that Kenilworth doesn't have any... as many stores in it as they used to. The same as Ottawa Street. That was great to be able to walk up both of those streets and do your shopping. But now that the big mall's there, it sort of closed off a lot of the little stores and that so... but yeah. JESSIE

Denise, Noreen and Christa shared their concerns about the effect of the closure of Lloyd George school on both parents and children in the neighbourhood. Denise pointed out that the closure not only placed stress on parents but that it could possibly influence people's decisions to move into the neighbourhood, especially those with young children.

There's everything for your kids with the exception of the school now... **If I had young children now, that's the only thing that would deter me because there's no way that [neighbourhood kids] should be going to school so far away.** It doesn't allow for... you have to have a two-income family now to survive. And if you have a two-income family, how can you have one parent taking a child to school and picking him up at noon, bring him home and

taking him back? You can't do that. What if my child gets sick? How does he get home? You know? It puts too much pressure on a family because the distance is too far to have both parents working and I don't think that's fair to the children. I think they should have a school closer than the kilometers they are right now. DENISE

Noreen viewed the school's closure as compromising neighbourhood cohesion. The school also served as a community center and its closure left many organizations without a common meeting ground. When children were transferred to a number of different schools in the surrounding area, connections between both children and parents in the neighbourhood were severed.

[Elementary school closure] That's our main thing. **This area now is transferred all over – school wide – we were once were a bunch – one school and everybody know each other.** What was once a second meeting place I guess for the church, I guess a meeting place for parents, for kids for everything and now **we have our children are all kind of separated in different areas so, it's hard...** NOREEN

Christa questioned the future viability of the neighbourhood given the closure of the school. She explained that there were few options for young parents in terms of where to send their children to school (i.e. the school board assigned the student to the school). She alluded to the fact that the school's closure might influence people's decisions to remain in the neighbourhood.

With people now, like the daughters of people that have lived for a long time like Danielle has a daughter and stuff you know, when we start of have kids, where are our kids going to have to go because Queen Mary might say no. It's just – it's going to be hard for the people coming up like for this generation. Because you have a lot of young couples, like at the corner, they have kids that are 3 or 4 so they'll be going to school soon... If you plan on staying here you know what I mean. CHRISTA

Christa was not only concerned about the younger generation of residents but also the older residents. She pointed out that many of the senior residents relied on public transportation but there were only a few bus shelters in the neighbourhood. Christa's concern about the older residents highlights the reciprocity between neighbourhood residents. In an abovementioned excerpt, Christa noted that it was the older residents who contributed to her feeling safe while running in the evening. Here, Christa outlined her concerns for the safety of the older residents.

There's a few [bus] shelters one near this road over here and another one outside the house where it stops but that's a good point [the need for more shelters], there's a lot of older ladies in the neighbourhood take the bus during the rain... CHRISTA

In the same regard Jon, one of the older participants, shared his concern for the younger residents in the neighbourhood by noting the potential danger posed to children by speeders.

And the speeders that go up that street. It's dangerous for the children going to class. Because this is all hours of the day these people are speeding. Because a lot of kids pass by our house... JON

The evaluation of the sub-theme, concern, identified several aspects of neighbourhood living that residents perceive as causes for concern such as renters, the closure of the elementary school, lack of bus shelters and speeders. These concerns were brought up by both younger and older participants as well as those with short and long-term residency in the neighbourhood. Interestingly, Jon's initial concerns for his personal safety switched to concerns for others once he settled into the neighbourhood. Overall, the concerns encompass those which threaten the vitality of the neighbourhood as well as its residents.

5.2.2 *Familiarity*

Danielle explained that her SoP is in part shaped by her extensive knowledge of the neighbourhood, which developed over her 19 years of residency. Danielle knew or recognized the majority of residents in the area. She stated "well some people say that I know this place like the back of my hand". She acknowledged that as a young individual there were opportunities for her to live in different areas but she cited her familiarity of the neighbourhood as one of the main reasons why she chose to reside there.

When you grow up here, you get so used to it, it's like well why bother moving out? You're comfortable, you know everybody... Sure it's always nice to explore something but you know everything is so familiar – you know exactly how many minutes it takes to get to the Barn... Everything is just proportioned to where it should be. I don't want to go somewhere and not know where the closest thing is. And people knowing everybody in the neighbourhood. You know, you are always open to making new friends and everything but it's not the top of my list. DANIELLE

She illustrated her familiarity with the neighbourhood with an example and how her sense of familiarity embodies a sense of security and comfort.

It's actually kinda funny, I don't do this because I have nothing to do but after I put my daughter to bed if I go to bed, this is going to sound kinda psychotic but when I lay my head down and I hear a door on a car close at a time when it is not supposed to I get up and I look. Like there was this one time when a couple of kids were actually going through some people's cars and not that I had everybody's car door timed, but you just get in such a routine where it's the same thing over and over and you hear something out of place and you're like – wait a minute. So I looked over and they were actually just walking past my car... umm you get in the habit of everything and that's what makes it comforting and relaxing because you know when something is going to go on and what's out of the ordinary and when something should be looked after.
DANIELLE

Noreen explained that the familiarity among neighbours goes beyond a superficial level. She gave an example of disciplining children in the neighbourhood to illustrate the fact that familiarity among neighbours upholds the peaceful atmosphere in the neighbourhood.

Sometimes you see the neighbours and the kids are fighting and the kids are fighting and the parents are fighting and it's just a big neighbourhood war. Here it's just more again familiar. If my kids are being bad, then kick its ass and send it home. Treat it like your own. And the same with anyone else's cause we can kinda say 'Get the hell out of here and go home' and that's it kinda thing. And there's no hard feelings. There's no one banging on your door.
NOREEN

Angela identified her home as contributing to her SoP in the neighbourhood. Her investment (i.e. both financial and temporal) in her home has imparted a sense of familiarity and comfort that enables her to consider her dwelling as a 'home' rather than a 'house'.

Like my son has a lovely home, and when I come well that's a house. When I come to my place it's a home. That's the way I feel. You know all these big places that they have and everything, my little house is mine. And I'm happy with it. I think it's the way you decorated it and the way you looked at it everyday...
ANGELA

Jane considered her role in the neighbourhood as imparting a sense of familiarity to others. She is identified for her longstanding residency (i.e. 41 years), her gardening skills and her leadership initiatives. Other participants also remarked that their identities

were well established in the neighbourhood. Roger shared that he was recognized for his profession as a taxi driver while Hettie and Jon were known to their neighbours as the couple who drove the little red car.

I'm the flower lady (laughter). They come and ask me information on plants that grow, which they don't know some of them, and I've got... they know who I am and they know I've lived there for a long time. If they want to organize something or want to do something, how about asking Jane first to see if she'll cooperate or start it.
JANE

Therefore, it is evident that feelings of familiarity develop over time as residents become more knowledgeable with their surroundings (i.e. developing place identity). In addition, familiarity is also strengthened by identifying residents and being identified as a resident of the neighbourhood.

5.2.3 *Pride*

The focus group participants acknowledged the negative stereotypes about their neighbourhood. They acknowledged that their neighbourhood was considered by outsiders as one of the least desirable areas in Hamilton, however, their SoP was not influenced by the negative stereotypes. Overall, the participants felt proud to be part of the neighbourhood. The following exchange between Julia, Dottie and Denise addressed the longstanding stereotypes.

I wouldn't hesitate to tell anybody where I live and I've had lots of people comment. What are you talking about? It's great, great neighbours, convenience of everything and I mean you know, it's clean. Cleaner than some neighbourhoods that I know of and you know, **just come on down and have a look because unless you come down and look, then you know, just because it's the east northend or whatever you call it, the industrial area, doesn't mean anything.** JULIA

We always got that rap. DOTTIE

The foundries. How can you live down by the foundries?
DENISE

Several respondents were quick to defend the neighbourhood by highlighting the advantages of living in the area, including friendly and reliable neighbours.

It's so comfortable, if something were to happen you could go knock on your neighbour's door and they'll help you... You're safe because they'll help. It's a very, very comfortable area and I'm proud to be here. **And if someone does say something about**

beyond the tracks, it doesn't matter... well that's home. It's a nice area, there's beautiful people around here... SELMA

Noreen and Christa attributed their pride to being part of third and fourth generations, respectively, to have lived in the neighbourhood. Noreen explained that although her husband would prefer to live on the West Mountain, she was adamant about remaining in the area despite the negative stereotypes.

Yeah, I'm very proud. Like I said, we represent, my grandparents... **we had a chance to move out a while ago before we built on and we did look elsewhere. My husband would have been right on the West Mountain in a heartbeat. But I won over and we stayed here.** I'm proud I'm here. I've always been here so...
NOREEN

Christa acknowledged that the neighbourhood is a part of her heritage and that she is not ashamed of being from 'behind the tracks'. Instead, she is proud to identify herself as being born and raised in the NEI neighbourhood in Hamilton.

I'm pretty proud. I represent Hamilton [as a professional boxer]. Even when I'm in Chicago [for training], you know everything comes back to my roots, where I'm from, especially my community **you know I always say, I'm behind the tracks and people always say – and people are like – oh really? – Yeah, that's where I live...** CHRISTA

Based on the excerpts above, it is clear that feelings of pride are entangled with references to the negative reputation of the NEI neighbourhood. From these excerpts, feelings of pride are distinguished as sentiments related to dignity and satisfaction. Feelings of pride involved turning pessimistic stereotypes into positive, optimistic outlooks. However, the majority of comments were made by those with long-term residency status in the neighbourhood suggesting that feelings of pride develop over time.

5.3 Physical Environments

5.3.1 Built Environments

Perceptions of place were formulated by evaluating the condition of the surrounding built environments such as homes, places of business and playgrounds. In terms of amenities, the focus group participants were satisfied with the availability and variety of shops and services in and around the neighbourhood, including the Centre Mall. Yet, there were mixed sentiments about places of business in the neighbourhood.

It seemed as though Gemma's SoP had changed for the better with the closure of a strip club, which was located near her home.

They actually closed the Pic so I'm right around the corner from the Pic, the strip joint so... It's really good now that they closed that up eh? GEMMA

Angela was quick to point out her disapproval of a car lot located in the neighbourhood, which she considered to be a blot on the landscape. The visual image that ensued from Angela's description is that of a property in need of upkeep.

Oh I like where I live. Like I said I've been there for 41 years, but the only problem is we have a lot of... **the car lot on the corner is not abiding by the rules at all. I think that should be cleaned up a lot better than what it is right now... It's dirty. They have a lot of tires there. They're parking big trucks there that should not be [and] that's a concern. It's just not what I... not only that, they're changing oil there and I don't think they should be changing oil there. ANGELA**

For others, the perception of place was less about optics and more about meaningfulness. Danielle explained that the NEI neighbourhood would not be considered to be the most aesthetically appealing neighbourhood in Hamilton. However, Danielle pointed out that for her, SoP was not about the visual appearance of the built environment.

Even though they are not brand new houses it is not what it looks like but it is what you make of it kind of thing. That's what makes everybody get along because it's not that important to everybody. That's what makes it so relaxed, you don't have to worry about certain things. DANIELLE

Many of the older participants voiced concerns about the state of the neighbourhood park. According to Jon, Denise and Angela, the park was not well-maintained. The lack of upkeep did not have a direct effect on them per se, however, it was evident that they considered the park to be important for young children in the neighbourhood. Jon remarked that the park, if properly maintained, could act as a haven for children.

I would like to see the park cleaned up too. Better for the kids, because there's no place for the kids to go, you know? I would like to see a place where the kids could go instead of on the streets you know? If they had a separate park and it was kept clean by the city, maintained by Dofasco, you know that would be even better for the children of this neighbourhood. They'd have a place where you could go. JON

And as time's gone on, not having younger children anymore, my children also went to school in this area, **I would like to see the park being kept up.** But the park's been there since I was seven, eight years old. DENISE

Angela's description of the park suggested that it had been vandalized and neglected over the years. She claimed that the park was unsuitable for children and that she would not allow her grandchild to play in the park.

The city could clean up the park! The children have one park in the neighbourhood right down here on this side of the tracks... It's got to be the dirtiest park. **It's not fit for the children to use. It's a dirty park.** That park should be cleaned up. The slides, the climbers, the whole park, the fountains, everything. I took my grandson out there when he was down visiting, and I wouldn't let him play there. It's just a dirty park. It's just garbage, graffiti on the walls of the building, the fountain was dirty. ANGELA

In the same regard, many of the focus group participants felt that their neighbourhood was neglected by the City of Hamilton in terms of maintenance and upkeep of public spaces. Selma viewed the City's slow response in repairing pedestrian railings as a prime example of the lack of concern for the neighbourhood from City officials.

The Kenilworth railings you know under the bridge – oh they were so bad. It took years and years [to get the City to address the problem]. It wasn't safe to walk up there. And I was saying, someone is going to get badly injured, cut... The railings were chipped, bent, the sidewalk was uneven and the lightings weren't working good under the bridge – **it took them a long time before they paid any attention to that. And I think it is because of our area [reputation].** SELMA

Similarly, Beth felt that other areas received more attention from the City, especially prominent neighbourhoods located in Ancaster.

You have to **wait until Ancaster** and that **get all of their schools before they do a good one down here.** BETH

The comments about aspects of the physical environment varied from the upkeep of infrastructure to visual aesthetics of homes and places of business. Those with longer residency were able to base their insights on the evolution of the neighbourhood, however, there did not seem to be any differences associated with responses made by younger or older residents in addition to those with short or long-term residency.

5.3.2 *Natural Environments*

A pressing issue for focus group participants was the pollution emitted by nearby industries. Several focus group participants attributed health problems to poor air quality while others, mainly those who had resided in the area for longer periods of time, noted improvements in air quality. According to Jon, dust was not affecting his health but it was compromising his ability to keep his home and vehicle clean. He and his wife, Hettie resided in the neighbourhood for 5.5 years and were becoming accustomed to the pollution.

I've got a lot of problems with the dust from Dofasco... The dust. The awful dust. You wash your car and you get... the stuff is incredible. You sweep the veranda, it's the same thing... 7 days a week, 365 days a year. JON

According to Roger, the dust was the main contributing factor to his breathing problems. He felt that the only solution to his breathing problems was to move out of the area. He and his wife Kacey expressed their reluctance to move out of the area solely because of the dust.

There's more dust here in this area than probably any area in the city, and the dust seems to just cover your house and if you leave a crack in the windows, it'll actually go in your house. **The dust is a big factor in breathing. Since I've been here, I've noticed that my breathing is a little worse than it was before I moved here...** The only thing that I don't like about this neighbourhood is the fact that's its so dusty and **when my breathing seems to be getting worse as time goes on, so I might have to move out of there if it doesn't get better.** I'll try to take medication for it and stuff, but it seems like it's getting a little worse all the time. But other than that, the neighbourhood is a nice neighbourhood to live in. I wish I had – and I don't think it's any fault – I think it's a fault of the environment coming down from the States more than anything. The dust comes from Dofasco, but the smog and all the dirt seems to come down from the States in the air. It causes all kind of smog. We seem to be in an area where there's a lot of smog eh? You can't even get away from it unless you move out of the whole entire area. ROGER

I like the neighbours. **I don't think there is anything that I would change. Except for the air. Dust.** KACEY

Hettie agreed with Roger that the poor air quality contributed to breathing problems. She considered the air quality to aggravate her asthma but she did not consider the air quality to be any different in the NEI area than her previous neighbourhood on the Mountain.

Like [Roger] here, sometimes the air gets me because of my asthma. I can't say it's now worse than the Mountain. It's just the air quality. I have asthma and I find the air quality bad. Much like Bob does. HETTIE

The majority of focus group participants did not perceive living in close proximity to industries as detrimental in terms of health outcomes. Many participants acknowledged that they had to deal with dust from the industries but several participants (i.e. mainly long-time residents) noted improvements in air quality over the years. From Noreen's excerpt it is evident that she has accepted the industries as being part of the neighbourhood.

I think we all wish I guess that Dofasco wasn't here but that is not going to change anything. I think we're okay... I mean it is dusty and dirty from Dofasco but I mean it's not as bad as other places, like if you go down Burlington Street and Niagara Street and those places... I don't know how they live down there meanwhile they're probably saying the same thing. You drive down Burlington Street with Dofasco – I really like – they put the wall up for the noise, they've got the light – you can run up and down and jog all night on Beach Road and feel safe because they take care of it too. **It's not the worst place to be. We're alright.** NOREEN

Sarah was aware of some of the health issues that her neighbours attributed to the poor air quality. In particular, she shared the story of her son's friend who suffered from health problems, which were related to pollution. The family she referred to, subsequently moved out of the area. Yet, Sarah was quick to point out that her children did not seem to be affected by the pollution.

So but for the factories and stuff, like my kids are healthy. It's all good and what-not. My son's best friend actually had to have his spleen removed. They moved in two years ago... He had ear infection over ear infection and the doctor told him it was because of the pollution. So they came from Nova Scotia and now they've gone back to Nova Scotia. SARAH

Dottie acknowledged that she often had to deal with soot downfall but she did not attribute her own health problems to pollution from nearby industry. The following excerpts illustrate how many participants, including Dottie, offered examples of

individuals who had lived in the area for their entire lives and seemed to be unaffected by the pollution.

Yeah, I ended up with cancer but you can't say the environment. I remember when my sons were growing up, my sons were over six foot, both of them. **And the janitor at the school told me that our environment had shortened the kids' lives like their growth is stunted from living down here. And I looked at him and says and what is my son's problem? Because they're over six foot, both of them.** And he started to laugh. **But we did have the problem with the soot.** And you could go out to your car if it wasn't on your windows, your verandahs, everything. You'd have to go out and sweep, you'd have to wash your chairs down before you could sit in them and now there's nothing. DOTTIE

Well health-wise, my mom's almost 70. My dad died five years ago... he didn't die until he was 76. Hell, Mrs. Pacey had to be... and Mrs. Scobey, they had to be almost 100 (laughter). No seriously. And they grew up here. All your family, they've grown up in this area through all those times of the soot and everything and they all lived to ripe old ages and we're still here so I don't think that... **I don't think living down here health-wise has affected any differently. We turned out okay... We lived down here our whole lives.** There's nothing wrong with us. A few loose screws but... You'd think you would see something by now right? I still think it's really... I mean who's to say it's the soot that's in the air here or you know, the car pollution that you know... I mean if something's going to get you, it's going to get you. DENISE

Several of the long-time residents were able to offer longitudinal perspectives regarding air quality. Julia and Denise noted improvements in air quality and they attributed the change on environmental laws and surveillance measures. According to Julia, she no longer had to resort to scrubbing her children's clothing to get rid of soot stains. Denise explained that it was now be feasible to have a pool but in the past many would be hesitant due to the soot downfall.

With the... **I think the environmental controls placed on the factories and stuff like that.** And it's not always you know people always blame Dofasco and Stelco but you have to remember, there's Columbia Chemicals down here, there's National Steelcar... so with all of them combined, and I think some of them were worse than the major steel companies but it's definitely, definitely become better in the years I've been here now. **I remember scrubbing the kids down. And their clothes. I'd have to literally soak them, scrub**

them, then put them in the washing machine because otherwise, it would not come out. Because it was like a greasy soot. It wasn't dirt, you know? But it's much better, yep. The kids would come home and their pants would be black and their hands would be black and the kids really had to scrub, you know, their hands, with a scrub brush and soap to get the stuff off. Like a bath just wasn't going to cut the mustard. **But within the last five years, no soap. I've really noticed a big difference which is nice.** JULIA

It used to be a lot more sootier than it is now. I think it's cleaned up a lot with Dofasco and Stelco having to go through all the pollution control. So there has been improvements in the air down here. **And then when people ask, you know, ask where you grew up, I would say, "under coke oven number three". And they'd say... their response is always "well why are you still alive?" But now I can see that the pollution control has really changed so there's not as... I mean... thirty years ago, you wouldn't want to put a swimming pool in down here. But now, you don't get up in the morning and have a black pool.** DENISE

From these excerpts it is evident that residents acknowledge the air quality and pollution issues associated with the NEI neighbourhood. However, it was interesting to note that long-term residents perceived improvements to air quality over the years and for the most part, they did not attribute health-related issues as being related or exacerbated by environmental pollution. Even more interesting was Jon and Hettie, the older couple who resided in the neighbourhood for just 5.5 years. Although the elderly couple acknowledged the pollution and were bothered by having to deal with the soot fallout, they seemed unfazed by it. Hettie went so far as to attribute her asthma to the overall poor air quality in Hamilton rather than solely the neighbourhood. In contrast, Roger and Kacey, a younger couple with similar experience in the neighbourhood (i.e. 5-6 years) were more willing to link Roger's breathing problems to the poor air quality in the area. This scenario suggests that older individuals are more accepting of environmental pollution which may be related to growing up during time periods where environmental laws and precautions were more lax.

5.4 Significance

5.4.1 Evaluation

Some participants conveyed their SoP by comparing their current neighbourhood to previous residential experiences. Several participants recalled unpleasant experiences in other neighbourhoods. These experiences helped to inform how they perceived their present surroundings. In contrast to her previous Locke Street area neighbourhood, Gemma found residents in the NEI neighbourhood to be more amicable and hospitable.

I used to live down by Locke Street for about a year and since I moved up this way, you can go to your neighbour's around here and borrow a cup of sugar. **You go down around Locke Street, knock on the door for sugar and you get shot.** That's the way the neighbourhood was down there. GEMMA

In terms of the environment and layout of the environment, Sarah preferred the NEI neighbourhood to the downtown core, where she had been raised. She viewed her current neighbourhood as being more 'child friendly' in that she felt there was more outdoor space conducive for recreation.

But I look at the neighbourhood I grew up in and the neighbourhood that I'm letting my children grow up in and it's totally different [vs. downtown Hamilton]. It's a lot better for everything. From what I remember I can say... it might have... it probably changed, hopefully it's changed now for kids now that live in that neighbourhood **but if you compare my neighbourhood that I'm in now to the one I grew up in, I definitely enjoy mine now better.** SARAH

Denise described feeling isolated in her upscale Calgary neighbourhood. In terms of appearance, the houses in the neighbourhood were grand and picturesque but the neighbours did not socialize with one another. Denise preferred living in her current neighbourhood because she took comfort in knowing that her neighbours helped one another in times of need. In particular, she found that the younger residents watched over the older residents and vice versa.

I think it's a sense of home and also the constantly knowing so you're not afraid to talk to your neighbours. You don't have that same fear of going into a new area. **I also lived in an area where it was big properties, people had lived there a long time but the most you saw was this you know [gestures a wave]? Or they'd walk the dog and say hi. No more than a five or ten minute conversation.** You know? And they never sat outside on their property. And these were people my age or our age with young kids that all went to school together but you didn't see them playing in the streets or playing at the park together. It was you go to school, you go home and that's the last you saw your friends until the next morning. **Whereas here, I think because the parents gel and grandparents on the street... like these guys take care of... they have elderly neighbours on this street and everybody takes care of everybody.** DENISE

Not all focus group participants expressed a preference towards the NEI neighbourhood. Hettie was still fond of her previous home on the West Mountain. For the past 5.5 years, she managed to build relationships with residents of the NEI neighbourhood but she still seemed attached to her previous home. She was a long-time resident of the West Mountain and she and her husband had raised their family at that location.

I was comfortable when I lived on the mountain. I like it up there. **I think I liked it better up there [on the West Mountain] than down here, but for different reasons.** Of course, where the neighbours are concerned, I like them down here. **My house I like up there. I had a beautiful home on the Mountain. I have a nice home now, but I liked the house on the Mountain.** HETTIE

In spite of the stereotypes about the NEI neighbourhood, Denise pointed out that there were worse places to live in Hamilton. She distinguished the NEI neighbourhood as being superior to the nearby area known as the 'North End'.

It's still not as bad as the north end though. We're from the other side of the tracks but we're not called the north end. [asked to clarify where it starts] **Sherman Avenue and going west. And in those days, you didn't venture down there. And it still hasn't changed. It's still... you wouldn't want to bring your children up down there if you don't have to.** And just coming a little bit further east, completely different. Just the mentality. **Because too, I would say because a lot of the people in this area worked at Dofasco, Dofasco and Stelco, United Steelcar and they are all very well-paying jobs so people have a little more money than the people in the north end.** I mean I think that's where your biggest difference is. Your financial incomes are little higher here. DENISE

Hettie had resided in the NEI neighbourhood for just over 5 years. As such, she was in the process of developing a SoP. She noted that many of the neighbourhood residents, her included, were from Eastern Canada. The area was reminiscent of Hettie's childhood neighbourhood and this enabled her to establish a connection to the surroundings.

It reminds me a lot of where I was living in Nova Scotia when I was brought up. It's like coming back home again living down here. It's got that – I think it's because there's so many down easterners living in this area. The people next door to us are from down home. Bob's across the street, he's from down home... Peter is over at the court from us... his parents are from down home. There's still – Joseph at the corner – he's from Newfoundland. So there's a lot of eastern-province people in this little area. **And**

sometimes – it reminds me of being back home. You have the whole sense of being back where I was when I was growing up.
HETTIE

Several focus group participants informed their evaluations of the neighbourhood based on their current stage in life. Denise acknowledged that it was important for her to reside in an area that promoted a sense of community, especially as she approached retirement.

Now that I'm getting older, that would be definitely what I would like to instill in my kids is find a place where there's a community, you know? Where you have that sense of communication with your neighbours and trust. I don't think you find places like this very much in the Hamilton area.
DENISE

Hettie's evaluation of her neighbourhood was primarily based on her current life stage. As a senior citizen with several health problems, she acknowledged that moving was not an option despite the fact that she did not feel a strong attachment to the neighbourhood. It was evident that Hettie's perception of the neighbourhood was influenced by her status as an older individual.

I have arthritis pain and I have diabetes and I have asthma. So I'm not the healthiest person in the world, but there's a lot of people that are worse off than I am. Jon is always there, he's a good man to help. It's a little house and we're able to look after it fine. I wouldn't want to move. I said, we're there for the duration. **Like I said, I'm there for the duration. I wouldn't want to move I don't think. Not at this stage in life. I think we're getting too old to make moves.** HETTIE

In sum, evaluations seemed to be based on previous experiences in other neighbourhoods as well as knowledge of other neighbourhoods. Together, previous experiences and knowledge of other neighbourhoods formed the basis for comparison between neighbourhoods for some residents. However, there seemed to be an age-related component attached to the evaluation sub-theme given that several residents considered their life stage (i.e. as senior citizens) in their evaluations.

5.4.2 Reputation

The NEI neighbourhood is often overshadowed by the surrounding industry. The focus group participants acknowledged the proximity to industry but distinguished their neighbourhood as a separate and significant entity. In essence, the reputation sub-theme was marked by the awareness and acknowledgement of negative stereotypes and the rationalization or negotiation of these stereotypes. Roger was aware of the

misconceptions about the neighbourhood. He pointed out that the neighbourhood was stereotyped by those who did not live there. In essence, Roger's comment illustrates that individuals should develop a SoP before passing judgment. In his opinion, in order to develop or establish a SoP, one must reside in the neighbourhood.

It's not supposed to be a good area to live in. I said you have to live in an area before you can define it. You can't just say 'oh that place is no good, or this place is no good'. You've got to live here to know what it's like. Because a lot of people give this such – below the Center Mall going towards Burlington Street – a bad name. ROGER

Sarah was reluctant to move into the area, which she characterized as 'Dofasco's backyard'. She admitted that as an outsider, she had preconceived notions about the area but after residing in the area, her outlook had since changed for the better.

Well I have to say that when I first moved in, I did not want to come to this area... I told my husband I did not want to live in Dofasco's backyard. That was pretty much how I saw this area. **Obviously I judged the book before I read it because I really enjoy my neighbourhood.** SARAH

Danielle explained that some of the negative stereotypes may be due to aesthetics. According to her, individuals often relied on what they saw to formulate their views and in doing so, they failed to consider other important aspects. She acknowledged that other neighbourhoods in Hamilton, were more visually appealing but that this was not an important part of her SoP.

And it might not be as pretty or as done up as for example the mountain... houses, it's not the point, it's just that... yeah, we don't worry that oh this person has something better than everyone else. Cause just like I said, after you've been here for awhile and it's just all together kinda thing. DANIELLE

Dottie confirmed that individuals, including those running for political office, paid little or no attention to neighbourhood. She felt that the neighbourhood was often overshadowed by surrounding areas.

The only complaint I have is the politicians. It doesn't matter who – doesn't matter if it's the city, doesn't matter if it's federal, doesn't matter if it's provincial. **When there's elections, this little area is always forgotten by the politicians.** Always. I have phoned up many a times to their campaign to complain about not getting any of their advertisements or nothing. **Not even one of these candidates**

will come down because they're more interested in the area around Kenilworth that our little area is a forgotten area as far as politicians are concerned. That's the only complaint I have.
DOTTIE

Selma felt that outsiders were quick to judge the area based on its location. It was difficult for her to reconcile her SoP with the knowledge that others considered the area to be an undesirable place to live.

Just like this area could get a little more respect I think – from people who don't live in it because that's... it's a normal neighbourhood – a good neighbourhood. But... It doesn't get the attention – they can wait for this and they can wait for that. You know, and it's not right. But yet, maybe better areas will get the attention first. Nice, yeah, because it's more visible and because we're under across the bridge it doesn't mean that we should get the end of the stick all of the time. SELMA

Noreen felt that she needed to justify her strong SoP to outsiders who stereotyped the neighbourhood as 'below the tracks'. Yet it was obvious that after many years of residing in the neighbourhood, Noreen was able to dismiss the offensive comments of others.

I mean we've always been labeled below the tracks... the bullies... because we're below the tracks... the bullies because we're below the tracks. We had the bad guys kind of living down here once upon a time which was a good thing because they didn't bother us – they bothered everybody else in Hamilton. But we all grew up together and that's one good thing about here... I raise my family, I went to school at Lloyd George where people started coming back and started raising people down here and it's funny... and they're like – 'ohmigod you live down here?'. NOREEN

The focus group participants were aware of their neighbourhood's reputation but it did not seem to influence their SoP. Although they acknowledged the stereotypes, they were not willing to define their neighbourhood based on the views of others. Danielle noted that the negative stereotypes and lack of attention from the City did not dissuade her from resettling in the neighbourhood.

They think, you live by Dofasco, you know what is the sense of putting all of the this money into it when it's just going to break apart sooner or later anyways.... [because] it's [the neighbourhood] behind the tracks and it's close to Dofasco and all that but that's when you just smile and wave... DANIELLE

Noreen pointed out that outsiders tended to view the neighbourhood as a last resort – somewhere people do not choose to reside but were forced to reside due to lack of finances. She explained the misconception and noted that, contrary to popular belief, she chose to raise her family in the area.

I think we all kinda fit in. We were always labeled below the tracks... this and that but this area has never been that stereotyping. We all have working parents, the mom stayed home and I mean Ottawa street that side was like you know the stereotyping but I think this area has always been... we had choice and I chose to stay here and raise my family in this area. So I mean that's why I think that's why we're all here... it's a choice, its not that we have to be here, it's we want to be in this area. NOREEN

In sum, it is evident that the residents acknowledged the negative stereotypes and overall negative reputation of the NEI neighbourhood in the wider Hamilton community. It was evident that the residents were able to rationalize or negotiate residing in a neighbourhood with a negative reputation over time. Those residents with short-term residency, including Roger and Sasha, acknowledged their awareness of how the neighbourhood was negatively represented prior to moving in. However, they also acknowledged how over time, their own misguided perceptions about the neighbourhood changed once they settled into the area.

5.5 Social Environments

5.5.1 Sense of Community

As previously mentioned, the organization of focus groups in the NEI neighbourhood was facilitated through contact with the neighbourhood association, Crown Point Community. We learned through the sessions that despite losing its headquarters when Lloyd George School closed, the group continued its projects using Noreen's basement as its temporary center of operations. The group organized numerous events in the neighbourhood and in doing so, helped to foster a sense of community in the neighbourhood.

Crown Point Community... It's a little informal right now. Since the school closed, we ran out of Lloyd George School for years. And for the last four years, we've been doing it out of my house here. Since we have nowhere to go kinda thing. But we still don't want to shut it down. We try to keep it going. We just did our Easter egg hunt at the park, and our garage street sale, we're having soon so we kinda keep things going. Slowly but surely... No, no, we take anybody [no membership required]. Anybody who

has hands and is willing to do something – the more the merrier.

I mean like, our Easter egg hunt, we have grandma's down the road that are knowing when it is coming asking hey when is that day, saying I have to get my grandkids down here. So which is nice.
NOREEN

The closure of the school led to the loss of a community center which, according to many focus group participants, threatened the sense of community in the neighbourhood. As Dottie explained, many of the residents experienced a sense of loss.

And even Mr. Gooddale [teacher] always said 'I've never worked in a school where I've had parents help like this school'. It was a community. **And then they closed the doors on us. Shut us down. That was the hardest thing to get used to.** DOTTIE

The neighbourhood association attempted to lobby the City for space for a community center but were unsuccessful. Their efforts demonstrate their dedication to improve their neighbourhood, essentially, by enhancing their SoP.

I thought, if we could have something where we could have some room and have a movie night, have dances, have a bingo night or you know do something that's just not this area but we considered the like other area where Dofasco is down on Beach Road area where there's a bunch of kids down there and that's what were really worked on when we had the school going. Like our kids at this end since they are a lot bigger there are more teens. **Kinda got shut out there [by the City]. Maybe one day, we can kind of fight again.** NOREEN

Some focus group participants shared ideas about the types of community services that were missing in the neighbourhood. Several of the older participants, including Jane and Hettie, noted the need for more programs geared towards seniors.

There's nowhere for us seniors – most of us seniors – they're trying to cut more and more programs. Well, there isn't much. There used to be day trips and pottery and cards and lots of things, but now there's only an Aquafit, but that's not really a senior thing anymore either. JANE

Hettie and her husband often found themselves volunteering outside of the neighbourhood but expressed a preference for remaining in the neighbourhood if volunteer opportunities were available. She also noted the lack of programs for younger individuals within the neighbourhood.

More senior stuff I'd like to see because of the area's growing [senior population]. When you're changed or downsized to smaller area there tends to be maybe more seniors and there's no programs for them or anything to do. **And then there's the teenagers also. There's nothing for them to do... You have to leave the area to get involved.** HETTIE

Similar to Hettie, Angela also expressed the need for community space and programs geared towards younger residents. She was concerned that the lack of entertainment options for youth could potentially lead to delinquent behaviour in the neighbourhood.

Well there used to be a movie hall. **There is no movie hall over here anymore... not for myself because I don't go to the movies that much. But for kids. There's no place for the teenagers to go.** They get in gangs and staying on the street. ANGELA

Jon was also concerned about the lack of programs for younger residents. He suggested that some of the revenue gained from shooting movies in the school could be transferred to the neighbourhood and used to fund programs for children and youth.

They closed down this school but yet they got the hydro and electricity on it all the time and now they're using it for movies and commercials. They're doing movies and commercials in it... **It would be nice if those people who are shooting these movies put a little bit into our neighbourhood for our own children you know? Like maybe clean up the park or something? I'd like to see that.** If they're going to be using the school for movies and stuff like that. JON

It is obvious that the residents were concerned about how the lack of community services was infringing on the sense of community in the neighbourhood. Issues related to the sense of community were voiced by both younger and older residents as well as those with both long-term and short-term residency in the neighbourhood.

5.5.2 Neighbours

One of the main aspects of the social environment that influenced SoP for the majority of focus group participants was relationships with neighbours. It was evident through the discussions that many of participants had developed a strong SoP based on their interactions with neighbours. Relationships with neighbours were marked by both reciprocity and support in terms of upkeep and maintenance of home property.

I haven't cut my lawn in five years. My neighbour does it.
GEMMA

Yes, I think that... that [it's] a very good neighbourhood. The fact that our neighbours are all very good; since we've been here, our neighbours have been fantastic to us and we try to be neighbourly as well... Well, like I said before, the neighbourhood is built up of solid people. The neighbours are fantastic. I've actually never lived in a neighbourhood where people were so neighbourly, eh? **You know, like, our next door neighbour has come over a couple of different times real late at night and helped me fix my furnace when it broke down. You know I've tried to help him with his roof. It just seems that everybody helps each other.** ROGER

I don't think that people let each others lawns get too shabby. If someone's away they cut each other's lawns. My neighbour when he washes his car, he washes mine. ... Everyone is friendly. We use each other's cars. We do each other's gardening. We watch each other's houses. Pretty easygoing. BETH

We watch out for our neighbours. I cut my grass, I cut my neighbour's grass, I cut my other neighbour's grass, I shovel my neighbour's snow, I shovel my other neighbour's snow. **They do things for me, I do things for them.** DOTTIE

We all kind of take care of our own property. Again, if we see a property that is – you know like my boys know – we've got a lady across the street, Lil [a senior citizen] ... We know that if someone up here hasn't cut it my boys know automatically to run over cut the grass across the street. We try to keep it livable. NOREEN

The sense of support and reciprocity from neighbours made residents feel safe about leaving their homes for extended periods of time.

That's why when we go on vacation, I never worry. Because I know my house is looked after by everybody. But not just the neighbours beside me, everybody on our street. JULIA

I'm not scared to leave my house alone or anything... neighbours around me look after it anyway if I was gone. JON

And I have my friends, and if they're going away, they make sure they tell me they're going away, so that they know I'm looking out for them. So we all look out for each other, even though she lives a couple... well, I can see her house from my house. **And if I don't see her lights on anytime, I would be over there knocking at her**

door... She [her neighbour] was going way for several days and then she was going to be somewhere else, she said, “I’m going to be gone for about a week”, so she said, “I just wanted you to know”. I said “Great, I appreciate that”. So, we’re sort of considerate of other people. JANE

Yet, the sense of support also extended beyond the upkeep of property to ensuring the well-being of neighbours, especially older residents and children.

If somebody doesn’t see Mr. so and so out on the street for two or three days, I hear these guys hadn’t seen George for a couple of days wonder what’s wrong. Or if somebody’s car doesn’t move for a couple of days when you know that they go out everyday. DENISE

I mean you don’t have to be outside watching your kids. Every house that has a kid, at some point in time, that I’m looking out the window making sure all the kids are okay. You know. Summertime, everybody’s on their porch... and you’re waving to everybody. It’s just amazing. So yeah I really enjoy my neighbourhood. SARAH

I cut the old fellow’s grass next door. The man next door is in his late eighties. He had a couple of strokes. JON

Like my mom had surgery and everybody’s asking me, I see them [neighbours] shopping at the Barn and they are asking me how my mom... which is nice, you don’t have to worry. CHRISTA

The older I get and you look back and say you know when I moved out of the area it was like sitting here... I used to sit on my porch and not another soul out there, you know? But not here. You can’t get away with nothing. If I come down and visit my mom and she’s not home, she darn well knows that I was there because everybody else on the street has told her, you know? Or I can phone somebody and say you know, and this is especially what I like is I could phone anybody on that side of the street and say just check and see if the car’s there. Anybody will go outside and check. Or your car breaks down, call Julia. She’ll come and get me... So yeah. DENISE

The strong relationships among neighbours in the NEI neighbourhood illustrated the social cohesiveness among residents.

When it comes time for me to move, I would like to get some kind of industrial saw and cut my neighbours [out]... **But if I could, I’d**

like to cut my neighbourhood, like literally saw it and bring all those out there with me [to the country]. SARAH

I feel comfortable here because everybody on the street is like your family. I can go next door to Beth's place or come over here to Noreen's or go to Bob's house across the street or Hal's at the corner... HETTIE

It's the people I really like. Not the house. HETTIE

The residents welcomed newcomers but maintained a watchful eye over them.

No, you know we're open [to renters]. They are here and then they are gone, that's the whole thing. There's a few houses like that... but the community watches and if there is a problem with them or their home... sooner or later it spreads around the neighbourhood and sooner or later the problem is solved. NOREEN

Taken together, the excerpts illustrate that the relationships between neighbours were built on reciprocity, respect and concern for one another. Many participants explained that their experience in the neighbourhood was enhanced by their neighbours, many of whom took comfort in knowing they could rely on their neighbours in times of need. Not only did neighbours care for one another's property but they were also vigilant about one another. Many focus group participants pointed out that they were especially attentive to the older residents in the neighbourhood. Regardless of age or length of residency, the consensus among focus group participants was that relationships with neighbours were strong. These relationships, in turn, contributed to positive SoP perceptions, in terms of aspects of the social environment.

5.6 Summary of Qualitative Findings for NEI Neighbourhood

The evaluation of themes and corresponding sub-themes based on the participant's age group and longevity of residency in the neighbourhood revealed that the majority of SoP perceptions were influenced by these two variables. In effect, one's sense of rootedness and perceptions of the natural environment are influenced by both age and length of residency. This suggests that older individuals and long-time residents are reluctant to move out of the neighbourhood. On the other hand, younger residents and those with less than 10 years of living in the neighbourhood were more likely to express concerns about the environment, in terms of pollution. Length of residency seemed to solely influence one's sense of history, feelings of familiarity and pride and thoughts about the reputation of the neighbourhood. This finding seems logical given that memories develop over time as does one's knowledge of his or her surroundings. In terms of feelings of pride and thoughts about the reputation of the neighbourhood, the

results of the qualitative analysis suggest that as one spends more time in their neighbourhood, he or she will attach greater meaning or importance to the area. Lastly, age seemed to be a factor in one's evaluation of their neighbourhood. It is possible that older individuals tend to have more experiences in different places and for this reason, they are able to evaluate their surroundings based on their previous experiences. Moreover, age nor length of residency played a strong role in influencing the sense of belonging, feelings of concern, perceptions about the built environment, sense of community or relationships with neighbours. It is plausible that these SoP perceptions are shaped by either internal and/or external forces more so than age or length of residency.

6 CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR CASE SWM

6.1 Attachment

6.1.1 Belonging

Belonging was manifested in a number of ways, from supervising children in activities in the neighbourhood through to bonding with neighbours. For a number of focus group participants a sense of belonging emerged from participating in neighbourhood activities with their children. As Diane elaborated, residents were brought together to supervise recreational activities. In this regard, the common thread that connected the residents together was the children. The interactions facilitated through recreational activities did dwindle over the years, as the children got older. According to Diane whose children were now teenagers and no longer participated in neighbourhood recreational activities, she still felt connected to the neighbourhood and to her neighbours, however albeit, to a lesser extent.

Yeah I feel I belong, especially on our street. **We all moved in around the same time and had children around the same age so you bond quite easily when there are children playing together.** And now even though they're grown up we still see the neighbours.
DIANE

Similar to Diane's experience, Belinda noted that the initial basis for her sense of belonging was forged through her children. Yet, Belinda pointed out that once her children grew up, the basis for her sense of belonging no longer existed. She attributed her current sense of belonging to longevity of residence in the neighbourhood as she had been a resident in the neighbourhood for 24 years.

I think I did originally [belong] when my kids were younger and they were in the schools in the neighbourhood and they were in sports at the park and so on because then I was always doing things in the neighbourhood right? Now that they are a little bit older, I don't think I have the same kind of connection because I'm not like visiting with the teachers or the coaches or I'm not in the park every night. They still are to some extent, but having said all that, **now that I've lived there so long, I feel like I belong because you know it's just home right?** I think that grew from all of the other things. From the school and the activities and the community and now, like I said, it's just home. I may not feel as connected to the people because I'm not seeing them on a regular basis anymore, but... BELINDA

Polly, an older participant, also commented that her initial experience of belonging to the neighbourhood was facilitated through her children's recreational activities. As a retired senior, she rekindled her sense of belonging through her grandchildren who lived nearby.

I have probably something that nobody else has mentioned, **I've got the good fortune of my youngest of five children lives two blocks away. So all the things that came to an end by way of going to home and school and those things I can now get to relive through my grandchildren.** So I get to go to soccer games and what else? Hockey games. POLLY

Aaron, a young participant, noted that his sense of belonging was not compromised by the fact that he was a student who spent the majority of time living away from his home and neighbourhood. For Aaron, his absence did not cause his sense of belonging to diminish, but rather found that it renewed itself when he returned from school. Aaron's statement suggested that his SoP remained intact even in his absence from place.

I also feel that I belong to my neighbourhood, which is surprising too because I'm actually a student so there's weeks that I'm not actually there. AARON

Aaron, in his twenties, resided in his neighbourhood since infancy. On the other hand, several SWM participants, including Dorinda and Gary did not have extensive experience in their neighbourhood. Dorinda and Gary had resided in their neighbourhood for seven years. In Dorinda's opinion, the concept of belonging to a neighbourhood seemed illogical. Her comments below illustrated her lack of attachment to both her home and the neighbourhood.

I never really looked to belong to a neighbourhood. For me a home is just where you live... If you're lucky your neighbours are friendly. If you're lucky they're also quiet and nobody's into drugs or anything or crime. **And basically you belong at work or you better belong at work or you're in a lot of trouble. Or you belong to a club but you don't-your neighbourhood is just where you live. That's how I've always seen it.** DORINDA

Notes from the researcher's reflexive journal questioned whether the lack of attachment expressed by Dorinda and her husband Gary might be related to their pattern of mobility. Gary revealed that they had made several moves between Hamilton and Guelph and in the process they had also lost a member of their family. He described feeling "dislocated" or out of place during the first few years after the move to their current home. Gary's experience suggests that there is a process involved in developing a sense of belonging, which is negotiated over time.

I don't know whether I feel any great sense of belonging. I'm sort of there... I've gotten... **sort of gotten used to it and sort of accepted living there.** I think I feel relatively comfortable. It takes a lot of money to move now so it's not worth the effort and frankly I wouldn't... I don't know whether I would have the tolerance to move anywhere anyways now. It's too much. **First four years I had a lot of... I felt very dislocated. Probably because we had originally lived in Hamilton, and then we were in Guelph and then we came back to Hamilton again. And it was very difficult coming back without my mother.** GARY

Unlike Dorinda, Marnie felt that establishing a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood was the precursor to feeling comfortable in the home setting. Previous experiences helped her to realize that satisfaction with home life could not be attained when there is a disconnection between home living and neighbourhood living. In her opinion, the quality of the home, in terms of size and aesthetics, was less of a factor in establishing a sense of belonging in comparison to the quality of the neighbourhood.

I feel a strong sense of belonging there and identity I think in the area because I'm very happy in my home and very happy with the neighbourhood. **I believe it doesn't matter whether you love the home, if you're not happy in the neighbourhood, then you won't be content there because you just have this ill feeling that you want change.** Because I have had that happen in the past where we have moved to other, new type surveys as well that have beautiful homes that were larger and newer and less maintenance to do as far as repairs on older buildings and such because we have had to do some of that here... MARNIE

Gladys viewed the dynamic between neighbourhood and home similar to Marnie. In her opinion, the larger area surrounding her house was the source of comfort rather than the house itself. These views shared by Gladys and Marnie suggest that their SoP encompassed the home within the confines of the neighbourhood.

It isn't necessarily the house you know? I've had bigger houses and it doesn't mean anything. To me that doesn't mean a darn thing. It just means the house that you live in and where you feel comfortable in and to me that's where I feel included is where I'm comfortable and it has to be in the West Mountain. Such a small area like from James to Garth, from Mohawk to Rymal Road area kind of thing. That area has to be where I have to be because this is where I've always been. You know? To me, that's my neighbourhood. **The house is just material bricks to me, it**

doesn't mean anything it's just I have to go where I'm comfortable and that's that area. GLADYS

According to the focus group participants, establishing a sense of belonging and attachment to one's neighbourhood was a gradual process. The experiences of several of the participants suggest that a sense of belonging was not immediate, but rather developed over time and through longevity of residence. Furthermore, building a sense of belonging was an experiential process in that it involved active participation in neighbourhood activities.

6.1.2 History

Several focus group participants rationalized attachment to their neighbourhood based on an accumulation of experiences over time. Polly, a retiree, resided in her neighbourhood for half a century and she planned to remain there for the rest of her life. She and her husband were heavily involved in the design and construction of their house. Polly shared that her husband passed away in their home and that she envisioned a similar fate for herself.

I actually... **I never think of looking for something else.** I take for granted that **this has been my home for 50 years and as my late husband said, "You'll carry me out." And they did. I'm assuming that the same thing will happen to me.** POLLY

Another older participant, Valerie, who resided in the neighbourhood for 20 years, described her attachment to her home and neighbourhood as developing with time. She noted that over the years, the house evolved into a home through investments of time, money and effort and as a result, she had no desire to move.

Well, to me... you have a house or you have a home. And I think that's the difference if you feel it's your home... **That all develops with your working around the home and making it your home.** Maybe that's what it is. It's making your... it's your home. It's not just a house. It's your making it your home. **So... and as for moving, I don't even want to start! No, I'm happy where I am. ... [A house is something] that you live in and you come and go, that you cook in, that you sleep in. A "home" is something that you want to return to.** Close the drapes and feel secure. VALERIE

Joseph, one of the middle-aged participants attributed his sense of attachment to the fact that he spent the majority of his life in the neighbourhood (i.e. 21 years in his current home but he was raised in the area). Not only was Joseph raised in the neighbourhood but also his elderly parents still resided in the home where he spent his childhood.

Joseph's longevity of residence coupled with his desire to remain in close proximity to his parents contributed to his sense of attachment.

Like I said, I've **lived there for most of my life** so the area's nice and **I'm close to my parents**. A son or daughter actually would prefer to live closer if possible to parents in most cases. Like my son here is if it's feasible for him to do so then he would. JOSEPH

Diane's sixteen-year experience in her neighbourhood was less extensive than that of Joseph's, however she still expressed a sense of attachment. She shared that after several moves over a span of ten years, her family settled into their current home and has resided there for 16 years. Although Diane contemplated moving, she acknowledged that it would be difficult for her to leave the home and neighbourhood, as it had become a storehouse of memories.

Before we moved there, we had moved about four times in the last ten years and now we've been here for 16 years. So whenever I think of moving, there's something that keeps me there. I think as our children leave home though and it's a bigger home, I'll probably want to move about five or ten years from now into a smaller home. **But it'll likely be difficult because that's where a lot of our family memories will be and that we shared with the neighbours as well. So, I may change my mind about moving in a few years.** DIANE

In the same regard, Sandra and Belinda considered their neighbourhood as the backdrop of many of their family memories. As a result, their current attachment to the neighbourhood was largely based on past experiences. Both women also shared that it was important for them to maintain a connection to the place where their children were raised.

Because **I raised my family there and the children grew up there [why she intends to remain there]**. You did the backyard ice rinks and now that they're older, they're going off and doing their thing but they come home. SANDRA

[T]hat's **the only home that my children have known** and I don't tend to be much of an adventurer **so yeah I think I'll stay there as long as I can** too. BELINDA

In sum, attachment to one's neighbourhood was conveyed as developing through lengthy experiences with place. Yet, the length of time spent in a particular place itself does not solely contribute to attachment; rather, it results from an accumulation of experiences and memories over time.

6.1.3 Rootedness

Several of the focus group participants conveyed rootedness through their willingness and desire to remain in their homes and neighbourhoods for years to come. Both older and young participants considered life stage and age-related issues as influencing rootedness. Peter, an 84-year old participant equated his rootedness to his current life stage by noting that he would contemplate moving if he were younger.

I am rooted to the extent that I guess I'm lazy about moving. It's an important consider[ation] isn't it? I'm lazy about moving...a lot of work. Well let's put it this way, **when you're 84 you don't feel like exactly getting up on a bicycle and riding down the road about 4 times a day. So, I'm lazy about moving. Maybe if I were 20 years younger I might say oh boy let's take a look. Because there are some nice areas around there and-you can build a nice place.** But all things considering, mainly myself, I feel somewhat rooted in the area. PETER

The researcher was perplexed by Peter's comments given that the majority of older focus group participants expressed a strong intention to remain in their neighbourhoods as long as possible. Notes from the researcher's reflexive journal questioned whether Peter's short-term residency (i.e. 7 years) in his current home influenced his lack of attachment. Along with his son and daughter-in-law, Peter had resided in a number of homes over the years. In contrast to Peter, several focus group participants with lengthy experiences in their current neighbourhoods expressed different views. Sally resided in her home for 50 years and she expressed a strong desire to remain in her neighbourhood until it was no longer possible. In effect, Sally acknowledged that she might not be able to care for herself as she continued to age.

I don't want to move until I can't take care of myself. I love my home and it's not an ornate home... Polly's looks much more impressive than my home but **I've got a nice little bungalow and everything is so convenien[t] and I love my home. And I like my yard and the whole area.** I'm very proud of it here. **And I want to stay there as long as I can.** SALLY

Sandra, a young middle-aged participant who resided in her neighbourhood for twenty years, conveyed her rootedness by sharing that she and her husband planned to age-in-place. She and her husband realized that choosing to remain in their home into old age might involve renovating in the event of age-related physical impairment.

We think about, you know, it's a 2-storey house and **what will we do if something happened to one of us and we couldn't climb the**

stairs. Well, yeah, **you make the dining room into a bedroom,**
we'll stay. SANDRA

As a young participant in his twenties, Aaron expressed the intention to “lay down his own roots” but acknowledged that remaining in his neighbourhood was contingent on his career path as he had recently graduated from teacher’s college. He recognized that unlike many of the other participants, he was not a homeowner but had resided in his parents’ home for twenty-one years. Therefore, as a recent graduate living in his parents’ home, Aaron attributed his lack of rootedness to his current life stage. He did however express an interest in settling in the SWM neighbourhood in the future. Therefore, although Aaron accepted the possibility of having to relocate for career purposes, he expressed attachment through his desire to return to the area.

Because I’m a bit younger than these five women here, but...but since I’m so young I have to like [lay down] my own roots and everything and because I’m a teacher there might not be the opportunity to move back to the West Mountain, so I might be forced to move elsewhere. And also, there’s always the opportunity that I could marry someone rich and move up to Lakeshore! **So, unfortunately I don’t feel as rooted as someone whose actually living there and owns a property would... It would be a choice, yes [settling on SW Mountain].** But at the same time too, there’s also the higher taxes and problems that people were talking about as well. All things to consider but if I had the choice, the money and a whole bunch of other factors, I would move back I guess. AARON

Based on the comments of several focus group members, attachment manifested itself through the concept of rootedness and the desire to remain in the neighbourhood. The participants’ current life stage played a role in determining the intensity of the connection between person and place, as did longevity of residency.

6.2 Emotions

6.2.1 Concern

The concerns expressed by the focus group participants were inconsistent such that they addressed a number of neighbourhood-related issues. Taken together, the concerns were interpreted as being voiced by individuals with a vested interest in their neighbourhood. Some of the issues raised by the focus group participants related to the physical environment. For instance, Polly was perturbed by the construction of two long-term care facilities in her neighbourhood, which in her opinion compromised the visual integrity of her neighbourhood and subsequently led to the loss of green space.

My neighbourhood has been invaded with the construction of two very large, long-term care facilities that took away the two-acre green park that we had and if it hadn't been for the fact that my late husband and I had built our home and now I have a big four bedroom home for myself, I would probably move but I'm sorry that that has happened... There's more traffic and they have a considerable staff so starting about 6:45 in the morning, the morning shift arrives and the driveway into their two facilities is directly opposite my driveway and my bedroom is at the front so as soon as the cars come, when they make their turn to go – well it's actually when they go and that the light shines right into our bedroom... I would say in addition to losing the green space is also the increase in traffic. POLLY

In the same regard but broadly speaking, Marnie and Joseph were both concerned about the effect of development projects on both green space and vacant land. They felt that the SWM was beginning to get too built-up.

Yet in some ways feel that... you wonder [about] that real goal in the future because **they're running out of open space as far as the city's expansion of the South Mountain goes. So, you do hope that there will be some open areas left in the future because that's changing so rapidly. MARNIE**

There's very, very little land left in Hamilton for new developers to put new homes in so eventually we will start losing our green spaces. If we don't designate them as "green-spaces." JOSEPH

Aside from the physical environment, several participants were concerned about aspects of the social environment. Aaron pointed out that in terms of demographics, there was a lack of younger residents in his neighbourhood, he stated, "Unfortunately there's not too many young people for me". The inability for Aaron to connect with people in his age category presented a lack of opportunity for him to build a social network within the confines of his neighbourhood.

While Aaron experienced a lack of young people in his neighbourhood, Diane experienced just the opposite. Unfortunately, the youth in Diane's neighbourhood had vandalized several properties including her own. She explained that the vandalism was an ongoing problem, which had prompted a friend to ask whether she would consider moving out of the area. In response, Diane explained that she would prefer not to have to resort to moving out of the neighbourhood.

The only other thing is this trouble we're having with some of the young people; hopefully they'll grow up and move away and

leave us alone. Other than a small few, we do trust our neighbours and haven't had much trouble at all. **Actually behind-our backyard is-there's a group of town homes that are geared to income. And in general the people that have lived right behind us, we've co-existed peacefully but I think there's a small few in that group that are delinquent.** It might just be the age they're at. They seem to be around 14 or 15 and yeah we've had a little bit of trouble with them so, unfortunately ... I think you're right. It's something new and it's probably not unique to our neighbourhood but it just happens to be us that's dealing with it. **But whenever I think-you know I had someone say, "Well, it's time to move." And I just don't feel that. I'd rather try and work it out than move at the moment.** DIANE

In spite of the vandalism mentioned by Diane, the SWM is considered to be one of the more upscale neighbourhoods in Hamilton. The homes are generally newer and larger than those in the Northeast Industrial neighbourhood and as a result, the mortgages likely to be more expensive. Joseph was not only concerned about the prospect of having to move out of the neighbourhood in the event of not being able to make his mortgage payments, he also expressed concern for the younger generation. More specifically, he explained that although his son preferred to settle in the SWM neighbourhood, the increased cost of living could jeopardize his future plans. Joseph's concerns not only represented those of a homeowner and father but could also be interpreted as coming from someone with a strong emotional connection to place.

If Ford does well I could continue paying my mortgages yes [I would like to remain in the neighbourhood]. I would stay there, yeah. It's...comfort factor... And like job opportunities nowadays, I think families would have to break apart because of-it's hard to find a good paying job right now. I work at Ford and it's-what's happening out there job-wise. My son works... trying to find a job as a tech-they're all hiring temporaries and to improve your job-you would, like you said, they would have to... he wants to be a fork-lift driver, you have to pay out of your own pocket for you to advance in the workplace. And that's what they say. In the future, you would have to hold maybe 2 or 3 jobs for you to support a house, a family and that's sad. I hope it doesn't come to that. JOSEPH

The concerns expressed by focus group participants from the SWM encompassed a diverse set of issues related to neighbourhood living. The issues might have varied but in raising their concerns, the residents demonstrated a common motivation, which was to uphold their SoP. By voicing a concern or reacting to a certain issue, the residents also emphasized their emotional connection to place.

6.2.2 Familiarity

In terms of familiarity, some focus group participants equated the concept with their ability to identify members of the neighbourhood in addition to being identified by others as belonging to the neighbourhood. As a young individual in his early twenties, Aaron's interactions with neighbours was minimal, however, he still felt a sense of familiarity since his status as a resident was acknowledged by others.

So I guess the social aspect isn't really there either because I'm not really linked in with everyone else but at the same time, **I still see these people, they're still willing to come up and talk to me and some of them even know my name.** AARON

On the other hand, Aaron's father Joseph, described his sense of familiarity based on his ability to easily recognize others as belonging to the neighbourhood. He explained that it was not necessary to know people's names, as he was able to distinguish people by face, home or a particular characteristic, illustrated below:

I know the people, the families there. The families that live outside the area, **you might now know them by name but you know them by face.** It's like you know them by their nickname. There's one guy that loves Elvis... I've never talked to him personally but I know him - he loves Elvis... He listens to Elvis tapes and he walks-walks and **[I] tend not to know them by name but they know you by where you live.** JOSEPH

Diane expressed a similar viewpoint in that she was able to recognize her neighbours but knew few, if any, personal details about them... She also noted that her sense of familiarity extended beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood as she sometimes encountered her neighbours around the City. This point suggested that SoP does not cease to exist when one is outside the confines of the place in question.

Also, there are quite a few neighbours that I might not know by name but recognize for doing school events and that sort of thing... people say "hi" and smile and wave even if you don't know them personally... Even if... not even in the neighbourhood, you're in the mall or the store or whatever, you still feel like we have a sense that the neighbourhood is there. DIANE

Aaron, Joseph and Diane had resided in their neighbourhoods for more than fifteen years. In contrast, Peter, an older participant resided in his neighbourhood for a shorter period, just seven years. In terms of familiarity, he did not mention his ability to recognize his neighbours. Instead, concerning his neighbours, Peter stated, "They walk in their own direction, which is not unusual in a probably new place... We don't stand

out from anybody and not one of them steps out, in my eyes, to anyone else. We're a pretty bland bunch in that area". Peter's lack of experience in the neighbourhood might explain his inability to identify his neighbours in the same capacity as Aaron, Joseph or Diane. In this regard, the excerpts above suggest that feeling a sense of familiarity might be influenced by an accumulation of encounters with neighbours, which likely develops with longevity of residence.

6.2.3 *Pride*

The feeling of pride manifested itself through feelings of contentment with the reputation of the neighbourhood as well as through a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Marnie distinguished different feelings of pride by noting that the sense of pride could be gained from self-satisfaction or through accolades from others. Her own sense of pride was derived from her landscaping that added to the aesthetics of her own property and the neighbourhood as a whole.

I'd have a lot more pride I'd say probably regarding the outdoors like gardening as we talked about because we enjoy the outside... It's nice but I don't think people in our area have a sense of being overly competitive about upkeep and that sort of thing because of their own pride. **I think people do it for themselves more than they do for impressing others.** Where I have lived in other areas where people were very competitive regarding the property maintenance and appearance which I don't really appreciate.
MARNIE

Along the same lines, Diane differentiated her own personal feelings of pride from those derived by making a positive contribution to the neighbourhood itself.

I guess there's some pride in owning a home; a nice home in a nice neighbourhood where there's school and your children can grow up in a healthy environment. And most of the neighbours take pride in the outside of their homes as well so I think that helps you know wanting to keep up... not necessarily a competition but to keep it nice for others as well. I guess I am proud of my home and my neighbourhood. DIANE

Similar to Diane, Valerie added that residents showed their pride by maintaining the neighbourhood through the upkeep of personal properties. She explained, "The homes are all well-kept so I guess that's considered being proud of where you live... I'm proud of my home and I'm proud of my neighbours because they do keep their homes nice".

Polly's feelings of pride were largely based on the role that she and her husband played in the construction of their home. She regarded her home as a source of accomplishment and hence, a source of pride.

Well, my usual response when people say, "Where do you live?", I say, "It's as close to heaven as I'm ever going to get [living near Upper Paradise Road]." And I wouldn't say that if I wasn't proud (laughter)... **The pride though I think probably comes mostly from the fact that my late husband and I built our house ourselves. And I just feel that it was such an accomplishment.** I often find myself thinking about his parents and my parents. They would have thought that their children had become very successful if they had lived long enough to see our accomplishments kind of thing. So that's probably what I'm most proud of. POLLY

Gladys's comments below suggested that feelings of pride could also be influenced by the reputation of the neighbourhood itself. For instance, she knew that her neighbourhood was recognized as a desirable place to own property in the wider Hamilton community.

Well...I guess I have to say I'm proud of my neighbourhood because-there's a couple reasons. One I feel safe and the other is... **If you follow the housing market like I do and-because it is old and new a lot of people think it's a very nice area. So I guess I'm proud of that. And I'm proud that it was close to my grandkids because there's a school a block away.** GLADYS

In the same regard, Valerie and Belinda derived their sense of pride from the positive reputation of the neighbourhood. Along with Gladys's comments, the comments below illustrated that neighbourhood reputation influenced affect, more specifically, feelings of pride.

When someone asks me where I live I'm not ashamed of where I live. VALERIE

It's an established neighbourhood. So I'm proud to say that's where I live. BELINDA

In sum, the derivations of pride varied among the focus group participants. For some, feelings of pride developed from one's personal contribution to the neighbourhood through the upkeep of their own property. Others were proud to reside in a neighbourhood that they considered a healthy environment while others were proud to reside in a neighbourhood with a good reputation.

6.3 *Physical Environments*

In response to questions pertaining to the state of the physical environment, there was a consensus among focus group participants that the SWM neighbourhood offered an ideal combination of built and natural environments. The following overview provided by Belinda summarizes the varying components of the physical environment and how they contribute to her SoP.

Besides the parks and the arenas and everything-where we are-like, we have so much of that. You couldn't really ask for a better neighbourhood for that sort of thing but no, I think that if you wake up in the morning and you can hear the birds singing and you know you take the dog out and there's a little bunny rabbit hopping in your backyard and the skunks were out there-like, what more could you ask for right? The ducks swim on our neighbour's swimming pool, right? How do you get all that plus the closeness of the variety store, the drug store, whatever. And mind you, some people don't like the Linc. I love the way that we can be far enough away from it that it doesn't affect our sleep or the traffic or whatever but it connects us everywhere. So, I think it's a great place to live all around. BELINDA

Belinda's excerpt was a clear illustration of the interconnection of the built and natural environments.

6.3.1 *Built Environments*

The specific attributes of the built environment that focus-group participants held in high regard included the physical layout of the neighbourhood and the provision of amenities and public transportation routes. Gladys appreciated the lack of uniformity in the neighbourhood in terms of the differing styles of houses. Paradoxically, in Gladys's opinion, the close proximity to both green space and amenities made her feel as though she lived in both a rural and urban area at the same time.

So I bought the lot. And it's-you've got **new houses, you've got old houses**, you've got young people, you've got old people and it's a good combination. And I like it because **it's almost like living in the country, except you're in the city... And we're close to the stores and yet we're still private.** And I mean if I wanted to go to a restaurant, **they must have 100 restaurants on Upper James to go in.** So, there's-you get the best of both worlds and to me it's a great place to have to live. GLADYS

Similar to Gladys, Valerie elaborated on her view of the SWM neighbourhood providing both a rural and urban atmosphere. Both of the women felt that their neighbourhood offered the “best of both worlds”.

We do have the best of two worlds because we're country and yet we're city. We don't even have to have a car, we're that-it's so convenient we can just walk 2 or 3 blocks at the very most for a bus. **We've got grocery stores, doctors, anything is so close and yet when you come home you come up quiet street or road and drive into your driveway and you're in a different world. And all the hustle and bustle that's going on beyond where I live, it's gone as soon as I pull into my driveway.** It's just amazing how it can be so busy. I just go in not even a block and I'm on Upper James and the cars are just zipping by like it's a regular highway and yet once I turn down my road, I'm in a different world. So, and it's close to everything so I mean it is. **It's the best of two worlds... But it's still country to us because like I say it's a different world once I turn down that road.** VALERIE

Along the same lines, in her description of the built environment, Marnie referred to neighbourhood layout in terms of the mix of housing. She felt that the different types and styles of homes contributed to the unique character of the neighbourhood in addition to its visual appeal.

And it's a mixed neighbourhood I would say as far as families go. There's older people with grown children and yet there are some younger families that have moved into the area as **some people have subdivided lots off their homes and built onto clearer lots with bigger homes. But they do blend fairly well into the neighbourhood. It has changed the look somewhat of it. Some people wouldn't like that as much and would prefer to have it the way it was before, but it's kind of nice as long as it's done tastefully and not too greatly monster homes.** MARNIE

Peter, an older participant, was impressed by the vast amount of amenities in the area in addition to the ease of accessing them. His views underlined the aspects of the built environment that were of most significance to him as a senior citizen. Another older participant, Polly remarked, “**If I choose to give up a car, the bus runs right by my door**”. Sally, also a senior citizen, stated, “**There aren't many places you can live and just walk to shopping and things like that... so it's very nice [and] I like it very much**”.

I think it's all summed up by the word “convenient”... 2 or 3 minutes to get to bus stops; Upper Wentworth or Upper Wellington,

whichever way you're going. Limeridge Mall within 3 or 4 minutes by car. Racing up the street in the other direction about 2 minutes by car. Upper James and Stonechurch 3 or 4 minutes up to Fortinos up on-and Zellers 5 minutes, 6 minutes, something like that. So by and large the ease of arriving at some of these locations. PETER

In keeping with the issue of accessibility, Sandra added, "**The other part about the physical part, the city recently changed all our sidewalks to make them wheel chair accessible or stroller accessible**". According to Sandra, improvements to the existing infrastructure helped to accommodate many individuals in her neighbourhood.

Diane stated that another advantage of living in the neighbourhood was its close proximity to the expressway and highways. She noted, "**We're close to a lot of the highways and now with the Linc we can get where we want to go a lot quicker** if we want to go to Toronto or Niagara that way". As a parent, Diane was also pleased with the availability and closeness of schools.

We have a nice park; our kids got to go there when they were young. And the schools were in the neighbourhood as well so they didn't have to be bussed anywhere. So it was nice that they could walk to school and be in the neighbourhood. DIANE

Aaron, one of the young participants was also pleased with not only the accessibility to amenities but also the wide variety of amenities in the neighbourhood especially recreational arenas. He noted the convenient location of two arenas in his neighbourhood, which he frequented to participate in sporting events.

Taken together, the SWM focus group participants were pleased with all aspects of the built environment. They were satisfied with the convenience of amenities, the availability of public transportation and the connectivity of the neighbourhood in terms of transportation and accessibility. The specific viewpoints of several focus group participants referred to aspects of the built environment that were most significant in their lives. For instance, two of the older participants commented on issues of accessibility while some of the young participants noted the proximity of schools and recreational arenas. This suggests that the significance that people attach to place is largely influenced by the aspects of the built environment most important to them as individuals and the roles that they play (i.e. parent, student etc.).

6.3.2 Natural Environment

The focus group participants shared their perceptions of the landscaping that surrounded their homes in addition to natural components found in the neighbourhood such as parks and trees. Marnie noted the visual appeal of the natural aspects in her

neighbourhood. She considered the neighbourhood park as a place that offered residents the opportunity to interact with nature.

I think it's a **beautiful, scenic area** with a lot of variety in the homes and in the landscaping and it is an older neighbourhood with a lot of beautiful large trees. **There are parks in the area for young people** and there is a creek... [it] actually runs just down the street from us where it's **a nice open environment too where kids can go fishing or just go for walks with their family or pets.**
MARNIE

Diane noted that she was aware of several neighbourhoods without access to parks and so she was grateful that there was one in her neighbourhood. She also found that the mature trees contributed to the peaceful atmosphere of her neighbourhood.

I think it's nice because it has a park in the middle. I think a lot of some of the older neighbourhoods didn't accommodate for open areas and parks and that. So I appreciate that in my neighbourhood... **I'm finding now that because the neighbourhood's around 16 years old, that the trees are more mature.** I do miss that in a new neighbourhood when you move there's no trees. You know they seem to file down all the trees so now that the trees are bigger, **it makes for a quieter, more gentle environment.** DIANE

The upkeep of personal property in terms of landscaping and gardening was a passion and a source of pride for many of the focus group participants. Interaction with the natural environment through these activities was considered therapeutic. Sandra and Valerie viewed the natural environment as contributing to their SoP.

Well, we've added some things to the house and planted more fruit trees and you know did gardens and **that's where the heart and soul is;** we're there so it's very nice. SANDRA

I love to garden; it's treed; it suits my personality now that I'm retired. VALERIE

In terms of pollution, the focus groups did not voice any immediate concerns. Polly was satisfied with the air quality in the neighbourhood, she stated, "**I think we still have cleaner air than lots of parts of the City of Hamilton, especially in the more industrial part**". Yet looking ahead, Joseph shared his concerns about the potential threats to the quality of the natural environment in terms of noise and air pollution. He shared his reservations about the expressway.

So, my concern is with the Linc again. Noise quality, air quality is a concern. We'll have to wait and see. JOSEPH

Overall, the residents seemed satisfied with the state of the natural environments in their neighbourhood. Many focus group participants contributed to the visual appeal of the natural environment through gardening and landscaping their properties. The lack of immediate concerns about both the natural and built environments suggests that the SWM neighbourhood has succeeded in offering residents an ideal physical environment.

6.4 Significance

6.4.1 Evaluation

Evaluations of the SWM neighbourhood were based on general perceptions related to neighbourhood dynamics. Some focus group participants compared their neighbourhood to other neighbourhoods in the City of Hamilton to illustrate their viewpoints. Other participants connected their meaningful experience in the neighbourhood to the fact that it was reminiscent of their childhood neighbourhood. The excerpts below demonstrate varying degrees of significance. It was noted that those with less experience in their neighbourhood, including Peter, Gary and Dorinda, offered general overviews while others with lengthier experiences, were more specific with their interpretations.

Peter pointed out that he perceived his neighbourhood to be less crowded than other areas. He conveyed a general sense of satisfaction as a neighbourhood resident.

It's different in as much as there aren't as many homes on the street probably five on one side, five on the other side before you come to an internal intersection; north and south. It's different in the sense that there's less activity on that street. And the residents are mostly quiet and they're off work. There's one retired individual a couple of houses away from me. Apart from that, during the day it's pretty well quiet... It's clean and it's fresh and it's new and it's quiet and it's close to the amenities... **But, it sort of all works together for my sense of being accommodated within the area.** PETER

Gary agreed with his father, Peter and offered a similar viewpoint. He added that neighbourhood was not as old in comparison to other neighbourhoods in the City.

I guess I'm satisfied living there. It's clean, there's no crime or drugs... I think it's well, it's probably-it's different. It's probably similar to most of the new neighbourhoods in terms of houses; new houses and styles of houses and whatever. Probably it's different because we might have less activity than other neighbourhoods; less

children around which is good and...most new neighbourhoods now are probably close to everything like this one is. GARY

Dorinda considered her neighbourhood to be “average” and comparable to other neighbourhoods in the City. She pointed out that her neighbourhood was bound to evolve over time since it was still fairly new.

It’s new. Lots of different types of people. Fewer families with children. I guess most people would be starting families in the near future... It’s quiet, but there’s a lot-probably a lot of quiet areas in Hamilton. And there’s quite a few families without children-there’s a couple of families without children. I’m sure you see that in other neighbourhoods too. I think ours is actually an average new neighbourhood. Give it another 20 years, things could change drastically... There’s no crime, there’s no drugs; it could be a lot worse. DORINDA

Similarly, Diane based her comments on the evolution of the neighbourhood based on her 16 years of experience as a resident. She predicted that the neighbourhood would change as many of the residents, including her, entered retirement in the next five to ten years. Her longevity of residence (i.e. 16 years) enabled her to offer an accurate assessment.

I think our neighbourhood is sort of in a stable mould at the moment. Probably-a lot of people bought our houses there 15 to 20 years ago and they’re all still there. I imagine they’re will be a transition maybe in the next 5 to 10 years as newer, younger families move in and my generation retires or whatever. DIANE

Marnie also commented on the evolution of the neighbourhood but in terms of new developments and expansion projects. She did not seem overly concerned about the additions. Instead, Marnie conveyed that it was important for her to live in a neighbourhood that both fostered a peaceful atmosphere and offered access to services and amenities.

It’s different in some of the ways that we’ve already talked about. Gladys was just mentioning the fact that it is a combination area of different age groups. **It’s an evolving neighbourhood. It has been there a long time.** Probably the first homes 50 years ago I guess-at least yeah. **But it’s constantly been added onto and developed as in other areas of the city, especially the South Mountain area has really developed over the past several years. I think they’re starting to run out of space, but at least it is [the neighbourhood] an area where you do feel a sense of security and calmness yet you’re not isolated from what you need to survive for grocery**

shopping and banking and all those types of things and doctors.

MARNIE

Belinda resided in her neighbourhood for a period of 24 years. She noted that she did perceive her area to be more upscale than other neighbourhoods in the City. Yet, she mentioned her recent change of attitude towards neighbourhoods located in the downtown core. Therefore, Belinda's comments suggest that her perceptions have changed over time. Overall, she was content with the population dynamics in her neighbourhood in that there was a mixture of different age groups.

Although, you know, as we've gotten older and seen more of the city I think well you know it's not really snobbish because there are very many nice neighbourhoods right? I started working downtown within the last year and just this week when I was driving to work I was thinking, "I always said I'd never live downtown, but there's some beautiful neighbourhoods down there". Yeah but, we'll stay there forever probably. I think it's different in that we have a good mix of people. Like we have older people; we have lots of different demographics, families, people-retired people with no children, seniors. I don't know that you get that in a lot of neighbourhoods now especially newer ones. BELINDA

In contrast to Belinda, Joseph was less open to exploring other neighbourhoods. During the re-construction of his home, he resided in the East Mountain area but voiced his strong preference for the SWM neighbourhood. In his opinion, the SWM neighbourhood was one of the more prominent neighbourhoods in the City.

I guess where you're brought up, you tend to be more content. I could never-I never liked the East Mountain. I don't know why. It's not-the stores are not there. You don't get these little strip malls yet. It's building up to be like down at Centennial Road it's starting to build up but it won't be the Upper James-Upper James and **Centennial will be always second-class to Upper James because the West is the West... "Go West young man." Like the Westerns say, but it's true...** JOSEPH

Joseph shared his vast experience in the SWM area. He was raised in the area and lived in his neighbourhood for 20 years. Sally was also a long time resident of her neighbourhood having resided there for 50 years, however, she was raised on the East Coast. Her evaluation of the neighbourhood involved a comparison to where she grew up. In her opinion, her childhood neighbourhood was much more connected in terms of a social aspect.

But when you grow up in a smaller community, you have a much more social life and with the other population. I grew up on an island in Nova Scotia. I mean you knew everyone and oh what a social life! I used to go back every summer and spend the summers. What a social life you had there! And knew everyone like 3 villages on 2 islands really. And you know a lot of people and take part in everything. It was great. So I miss that part but as far as Hamilton, I really like Hamilton. I think it's a great place to live. SALLY

On the other hand, Marnie perceived her strong connection to her current neighbourhood to be related to the fact that it was reminiscent of her childhood neighbourhood. Although her experience in the neighbourhood was short (i.e. 3 years), she had lived in the SWM area for her entire life. Marnie had moved several times in order to find a suitable neighbourhood. Her comments below illustrated the rationale for her strong SoP; she described her SoP as evolving through a combination of feelings, aspects of the natural environment, visual and auditory cues.

And I love gardening as well and the outdoors because **I grew up in the country, and not far from this particular neighbourhood itself so I still feel a strong connection to my childhood with my roots going way back to the country that it's near there. Maybe not the exact same spot but the same type of environment and feeling, where there are still some farm lands around you that you can see and birds and nature and all that type of thing.** We like to be outside; we like walking; we like dogs, we have 2 dogs so there's a lot of areas for them to go. I love the whole area really; I feel quite a strong connection I think to the neighbourhood and area itself. MARNIE

Along the same lines but with less elaboration, Sandra compared her current neighbourhood to childhood experiences in Dundas and Burlington. She also attributed her strong connection to the neighbourhood to the fact that it was similar to her childhood neighbourhoods.

I lived in Dundas and I lived in Burlington [growing up]. And I found the neighbourhood to be the same where I am and that's probably why we're where we are because it is like where I grew up... I guess we were; subconsciously went "oh yeah that will do." And yes it's just like my mother's home. SANDRA

The focus group participants based their interpretations and evaluations of the SWM neighbourhood on a number of factors. Some offered general overviews while others related their general perceptions using specific examples and comparisons to illustrate their points of view. For the most part, those with lengthier experiences in their

neighbourhood were able to offer more elaborate assessments while those with shorter experiences were more reserved with their comments. Therefore, the significance of neighbourhood was demonstrated through the evaluations noted above, with the basis of the evaluations depending on length of residence.

6.4.2 Reputation

The significance that residents attached to their neighbourhood was also influenced by the reputation or stereotypes about the area. It was a well-known fact that the SWM was considered one of the more desirable areas in Hamilton. Polly noted that SWM residents paid higher taxes than their fellow Hamiltonians and that they also tended to more affluent.

Things I can be proud of would be **we pay the highest taxes in all of Hamilton**, we get the least amount in return for our taxes... **Probably has the highest income**; I don't know whether I should be proud of those things. POLLY

Other participants, including Sally and Sandra, were also quick to refer to the “good reputation” of the neighbourhood as well as its desirability and the fact that it was “well-established”.

Yes, I like the area and **I think it's got a good reputation** and everything and it's a **very desirable place to live**. SALLY

It's well-established... And it's true that as soon as a house goes up for sale on the West Mountain, it's sold. So it must be desirable. SANDRA

Aaron also noted that the SWM neighbourhood was recognized for being a higher-income area with a low population density. He also perceived that others viewed the neighbourhood as being more aesthetically appealing and cleaner relative to other areas in the City.

I'm happy to be in my neighbourhood. I wouldn't say it's like yeah-my neighbourhood's the greatest, I mean if you lived on Lakeshore down near the lake. I still find it a pretty good place to live. **I would tell my friends that I live there, I wouldn't feel disgraced or anything... But in comparison to say a lower income area, like the downtown core, there's a huge difference. It's not as crowded. You find that the people are kind of nicer; they'll actually come out and talk to you a little bit. I guess there's more of a nicer image to it like the downtown core and the areas around it are a little bit more dirtier just the way it looks and**

everything. I think our area's a little more cleaner and it compares to our higher income areas in the city... AARON

Joseph perceived others to be envious of the SWM neighbourhood. He felt that people would prefer to reside there but were constrained by the high cost of living associated with living in the area.

The reason why is because recently I've built a new home on my lot. They tore the one down and rebuilt a new one on it. And for the past year I was living on the East Mountain and recently married too so things change for-good change. But, living in the East Mountain when I lived all my life mostly in the West. My parents live in the West, too; a 5 minute walk from where I live. So, going to different parts of town like the East Mountain, **everybody that I know that lived in the West and moved to the East, they don't like it. They've always wanted to come back to the West but they can't afford the West because yes our taxes are high and the cost of living here is high... JOSEPH**

Marnie felt that the reputation of the area was upheld by long-time residents. She noted that residents concerned themselves with the visual appeal of the neighbourhood and worked to upkeep the visual integrity of the neighbourhood.

I think a lot of the people around there have been there a long time. And even the ones that are newer to the neighbourhood do maintain a sense of pride about their homes. **They're attached to the area and attached to the buildings themselves and they're concerned about the look of the area. And definitely plan to keep it up all the time. MARNIE**

In the same regard, Belinda also referred to the fact that the neighbourhood was "well-established". She also noted that the neighbourhood was more visually appealing than other neighbourhoods in terms of aesthetics.

It's a more established neighbourhood so it's-we still have like nice lawns and trees that are 20 or 30 years old and it's really pretty really compared to some [other neighbourhoods]. It's not all cement. BELINDA

It was evident that the focus group participants had an awareness about the favourable reputation of the SWM neighbourhood in the wider Hamilton community. The excerpts above suggest that perceptions related to reputation influenced the importance people attached to their neighbourhood and in turn, also influenced their sense of identity.

6.5 *Social Environments*

6.5.1 *Sense of Community*

The focus group participants agreed that community services geared towards children and youth were abundant, however, there was a lack of services available for senior citizens. Sandra described the social programming for kids that were organized through the school system.

There's absolutely nothing missing. There's... we have... I mean we've got three high schools and all the schools have social things. You know... you can rent or they have things going on or you can attend whatever is your interest. SANDRA

Belinda added that the park in her neighbourhood offered extracurricular activities for children organized by a counselor. Yet, she did express concern about the lack of activities for older individuals.

Well we have a community counselor that represents the activities at the park. So, it's one of those things that you tend to be more involved in when you're children are involved in sports right? ... I just hope that as the demographics change the people get older that the programs will as well. BELINDA

Joseph noted the lack of social programming for senior citizens in the neighbourhood. He noted the availability of extracurricular activities for seniors in other neighbourhoods.

I was living in the East Mountain, they had lawn bowling club thing that they opened up and they had a park for the kids but then the neighbourhood themselves had to contribute so much money for that to happen. I know there's one at Chedoke-Chedoke Arena that has the bocce-ball thing that tends to bring out the seniors there; they enjoy that. From where I live, I would have to say it's accessible by car but close by – no... about the social clubs, as the population starts to age, they should open up some social event like where older people could go and try to mingle. JOSEPH

Sally, one of the older participants, agreed that there was indeed a lack of social programming for senior citizens. She expressed interest in participating in such activities if they became available.

There's nothing involving clubs or anything like that. We're all on our own it seems to me... It would've been nice if they'd ever been some social center for activities. SALLY

Overall, the focus group participants were satisfied with the community services available for children and youth. However, a number of the focus participants were concerned about the lack of community services for seniors or retirees. Joseph and Belinda were both young middle-aged participants but yet they still concerned themselves with the aging demographic. Sally, an older participant, felt that the sense of community in the neighbourhood had weakened over the years. She felt that a community center would not only benefit seniors but that it would also help to promote a sense of community among residents in general.

6.5.2 Neighbours

Relationships with neighbours influenced the focus group participants' perceptions of the social dynamics in their neighbourhood. However, the types of relationships with neighbours varied among focus group participants. Some felt a strong connection to neighbours while others failed to forge relationships with their neighbours.

Gladys sensed that residents in her neighbourhood felt comfortable interacting with each other. She also noted that neighbours looked out for each other and she shared an example to illustrate her point of view.

The neighbours and that look after one another; they're friendly and it feels like you can go out and talk to the neighbour where a lot of places you can't do that; it's comforting. I guess that's what I have to say; it's comfortable. And as I said, with her [Marnie] husband, there was an ambulance there and I had a group of people yesterday over for a party and I live next door to her and her husband was kind enough when he saw all the cars he thought it was something that had happened to me. So he was worried about me and I said, "Isn't that nice that somebody would do that?" To me, I thought that was great. ...He probably thought I'd died, but...**I thought it was very, very nice that he took the time to come over and see if everything was ok, you know?** And I mean that's the kind of neighbourhood that it is. GLADYS

Valerie also pointed out that neighbourhood residents looked out for each other but even more so, they were concerned about the well-being of older residents.

Our neighbours have been there longer than I've been, a lot of them. So, and they seemed to welcome me when I did come into the neighbourhood and they're still there and we see them walking up and down the road. **And everyone kind of keeps an eye out you know for the older folk when-there's a man right across that's-from us-that's had a heart attack and he's out up and down his**

driveway. And if I see him, I just kind of peek out and see if he's ok, if he's still walking I know he's alright. So, yeah-and then they feel the same way. VALERIE

Peter recognized the process involved in building relationships with neighbours. He still considered himself as a newcomer to the neighbourhood, however, he felt that in time his neighbours would be more congenial.

I rather expect that as time goes by, the neighbours will lose some of their distance, close-up a little bit with each other. I expect that to be the case. But it being new, **they're still sort of looking out on the side of their eye at who is there and who isn't there and that sort of thing.** PETER

Similar to Peter, Belinda noted her difficulty in forming relationships with neighbours in her previous neighbourhood. Based on her previous experience, she noted that it was the lack of common values among neighbours that influenced her SoP to the point where she felt it was necessary to move out of the area.

Yeah, that's an interesting concept. Part of it I think is space, particularly in this other home I was in. It was a newer home, it was a very small lot, it was a beautiful house but it was a busy street connected to Limeridge Mall. We had a lot of traffic with-as you were mentioning children at the school at the school near you. There are children walking back and forth quite often. I love children; there're a lot of kids in the area. And my children were young at that time so they had lots of people to play with but I felt that the neighbourhood itself-I **just had a-some sense of disappointment with the surroundings of other people. I didn't feel that we shared the same beliefs and support group type things for the atmosphere for the children to grow up. People around me were much more-their children were all over the street and they just didn't seem focused on the children. I didn't really feel that we had a lot in common that way.** MARNIE

In her current neighbourhood, Marnie described an instant connection with neighbours.

I haven't had any second thoughts about choosing that neighbourhood or being surrounded by any of my neighbours. I'm thrilled with everyone there. MARNIE

Valerie pointed out that she did not attend social gatherings with neighbours but that in the event of a sickness or tragedy, neighbours offered support.

They wave when we come in and out of the driveway. It's not-we don't coffee a lot. Just if there's been an illness or something we'll go in and take them something and visit for a bit. But none of us have been the type of neighbour that's gotten into each other's personal business. Just kept it as a friendly neighbourhood and it's really worked out but we know we have that comfort if we needed anything that our neighbours would be there for us. So yeah, I feel comfortable. VALERIE

Aaron noted that despite a lack of social networks in the neighbourhood, neighbours still acknowledged each other in a friendly manner.

Like me and a couple buddies we played like street hockey last summer and one of the neighbours just came by and said, "Yeah, let me take a couple shots with you guys." **So, there's that connectivity that despite me not being there or despite me not being that social context, all these people can still get together and everybody's comfortable with each other to that.** AARON

Joseph commented on the importance of being neighbourly. In his opinion, quick-paced lifestyles impacted relationships between neighbours since people had little or no time to devote to building relationships with neighbours.

I would describe it as **family-oriented**. Everybody knows each other. **Not everybody wants to be nosy but they're friendly... People tend to-because life is at a fast-pace right now, that they don't tend to take the time to socialize with their neighbours, be more friendly; it's sad but that's the case right now.** Everything's a go, go, go and where I live right now, people tend to go outside and take those nice, you know, walks and things like that. Like you're in like Mississauga, you don't all know who lives next door to you because people don't take the time to get to know each other, especially someone next door to you. You might see him everyday but you don't-all of a sudden you hear in the news that there's a grow-up next door or-but ours is established so it's safe and you know the people next do you. **Like my next-door-neighbour says, sometimes your neighbour is more closer than your family because you're living right next to them and you get to know them and you get to trust them and trusting someone is very important.** JOSEPH

Belinda agreed that quick-paced lifestyles compromised relationships between neighbours. Yet, she felt that she could rely on her neighbours should the need arise.

And I like to think it's unique in that we have some really good neighbours. I don't know if you get that everywhere, especially with people being busy. But there's lots of people right in the area that we live in that you could call on at anytime for anything and again I don't know if you get that everywhere. BELINDA

As a long-time resident of her neighbourhood, Sally was able to comment on the evolution of relationships between neighbours over time. She explained that neighbours interacted much more in the past. The construction of new housing units increased the density of the neighbourhood and this according to Sally, increased the population of the neighbours making it difficult to foster a sense of community.

We used to know - I used to know the people on the side street because it was young people then – couples with children and we all went to baby showers and we know everyone there. But now it's been – the lots have been divided up and more people have moved and the other have moved out so we don't know all those people. We don't have the small community because it's filled in now with houses everywhere. SALLY

Although the focus group participants acknowledged the importance of neighbours, many participants noted the lack of strong relationships among neighbours. Many of the participants attributed the weak relationships to busier lifestyles. Yet, a number of participants felt that they could rely on neighbours in times of need. Therefore, relationships with neighbours in the SWM neighbourhood were inconsistent, some regarded neighbours as friends while others acknowledged neighbours simply as familiar faces.

6.6 Summary of Qualitative Findings for SWM Neighbourhood

The results of the thematic analysis of SWM focus group sessions showed that resident's age and length of residency influence several SoP perceptions. Both age and length of residency had an effect on rootedness such that older residents in addition to those with lengthier residencies expressed a stronger desire to remain in their neighbourhood. Length of residency seemed to be the most influential variable (i.e. as opposed to resident's age) in terms of one's sense of history, feelings of familiarity and as the basis of neighbourhood evaluations. It is logical that length of residency influences one's sense of history and feelings of familiarity given that these two perceptions advance over time. In terms of length of residency influencing neighbourhood evaluations, it is possible that individuals with lengthier experiences in place are more knowledgeable (or more familiar) with their surroundings and thus more willing or equipped to provide assessments. Moreover, it was apparent that age nor length of residency seemed to have an effect on one's sense of belonging, feelings of concern, pride, perceptions of the built and natural environments or neighbourhood reputation as

well as sense of community or relationships with neighbours. It is possible that aforementioned perceptions vary according to individual (i.e. they are subjective in nature) and as a result they are not influenced by temporal components such as age or length of residency.

7 CHAPTER SEVEN: SURVEY RESULTS

7.1 Review of Quantitative Phase

The following section examines the results of the survey in terms of rates of response and sample representativeness. The sample is also examined according to the two variables of interest: (1) age group and; (2) length of residence categories. Finally, the integration of both the qualitative and quantitative phases of study is outlined in more detail.

7.1.1 Survey Response Rate

As previously outlined in Chapter 2: Methodology, the survey, titled “Defining ‘SoP’: A Survey of Hamilton Residents” was mailed to 1250 randomly selected households in both study sites. In total, 404 surveys were collected, 226 from the SWM and 178 from the NEI neighbourhood. The overall response rate was 32%; the response rate was calculated by dividing the total number of completed surveys by the total number of surveys distributed (i.e. 404/1250). This response rate may be considered low but according to Fowler (1984), “there is no agreed-upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate” (p. 48). Fowler (1984) adds that although it is possible to achieve high response rates above 75%, it is not uncommon for mail surveys to achieve response rates of less than 30%. The individual response rates for the separate neighbourhoods were 36% in the SWM and 28% in the NEI area. The results were prepared using both SPSS 15.0 and Excel for Windows.

7.1.2 Representativeness of Survey Sample

Prior to further analysis, the survey sample was compared to data obtained from the 2001 Census, for both study neighbourhoods, in order to determine whether the sample reflected the population. Two-sample difference of proportions tests were used to evaluate statistically significant differences between selected survey and census variables (procedures outlined in Chapter 2: Methodology).

Table 7 illustrates the results of the tested pairs (i.e. NEI survey variables vs. NEI Census variables & SWM survey variables vs. SWM Census variables). A select number of variables could be used for these sets of tests due to slight deviations in the wording and operationalization of questions and categories between the survey and the Census of Canada. Results from the two-sample difference of proportions tests showed that the survey samples were significantly different from the Census samples in terms of the following tested variables:

- Proportion of owned dwellings
(NEI: $Z_p = -5.02$ $p < 0.0001^*$; SWM: $Z_p = -4.48$ $p < 0.0001^*$)

- Proportion of rented dwellings
(NEI: $Zp=4.95$ $p<0.0001^*$; SWM: $Zp=4.48$ $p<0.0001^*$)
- Proportion of high school graduates
(NEI: $Zp=1.24$ $p=0.22$; SWM: $Zp=2.12$ $p=0.03^*$)
- Proportion of university and/or post-university graduates
(NEI: $Zp=-4.14$ $p<0.0001^*$; SWM: $Zp=-4.68$ $p<0.0001^*$)
- Proportion of individuals aged 60+
(NEI: $Zp=-3.23$ $p=0.001^*$; SWM: $Zp=-4.23$ $p<0.0001^*$)

The proportion of high school graduates who responded to the survey (i.e. 17%) in the NEI area was found to be representative of the proportion of high school graduates in the neighbourhood based on the Census data (i.e. 21%).

Table 7: Sample Representativeness: Housing and Education Variables

Variable (%)	NEI		SWM	
	Survey	2001 Census	Survey	2001 Census
Dwellings Owned	88	70	94	81
Dwellings Rented	12	30	6.4	19
High School Diploma	21	17	8.4	13
University Degree or Higher	8.5	3.0	28	16
Persons Aged 60+	22	14	25	15

Table 8 illustrates the comparison between survey samples and Census samples based on age groups. The particular age groups were selected for analysis based on the demographics of focus group participants. As previously outlined, focus group participants were separated into two groups: (1) young participants and; (2) older participants. The two broad age groups that correspond to these categories are: (1) 18-59 years (i.e. young participants) and; (2) 60+ years (i.e. older participants). In addition, it was noted that the young participants group was further sub-divided to include young adults and middle-aged adults. For this reason the 18-59 age category was sub-divided into two groups: 18-34 years and 35-59 years. It was not possible to aggregate data from the Census to formulate 18-34 and 18-59 age groups and for this reason, the survey categories must be compared to 20-34 and 20-59 age groups, respectively.

Table 8: Sample Representativeness: Age Group Variables

Age Group (%)	NEI		SWM	
	Survey	2001 Census	Survey	2001 Census
18-59 (Survey) 20-59 (Census)	76	58	74	53
18-34 (Survey) 20-34 (Census)	17	19	9.3	18
35-59	60	36	64	35
60+	22	14	25	15

Table 8 shows that there is an over-representation of respondents in the 35-59 and 60+ age groups for both neighbourhoods. There also seems to be an under-representation of respondents in the 18-34 age group in the SWM neighbourhood.

Table 9 below illustrates the number of survey respondents in each age group for both neighbourhoods. For both neighbourhoods, the majority of respondents were from the 35-59 age category (i.e. middle-aged).

Table 9: Number of Respondents by Age Group

Age Group (yrs.)	NEI	SWM
18-59	136	166
18-34	30	21
35-59	106	145
60+	40	57
Missing	2	3
Total	178	226

An additional variable of interest is the length of residence in the neighbourhood. Table 10 illustrates the length of residence categories selected as the basis of analyses and the number of survey respondents in each group for both neighbourhoods. The specific categories were selected in order to best compare to those of the focus group participants.

Table 10: Number of Respondents by Length of Residence in Neighbourhood

Length of Residence (yrs.)	NEI		SWM	
	Number of Respondents (n)	%	Number of Respondents (n)	%
0-10	86	48.3	119	52.7
11-20	38	21.3	80	35.4
21+	54	30.4	27	11.9
Total	178	100	226	100

In terms of proportions, approximately half the respondents in each of the study areas lived in their neighbourhood for less than ten years. There was a greater proportion of respondents who lived in their neighbourhood for more than 21 years in the NEI area (i.e. 30.4%) in comparison to the SWM (i.e. 11.9 %).

In summary, the comparison of the survey sample to population statistics from the 2001 Census showed that the survey sample is overall not representative of the actual population. As outlined, two age categories were overrepresented in the sample (i.e. 35-59 & 60+ age groups) in addition to homeowners and individuals with a university education or higher. The incongruity between the sample and population statistics is likely a result of the fact that the surveys were sent to households. Also, researchers have little or no control over who or how many individuals choose to respond to mail surveys; for instance, residents in high-income neighbourhoods tend to respond to mail surveys more so than those in low-income neighbourhoods (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2005). This was apparent in the individual neighbourhood response rates as 36% of the total number of respondents were from the SWM in comparison to 28% from the NEI neighbourhood.

7.2 Integration of Qualitative Data & Survey Results

Using the results of the thematic analysis as a guide, survey items corresponding to each of the 12 sub-themes were selected for further analysis. Table 11 lists the sub-themes and related survey items. As noted with an asterisk (*), several of the sub-themes are represented by more than one survey item, however, the first question listed is considered as the item which best captures the essence of the sub-theme and will be referred to as the focal item. The additional items will be referred to as supplementary items.

Table 11: Themes, Sub-themes and Corresponding Focal and Supplementary Survey Items

Theme & Sub-theme	Survey Item(s)
1. Attachment	
i. <i>Belonging</i>	1. I feel a sense of belonging to my neighbourhood.
ii. <i>History</i>	1. I want to remain in my neighbourhood because it is a storehouse of memories for me (e.g., I built the home I'm living in, my children grew up here, etc.).
iii. <i>Rootedness*</i>	1. How rooted do you feel in your neighbourhood? 2. If you had to move away from your neighbourhood how disappointed would you be? 3. I would like to stay in my neighbourhood as long as my health allows me to do so.
2. Emotions	
i. <i>Concern*</i>	1. I care about what the neighbourhood will be like in ten years. 2. How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood.
ii. <i>Familiarity*</i>	1. I can recognize most of the people who live in my neighbourhood. 2. I know many of my neighbours on a first name basis.
iii. <i>Pride</i>	1. I take pride in my neighbourhood.
3. Physical Environments	
i. <i>Built Environments</i>	1. The neighbourhood is too built-up.
ii. <i>Natural Environments*</i>	1. There is enough green space in my neighbourhood (e.g., mature trees, parks, etc.) 2. How likely are you to leave the neighbourhood because of the pollution (e.g. air quality, water quality)?
4. Significance	
i. <i>Evaluation*</i>	1. How much do you like your neighbourhood? 2. There's no other neighbourhood where I would rather live.
ii. <i>Reputation</i>	1. If you were to move, how important would it be that you remain in the same neighbourhood?
5. Social Environments	
i. <i>Sense of Community*</i>	1. How often do you participate in social activities with your neighbours (e.g., barbeques, coffee dates, etc.)? 2. How much does participating in community activities make you feel connected to your neighbourhood?
ii. <i>Neighbours*</i>	1. Many of my neighbours are close friends. 2. If you had to leave, how many of your neighbours would you miss?

7.3 Two-sample Difference of Proportion Tests

A series of two-sample difference of proportion tests were conducted to assess statistically significant differences between the following pairs based on: (1) age and; (2) length of residence, since the purpose of the study is to evaluate SoP perceptions based on these two variables in each neighbourhood. As noted in Chapter 2: Methodology, the age groups and length of residence categories are divided as follows:

(1) Age Groups

- i. 18-34 years & 60+ years (i.e. Young vs. Older respondents)
- ii. 35-59 years & 60+ years (i.e. Middle-aged vs. Older respondents)
- iv. 18-34 years. & 35-49 (Young vs. Middle-aged respondents)

(2) Length of Residence Categories

- i. 0-10 years vs. 21+ years
- ii. 11-20 vs. 21+ years
- iii. 0-10 years vs. 11-20 years

The tables displaying the results of the analysis will be presented according to *theme* and sub-divided by *sub-theme*. Although the response categories were aggregated for the test of proportions (as previously outlined, the ‘strongly agree/agree’ and ‘neutral/strongly disagree/disagree’ categories were grouped together), the proportions are presented to illustrate three response categories: ‘strongly agree/agree’, ‘neutral’ and ‘strongly disagree/disagree’.

7.4 Summary of Survey Results

The first part of the chapter provided an overview of the survey results including details about rates of response as well as the representativeness of the sample. The overall response rate was low and the sample was not representative of the population. The survey sample was then examined according to the three variables of interest (i.e. neighbourhood, age groups and length of residence categories). The following section outlined how the qualitative results were used to guide the quantitative analysis. Finally, the statistical tests (i.e. the two-sample difference of proportion tests) used for the analysis of quantitative data were described in order to provide a framework for understanding the organization of results in the following two chapters; the quantitative findings of Case NEI and Case SWM are presented in Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine, respectively.

8 CHAPTER EIGHT: RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR CASE NEI

8.1 NEI Neighbourhood Perceptions

As previously noted, 178 individuals from the NEI neighbourhood responded to the survey. At the onset of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how they defined their neighbourhood; the options included:

- a) Its physical characteristics
- b) Its social ties and interactions
- c) Its access to services such as shops, schools, parks it provides
- d) The shared experiences and identification with other residents
- e) Other

Option “e” gave respondents the opportunity to indicate their own answer. Since only a handful of respondents selected this option, the following analysis will focus on the first four options. The figures below depict neighbourhood perceptions by age group and length of residence, respectively.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the majority of respondents, regardless of age, thought of their neighbourhood in terms of its access to services such as amenities, educational institutions and parks (i.e. 47% for the 18-34 age group, 46% for 35-59 age group, & 56% for 60+ age group). Aside from this option, respondents aged 60+ also perceived their neighbourhood in terms of the shared experiences and identification with other residents (i.e. 28%). On the other hand, the second most popular neighbourhood perception for those in the 18-34 and 34-59 age groups was based on physical characteristics.

A trend was apparent when the question was analyzed according to length of residence (see Figure 5). The majority of respondents, regardless of length of residence perceived their neighbourhood for its access to services (i.e. 45% for 0-10 years, 49% for 11-20 years & 49% for 21+ years). The next choice for those with 21 or more years of experience in the neighbourhood was the perception based on shared experiences and identification with neighbours (i.e. 25%). In contrast, the second most popular perception for those with 0-10 years of experience in the neighbourhood was based on physical characteristics (i.e. 23%) while those living in the neighbourhood for 11-20 years equally viewed their neighbourhood based on its physical characteristics (18%) and according to shared experiences and identification with others (18%). The least popular choice for respondents, based on both age group and length of residence, was the perception of the neighbourhood based on social ties and interactions.

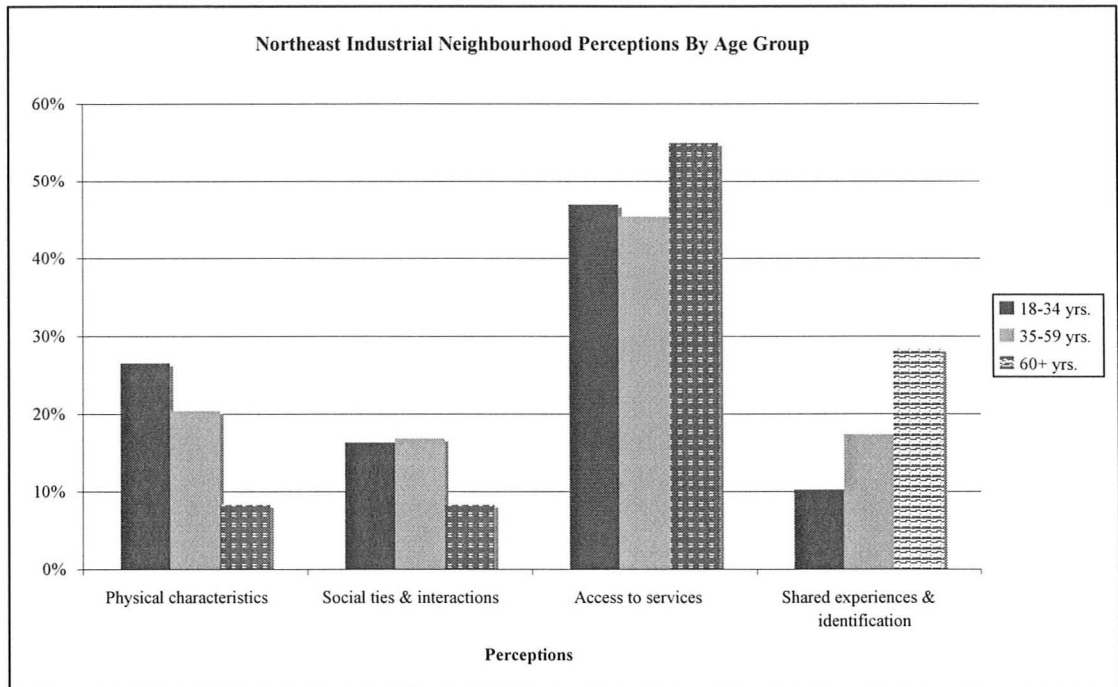


Figure 4: NEI Neighbourhood Perceptions by Age Group

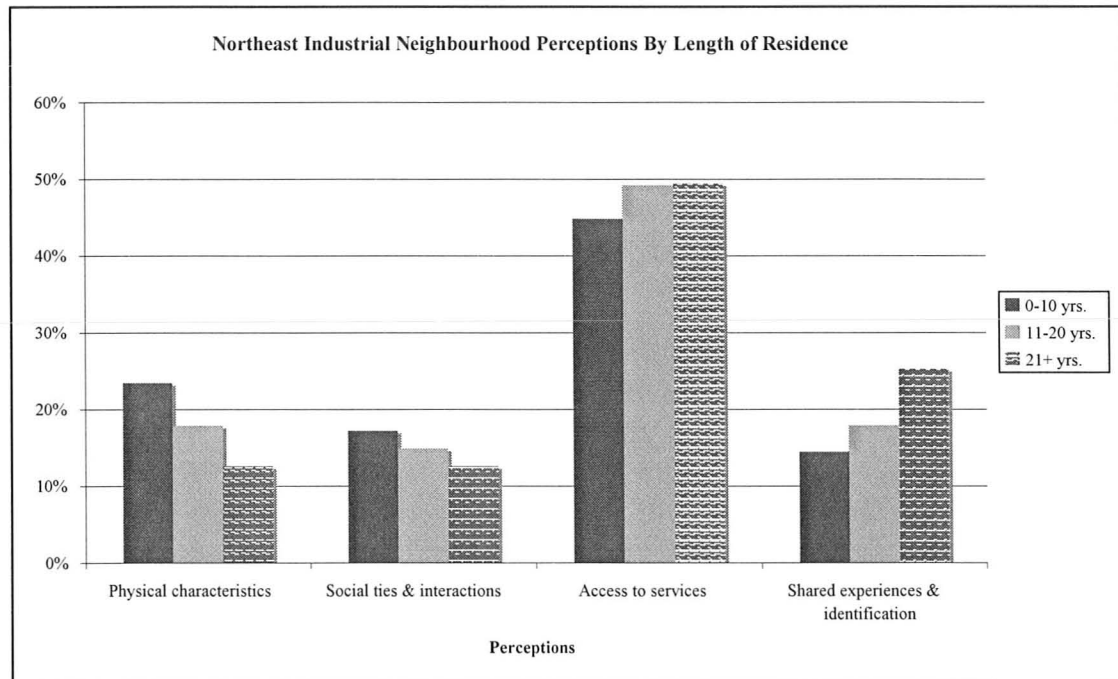


Figure 5: NEI Neighbourhood Perceptions By Length of Residence

Since the results of the selected survey items will be explored in terms of both age group and length of residence, the neighbourhood sample was correlated on both of these variables (see Figure 6). The graph below shows that the majority of respondents in the 18-34 and 34-59 age groups lived in the neighbourhood for 0-10 years while the majority of respondents in the 60+ age category lived in the neighbourhood for 21+ years.

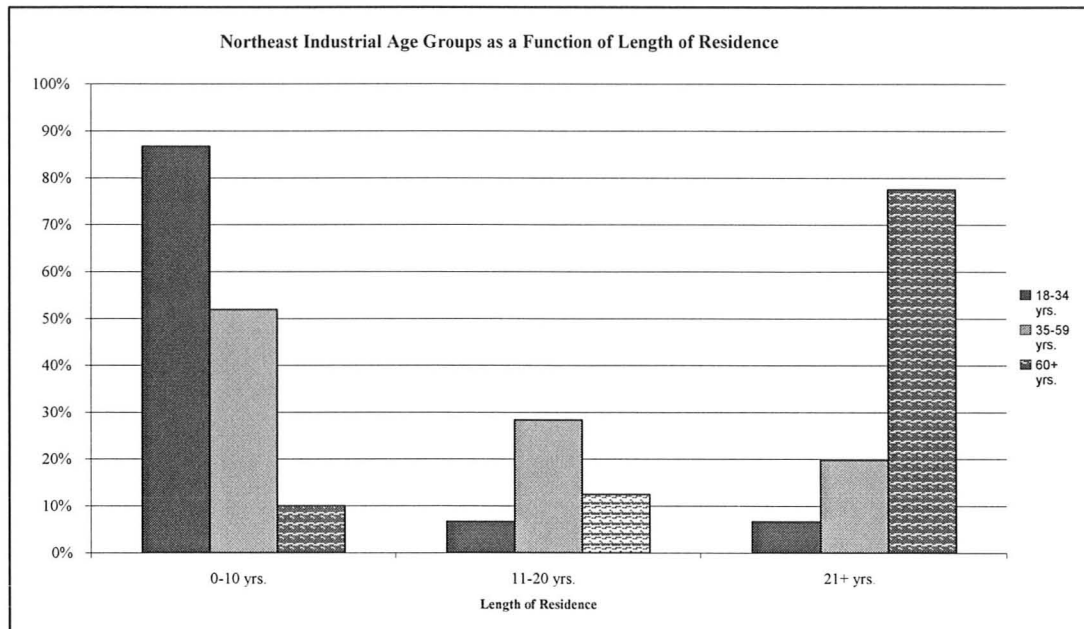


Figure 6: NEI Age Groups as a Function of Length of Residence Categories

8.2 Analysis According to Theme

8.2.1 Attachment

A total of five survey items comprise the *attachment* theme (i.e. one focal item for each of the three sub-themes and two supplementary items were included as part of the *rootedness* sub-theme). The table below shows that the propensity to 'strongly agree/agree' with the items included as part of the attachment theme increases with age group and length of residence. As such, the 60+ age group and the 21+ years of residence category showed the highest proportions (as illustrated in Table X below). The following pairs were found to be significantly different:

- 18-34 age group & 60+ age group (for all three sub-themes)
- 18-34 age group & 35-59 age group (for all three sub-themes)
- 35-59 age group & 60+ age group (for *history* & *rootedness* sub-themes)
- 0-10 yrs. & 21+ years (for all three sub-themes)
- 11-20 yrs & 21+ years (for *history* & *rootedness*)

The results suggest that, overall, older residents and those with longer experiences in their neighbourhood were more attached to the NEI neighbourhood.

Table 12: Attachment Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Belonging</i> : I feel a sense of belonging to my neighbourhood.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
				18-34	35-59	
SA/A ¹⁶	27	54	60	35-59	$Z_p = -2.62$ $p = 0.009^*$	
N ¹⁷	46	31	27			
SD/D ¹⁸	27	15	13	60+	$Z_p = -2.77$ $p = 0.006^*$	
Total	100	100	100		$Z_p = -0.67$ $p = 0.500$	
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
				0-10	11-20	
SA/A	40	58	63	11-20	$Z_p = -1.89$ $p = 0.058$	
N	41	26	24			
SD/D	19	16	13	21+	$Z_p = -2.70$ $p = 0.007^*$	
Total	100	100	100		$Z_p = -0.49$ $p = 0.624$	
ii. <i>History</i> : I want to remain in my neighbourhood because it is a storehouse of memories for me.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
				18-34	35-59	
SA/A	7	39	58	35-59	$Z_p = -3.33$ $p = 0.001^*$	
N	13	20	14			
SD/D	80	41	28	60+	$Z_p = -4.39$ $p < 0.0001^*$	
Total	100	100	100		$Z_p = -2.04$ $p = 0.041^*$	
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
				0-10	11-20	
SA/A	19	34	69	11-20	$Z_p = -1.89$ $p = 0.058$	
N	24	11	14			
SD/D	57	55	17	21+	$Z_p = -5.93$ $p < 0.0001^*$	
Total	100	100	100		$Z_p = -3.25$ $p = 0.001^*$	
iii. <i>Rootedness</i> : How rooted do you feel in your neighbourhood?						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
				18-34	35-59	
VR/FR ¹⁹	20	45	68	35-59	$Z_p = -2.50$ $p = 0.012^*$	
N	33	29	17			
NVR/NAAR ²⁰	47	26	15	60+	$Z_p = -3.94$ $p < 0.0001^*$	
Total	100	100	100		$P = 0.017^*$	
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
				0-10	11-20	
VR/FR	26	42	80	11-20	$Z_p = -1.84$ $p = 0.066$	
N	37	19	16			
NVR/NAAR	37	39	4	21+	$Z_p = -6.24$ $p < 0.0001^*$	
Total	100	100	100		$Z_p = -3.69$ $p = < 0.05^*$	

¹⁶ SA/A = Strongly Agree/Agree

¹⁷ N = Neutral

¹⁸ SD/D = Strongly Disagree/Disagree

¹⁹ VR/FR = Very Rooted/Fairly Rooted

²⁰ NVR/NAAR = Not Very Rooted/Not at all Rooted

The two supplementary questions that were included as part of the *rootedness* sub-theme were:

1. *If you had to move away from your neighbourhood, how disappointed would you be?*
2. *I would like to stay in my neighbourhood as long as my health allows me to do so.*

The results show that the 60+ age group was significantly different from the 18-34 age group for both questions (#1 $Zp=-2.57, p=0.01^*$ and #2 $Zp=-4.35, p<.0001^*$). A greater proportion of respondents in the 60+ age group (i.e. 50%) selected 'very disappointed/fairly disappointed' for Question 1 in contrast to the 18-34 age group (i.e. 20%). Similar results were found in terms of length of residence; the 21+ years category was significantly different from the 0-10 years category with 52% selecting 'very disappointed/fairly disappointed' in comparison to only 23% from the 0-10 years category ($Zp= -3.47, p=0.0005^*$). For Question 2, the 60+ age group was also significantly different from the 35-59 age group ($Zp=-3.04, p=0.002^*$). 72.5% of those in the 60+ age group prefer to remain in their neighbourhood for as long as possible. There were no significant differences in terms of length of residence for Question 2.

8.2.2 *Emotions*

Five survey items are included as part of the *emotions* theme, which contains three sub-themes (i.e. one focal item and one supplementary item for the *concern* and *familiarity* sub-themes). The results of the analysis of the concern and familiarity sub-themes were similar with no significant differences found between age groups. However, a significant difference was found to exist between the 0-10 years and 21+ years of residence categories for both of these sub-themes, with those with 21+ years of residency feeling more concern and familiarity. In terms of the pride sub-theme, the propensity to take pride in one's neighbourhood increased with age group and length of residency; significant differences were found to exist between the 18-34 and 35-59 age groups as well as the 18-34 and 60+ age groups in addition to the 0-10 and 21+ years and 11-20 and 21+ years length of residence categories.

Table 13: Emotions Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Concern: I care about what the neighbourhood will be like in ten years.</i>						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VT/FT ²¹	63	78	68	35-59	$Z_p = -1.67$ $p = 0.095$	
N	24	13	19			
NVT/NTAA ²²	13	8	13	60+	$Z_p = 0.36$ $p = 0.716$	$Z_p = 1.35$ $p = 0.177$
Total	100	100	100			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
VT/FT	67	71	83	11-20	$Z_p = -0.40$ $p = 0.690$	
N	21	16	11			
NVT/NTAA	12	13	6	21+	$Z_p = -2.08$ $p = 0.038^*$	$Z_p = -1.41$ $p = 0.160$
Total	100	100	100			
ii. <i>Familiarity: I can recognize most of the people who live in my neighbourhood.</i>						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VT/FT	60	72	75	35-59	$Z_p = -1.22$ $p = 0.221$	
N	20	11	7			
NVT/NTAA	20	17	18	60+	$Z_p = -1.34$ $p = 0.181$	$Z_p = -0.40$ $p = 0.690$
Total	100	100	100			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
VT/FT	60	76	80	11-20	$Z_p = -1.71$ $p = 0.087$	
N	20	6	7			
NVT/NTAA	20	18	13	21+	$Z_p = -2.36$ $p = 0.018^*$	$Z_p = -0.38$ $p = 0.704$
Total	100	100	100			
iii. <i>Pride: I take pride in my neighbourhood.</i>						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VT/FT	40	68	73	35-59	$Z_p = -2.78$ $p = 0.005^*$	
N	37	19	14			
NVT/NTAA	23	13	13	60+	$Z_p = -2.73$ $p = 0.006^*$	$Z_p = 0.053$ $p = 0.593$
Total	100	100	100			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
VT/FT	60	50	80	11-20	$Z_p = 1.09$ $p = 0.277$	
N	24	21	16			
NVT/NTAA	16	29	4	21+	$Z_p = -2.36$ $p = 0.018^*$	$Z_p = -2.99$ $p = 0.003^*$
Total	100	100	100			

²¹ VT/FT = Very True/Fairly True

²² NVT/NTAA = Not Very True/Not True at all

The two supplementary questions included as part of the **emotions** theme were:

1. *How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood? (sub-theme: concern)*
2. *I know many of my neighbours on a first name basis. (sub-theme: familiarity)*

In terms of safety, the 60+ age group and those living in their neighbourhood for more than 21+ years indicate higher proportions of feeling ‘very safe/safe’. For instance 70% of those in the 21+ years of residence category selected feeling ‘very safe/safe’ in contrast to 49% and 50% of the 0-10 and 11-20 years of residence categories, respectively. Significant differences were found to exist between the following age groups and length of residence categories for supplementary question #1:

- 18-34 age group and 60+ age group ($Zp=-3.17, p=0.001^*$)
- 18-34 age group and 35-59 age group ($Zp=-3.17, p=0.002^*$)
- 0-10 years and 21+ years ($Zp=-2.51, p=0.012^*$)
- 11-20 years and 21+ years ($Zp=-1.98, p=0.047^*$)

Therefore, in terms of safety, older residents and those with lengthier residency feel safer than younger residents and those with shorter residency in the NEI neighbourhood.

Similar results between the focal item and supplementary item (i.e. #2) for the sub-theme *familiarity* were found to exist with a significant difference (i.e. $Zp=-3.03, p=0.002^*$) between those with longer residency (21+ years) in comparison to those with shorter residency (0-10 years), with those having longer residence more likely to know neighbours on a first-name basis. Like the focal item, there were no significant differences between age groups for the supplementary item.

8.2.3 *Physical Environments*

A total of three survey items comprise the *physical environments* theme, which is made up of two sub-themes (i.e. one focal item for each of the two sub-themes plus one supplementary item included as part of the *natural environments* sub-theme). In terms of the *built environments* sub-theme, the proportion of those selecting the ‘strongly agree/agree’ option for the focal item was low. Only one pair was found to be significantly different (i.e. the 18-34 and the 60+ age groups). A mere 3% of those in the 18-34 age group felt that the NEI neighbourhood was too built-up in contrast to 23% of those in the 60+ age group. Those in the young age groups (i.e. 18-34 & 35-59) and those with shorter longevity of residence (i.e. 0-10 and 11-20 years) were less likely to “strongly agree/agree” that there is enough green space in the NEI neighbourhood in contrast to those in the older (i.e. 60+) age group and those with longer residency (i.e. the 21+ years of residence category). Similar results were found to exist for the supplementary item: *How likely are you to leave the neighbourhood because of pollution (e.g. air quality, water quality)?* Those in the younger age groups (i.e. 18-34 and 35-59),

in addition to those with shorter longevity of residency (i.e. 0-10 and 11-20 years), expressed a stronger likelihood to leave the NEI neighbourhood due to pollution in comparison to those in the 60+ age group and to those with 21+ years of residence. Significant differences were found to exist between the following age groups and length of residency categories:

- 18-34 age group and 60+ age group ($Zp=2.64, p=0.008^*$)
- 35-59 age group and 60+ age group ($Zp=2.61, p=0.009^*$)
- 0-10 years and 21+ years ($Zp=4.11, p<0.0001^*$)
- 11-20 years and 21+ years ($Zp=1.97, p=0.049^*$)

Overall, younger residents and those with shorter residency were more likely to consider moving due to pollution in comparison to older individuals and those with longer residency in the NEI neighbourhood.

Table 14: Physical Environments Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Built Environments</i> : The neighbourhood is too built-up.				Test of Proportions Results		
Response (%)	Age Group			Age Group		
	18-34	35-59	60+	18-34	35-59	
SA/A	3	17	23	35-59	$Zp = -1.90$	
N	60	44	29		$p = 0.057$	
SD/D	37	39	48	60+	$Zp = -2.27$	$Zp = -0.77$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.023^*$	$p = 0.444$
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+	0-10	11-20	
SA/A	15	11	20	11-20	$Zp = 0.69$	
N	48	42	39		$p = 0.493$	
SD/D	37	47	41	21+	$Zp = 0.80$	$Zp = -1.26$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.422$	$p = 0.208$
ii. <i>Natural Environments</i> : There is enough green space in my neighbourhood.				Test of Proportions Results		
Response (%)	Age Group			Age Group		
	18-34	35-59	60+	18-34	35-59	
SA/A	10	39	60	35-59	$Zp = -2.96$	
N	27	21	15		$p = 0.003^*$	
SD/D	63	40	25	60+	$Zp = -4.25$	$Zp = -2.31$
Total	100	100	100		$p < 0.0001^*$	$p = 0.021^*$
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+	0-10	11-20	
SA/A	35	18	57	11-20	$Zp = 1.85$	
N	17	27	24		$p = 0.065$	
SD/D	48	55	19	21+	$Zp = -2.62$	$Zp = -3.74$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.009^*$	$p = < 0.05^*$

8.2.4 Significance

Three items comprise the *significance* theme (i.e. one focal item for each of the two sub-themes, named *evaluation* and *reputation*, as well as one supplementary item included as part of the *evaluation* sub-theme). Results of the focal item for the *evaluation* sub-theme showed that as the age group increased so did the proportion of liking one's neighbourhood 'a great deal/a fair deal'. As such, a significant difference was found to exist between the 18-34 and 60+ age group. In comparison to the focal items, lower proportions resulted for the supplementary item, *There's no other neighbourhood where I would rather live*. In terms of the supplementary item, only 3.3% of respondents in the 18-34 age group selected 'strongly agree/agree' in comparison to 15% of the 35-59 age group and 32.5% of the 60+ age group. As a result the 18-34 and 60+ age groups as well as the 35-59 and 60+ age groups were found to be significantly different (i.e $Z_p = -3.02$, $p = 0.002^*$; $Z_p = -2.35$, $p = 0.02^*$, respectively). In addition, 28% of those respondents with 21+ years of residence in comparison to 12% of those with 0-10 years of residence in the NEI neighbourhood agreed that there is no other neighbourhood where they would rather live ($Z_p = -2.43$, $p = 0.015^*$).

In terms of the focal item for the *reputation* sub-theme, a number of significant differences were found to exist between age groups and length of residence categories. Overall, there was a low proportion of respondents who selected that it would be 'very important/fairly important' to remain in the same neighbourhood if they were to move, across age groups and length of residence categories. However, the proportions did increase with age group and length of residence. As a result, significant differences were found to exist between the following pairs:

- 18-34 age group and 60+ age group
- 35-59 age group and 60+ age group
- 0-10 years and 21+ years
- 11-20 years and 21+ years

Therefore, older residents and those with who have lived in the area for more than 20 years are more likely to move within the same neighbourhood in comparison to younger residents and those with less than 20 years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood.

Table 15: Significance Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Evaluation</i> : How much do you like your neighbourhood?										
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results						
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group						
				18-34	35-59					
AGD/AFA ²³	40	57	68	35-59	$Z_p = -1.61$ $p = 0.108$					
N	37	27	22		60+	$Z_p = -2.29$	$Z_p = -1.20$			
NVM/NAA ²⁴	23	16	10	$p = 0.022^*$ $p = 0.231$						
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	Length of Residence (yrs.)						
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			11-20	Length of Residence (yrs.)					
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20				
AGD/AFA	53	45	69	11-20	$Z_p = 0.90$ $p = 0.369$					
N	30	23	27		21+	$Z_p = -1.76$	$Z_p = -2.28$			
NVM/NAA	17	32	4	$p = 0.078$ $p = 0.023^*$						
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	ii. <i>Reputation</i> : If you were to move, how important would it be that you remain in the same neighbourhood?						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results						
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group						
				18-34	35-59					
VI/FI ²⁵	10	19	38	35-59	$Z_p = -1.14$ $p = 0.253$					
N	10	23	23		60+	$Z_p = -2.61$	$Z_p = -2.35$			
NVI/NAAI ²⁶	80	58	40	$p = 0.009^*$ $p = 0.019^*$						
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	Length of Residence (yrs.)						
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			11-20	Length of Residence (yrs.)					
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20				
VI/FI	15	16	35	11-20	$Z_p = -0.10$ $p = 0.924$					
N	15	21	30		21+	$Z_p = -2.75$	$Z_p = -2.06$			
NVI/NAAI	70	63	35	$p = 0.006^*$ $p = 0.039^*$						
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>							

8.2.5 Social Environments

A total of four survey items comprise the *social environments* theme (i.e. a focal and supplementary item for each of the two sub-themes). Similar findings resulted in the analysis of the focal item and supplementary item for the *sense of community* sub-theme. No significant differences were found for either the age groups nor the length of residence categories. Overall, low proportions of respondents, regardless of age group or length of residency, selected the ‘all the time/often’ option in terms of participating in

²³ AGD/AFA = A Great Deal/A Fair Amount

²⁴ NVM/NAA = Not Very Much/Not at all

²⁵ VI/FI = Very Important/Fairly Important

²⁶ NVI/NAAI = Not Very Important/Not at all Important

social activities with neighbours. This was also the case for responses to the supplementary item, *How much does participating in community activities make you feel connected to your neighbourhood?*

Table 16: Social Environments Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Sense of Community</i> : How often do you participate in social activities with your neighbours?						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
ATT/O ²⁷	10	10	13	35-59	$Z_p = -0.06$ $p = 0.952$	
S ²⁸	20	28	9	60+	$Z_p = -0.33$ $p = 0.745$	$Z_p = -0.37$ $p = 0.714$
HE/N ²⁹	70	62	78			
Total	100	100	100			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
ATT/O	9	11	13	11-20	$Z_p = -0.21$ $p = 0.832$	
S	21	21	24	21+	$Z_p = -0.68$ $p = 0.495$	$Z_p = -0.35$ $p = 0.723$
HE/N	70	68	63			
Total	100	100	100			
ii. <i>Neighbours</i> : Many of my neighbours are close friends.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
SA/A	7	21	25	35-59	$Z_p = -1.79$ $p = 0.074$	
N	33	22	40	60+	$Z_p = -1.03$ $p = 0.300$	$Z_p = -0.553$ $p = 0.580$
SD/D	60	57	35			
Total	100	100	100			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
SA/A	14	18	28	11-20	$Z_p = -0.637$ $p = 0.524$	
N	27	21	39	21+	$Z_p = -2.02$ $p = 0.044^*$	$Z_p = -1.04$ $p = 0.300$
SD/D	59	61	33			
Total	100	100	100			

For the *neighbours* sub-theme, the majority of significant differences were found to exist between the 0-10 and 21+ years of residence categories in addition to the 18-34 and 60+ age groups. In terms of the focal item, 7% of those in the 18-34 age category considered their neighbours as close friends in comparison to 25% of those in the 60+ age category. In addition 14% of those with 0-10 years of residence considered their neighbours as close friends in comparison to twice the proportion of those with 21+ years of residence (i.e. 28%). Similar findings resulted in the analysis of the supplementary

²⁷ ATT/O = All The Time/Often

²⁸ S = Sometimes

²⁹ HE/N = Hardly Ever/Never

item: *If you had to leave, how many of your neighbours would you miss?* 67.5% of those in the 60+ age group would miss ‘many/some’ in comparison to just 40% of those in the 18-34 age group ($Zp=-2.29$, $p=0.022^*$). Furthermore, significant differences were found to exist between the 0-10 and 21+ years of residence categories ($Zp=-3.07$, $p=0.002^*$) as well as the 0-10 and 11-20 years of residence categories ($Zp=-2.19$, $p=0.029^*$), with those with longer residency feeling that they would miss their neighbours.

8.3 Summary of Quantitative Results for CASE NEI

According to the information presented in this chapter, the majority of NEI residents perceived their neighbourhood in terms of its access to services regardless of age or length of residency. The results suggest that older residents and those with longer residencies are more attached and take more pride in their neighbourhood. Furthermore, as age and length of residency increased so to did the proportion of liking one’s neighbourhood as well as the desire to remain in the same neighbourhood in the event of a move. In addition, those with longer residency (i.e. more than 20 years) expressed more concern, a greater sense of familiarity with their surroundings and they were more likely to consider their neighbours as close friends. On the other hand, younger individuals and those with shorter residency were more likely to indicate that there was not enough green space in the NEI neighbourhood and they were also more likely to consider moving due to pollution. Lastly, regardless of age group and length of residency, residents indicated low levels of participation in social activities with neighbours suggesting a poor sense of community in the NEI neighbourhood.

9 CHAPTER NINE: RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR CASE SWM

9.1 SWM Neighbourhood Perceptions

226 individuals responded to the survey in the SWM neighbourhood. In terms of the breakdown of responses to the survey question about how they defined their neighbourhood, the majority of respondents, regardless of age group or length of residence agreed that they perceived their neighbourhood based on its access to services (see Figures 7 & 8 below). The second most popular perception, for all age groups in addition to those with both 11-20 and 21+ years of experience in the neighbourhood, was based on the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood. The second most popular choice for those respondents who lived in the neighbourhood for 0-10 years was the perception of the neighbourhood for its social ties and interactions. The graphs below depict the results based on age group and length of residence, respectively.

The evaluation of respondents based on both age group and length of residence in the SWM neighbourhood is depicted in Figure 9 below. The results show that majority of respondents in each of the three age groups lived in the neighbourhood for 0-10 years (i.e. 62% of respondents aged 18-34, 55% of respondents aged 35-59 & 44% of respondents aged 60+ comprise this category). The representation of all age groups is lowest in the 21+ years category, likely due to the relative newness of the neighbourhood.

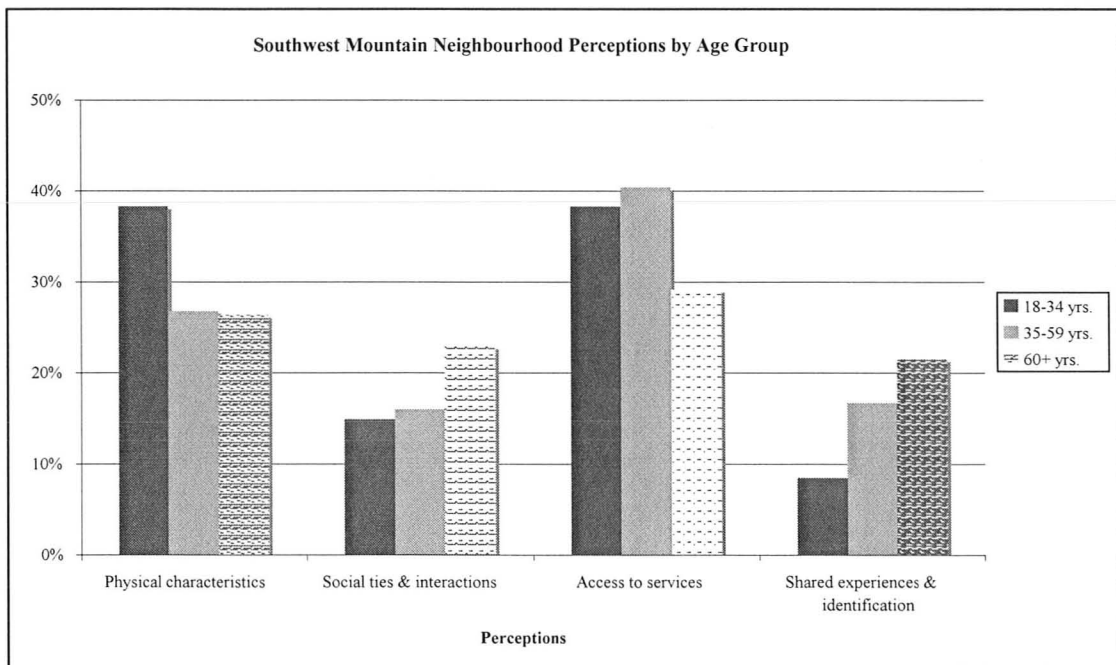


Figure 7: SWM Neighbourhood Perceptions by Age Group

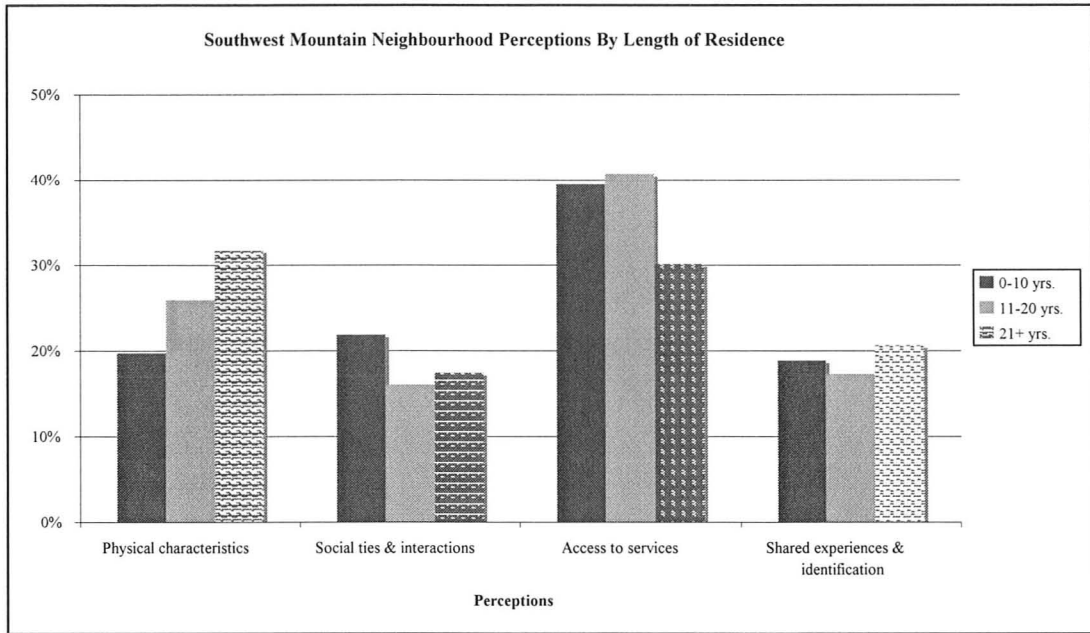


Figure 8: SWM Neighbourhood Perceptions by Length of Residence Categories

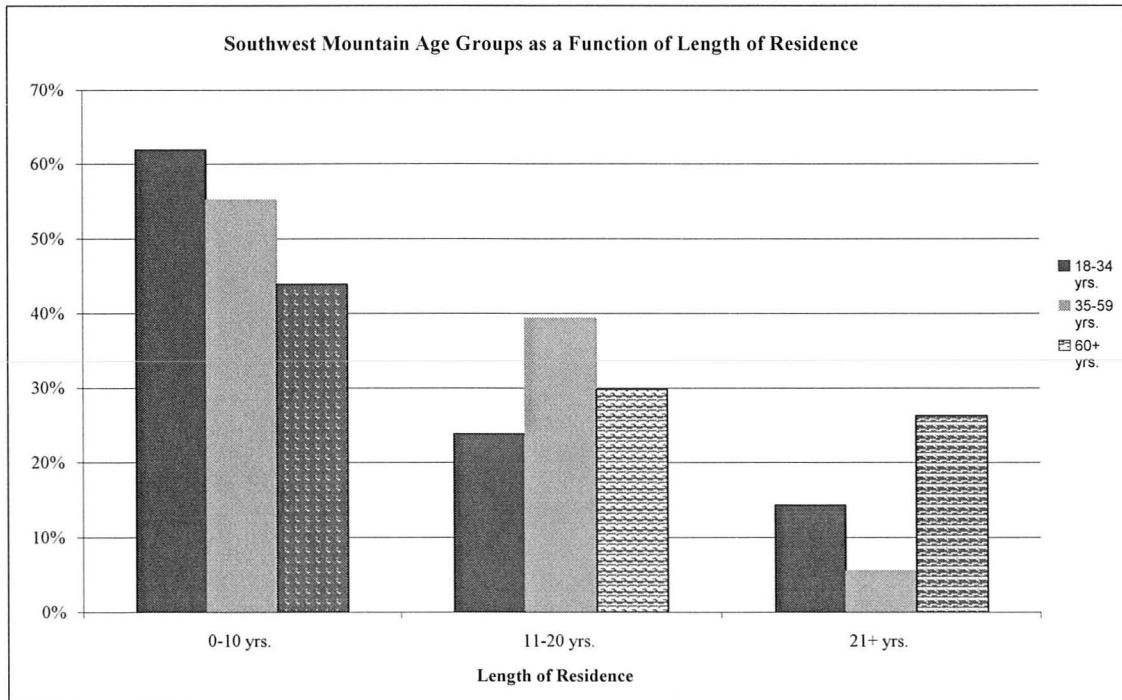


Figure 9: SWM Age Groups as a Function of Length of Residence Categories

9.2 Analysis According to Theme

9.2.1 Attachment

A total of five survey items comprise the *attachment* theme (i.e. three focal items for the three sub-themes in addition to two supplementary items included as part of the *rootedness* sub-theme). Overall, the analysis of the three focal items included as part of the **attachment** theme revealed a general trend. As the age group and length of residence categories increased, so did the proportions of respondents selecting ‘strongly agree/agree’. No significant differences were found to exist between pairs in the *belonging* sub-theme: however, the proportions of respondents selecting the ‘strongly agree/agree’ option were quite high for both age groups (i.e. range 57-77%) and length of residency categories (i.e. range 63-78%)

The findings from the analysis of the focal items corresponding to the *history* and *rootedness* sub-themes were similar in that there were no significant differences between age groups but there were significant differences between length of residence categories (see Table 17 below). In terms of the history sub-theme, 74% of those living in their neighbourhood for 21+ years selected the ‘strongly agree/agree’ option to remain in their neighbourhood due to nostalgia-related reasons in comparison to 28% of those living in the neighbourhood for 0-10 years. In relation to the rootedness focal item, 93% of respondents in the 21+ years of residence felt ‘very rooted/fairly rooted’ in contrast to just 49% of those with 0-10 years of experience in the neighbourhood.

The two supplementary items included as part of the *rootedness* sub-theme were:

1. *If you had to move away from your neighbourhood how disappointed would you be?*
2. *I would like to stay in my neighbourhood as long as my health allows me to do so.*

For both supplementary items, significant differences were found to exist between age group pairs. There were no significant differences between length of residence pairs for Question #1 but a significant difference was found to exist between one of the length of residence pairs for Question #2 (i.e. 0-10 and 21+ years; $Z_p = -2.36$, $p = 0.018^*$). With respect to age group pairs, 74% of respondents in the 60+ age group category selected the ‘very disappointed/fairly disappointed’ option with regard to the prospect of moving away from the neighbourhood, in contrast to 48% of those in the 35-59 age group and 38% of those in the 18-34 age group. As a result, the 18-34 and 60+ age groups and the 34-59 and 60+ age groups were found to be significantly different (i.e. $Z_p = -2.91$, $p = 0.004^*$ & $Z_p = -3.27$, $p = 0.001^*$, respectively). The findings suggest that older residents would be more upset in the event of a move in comparison to younger residents and regardless of length of residency in the SWM neighbourhood. All combinations of age group pairs were found to be statistically different for Question #2.

Table 17: Attachment Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Belonging</i> : I feel a sense of belonging to my neighbourhood.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
SA/A	57	64	77	35-59	$Z_p = -0.62$ $p = 0.534$	
N	19	28	19	60+	$Z_p = -1.75$ $p = 0.081$	$Z_p = -1.79$ $p = 0.074$
SD/D	24	8	4	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			11-20	$Z_p = -1.02$ $p = 0.309$	
	0-10	11-20	21+	21+	$Z_p = -1.46$ $p = 0.145$	$Z_p = -0.78$ $p = 0.437$
SA/A	63	70	78			
N	27	24	18			
SD/D	10	6	4			
Total	100	100	100			
ii. <i>History</i> : I want to remain in my neighbourhood because it is a storehouse of memories for me (e.g., I built the home I'm living in, my children grew up here, etc.)						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
SA/A	33	35	49	35-59	$Z_p = -0.17$ $p = 0.869$	
N	38	39	25	60+	$Z_p = -1.24$ $p = 0.214$	$Z_p = -1.83$ $p = 0.067$
SD/D	29	26	26	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			11-20	$Z_p = -1.99$ $p = 0.047^*$	
	0-10	11-20	21+	21+	$Z_p = -4.52$ $p < 0.0001^*$	$Z_p = -2.95$ $p = 0.003^*$
SA/A	28	41	74			
N	40	35	19			
SD/D	32	24	7			
Total	100	100	100			
iii. <i>Rootedness</i> : How rooted do you feel in your neighbourhood?						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VR/FR	43	57	67	35-59	$Z_p = -1.18$ $p = 0.239$	
N	33	31	28	60+	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.057$	$Z_p = -1.32$ $p = 0.188$
NVR/NAAR	24	12	5	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			11-20	$Z_p = -1.56$ $p = 0.119$	
	0-10	11-20	21+	21+	$Z_p = -4.15$ $p < 0.0001^*$	$Z_p = -3.15$ $p = 0.002^*$
VR/FR	49	60	93			
N	38	29	3			
NVR/NAAR	13	11	4			
Total	100	100	100			

A large proportion of respondents in the 60+ age group (i.e. 96%) selected the ‘strongly agree/agree’ option in regard to their desire to remain in the SWM neighbourhood, health permitting, in contrast to 24% of those in the 18-34 age group and 59% of those in the 34-59 age group. The results of the difference of proportions tests are as follows:

- 18-34 age group and 60+ age group ($Z_p = -6.76$, $p < 0.0001^*$)
- 35-59 age group and 60+ age group ($Z_p = -5.18$, $p < 0.0001^*$)
- 18-34 age group and 35-59 age group ($Z_p = -3.05$, $p = 0.002^*$)

Thus, the findings suggest that older residents consider their health as having an effect on their residential status in comparison to young residents.

9.2.2 Emotions

A total of five survey items are included as part of the *emotion* theme (i.e. one focal item for each of the three sub-themes and two supplementary items for two sub-themes, *concern* and *familiarity*). Although there were no significant differences between age group pairs and length of residency pairs for the *concern* sub-theme, the high proportions of respondents who expressed concern by choosing the ‘very true/fairly true’ option were noted, with proportions upwards of 70%. The analysis of the supplementary item corresponding to the concern sub-theme, *How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood?*, also revealed high proportions. For instance, 100% of respondents in the 18-34 age group felt ‘very safe/safe’ in the SWM neighbourhood in comparison to 87% of the 35-59 age group and 98% of the 60+ age group. Similar results were also apparent in the length of residence categories (i.e. 89% for 0-10 years; 92% for 11-20 and 96% for 21+ years).

The results from the analysis of the focal and supplementary items for the *familiarity* sub-theme (i.e. *I know many of my neighbours on a first name basis.*) were similar. There were no significant differences between age group pairs; the range of proportions was found to be between 62-70% in terms of those responding ‘very true/fairly true’ to both items. However, significant differences were found to exist between length of residence categories. For the focal item, the 0-10 and 11-20 years of residence and the 11-20 and 21+ years of residence pairs were significantly different. This suggests that those with more than 20 years of residency in the SWM neighbourhood are more likely than those with less than 20 years of residency to recognize their neighbours. For the supplementary item, 73% of those in the 11-20 years of residence category agreed that they knew their neighbours on a first name basis in contrast to 55% of those in the 0-10 years of residence category and this pair was found to be statistically different (i.e. $Z_p = -2.62$, $p = 0.009$). Thus, those with lengthier residency in the SWM neighbourhood are more likely to be familiar with their neighbours.

Table 18: Emotions Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Concern</i> : I care about what the neighbourhood will be like in ten years.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VT/FT	71	86	84	35-59	$Z_p = -1.74$	
N	19	10	12		$p = 0.082$	
NVT/NTAA	10	4	4	60+	$Z_p = -1.27$	$Z_p = 0.36$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.204$	$p = 0.716$
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
VT/FT	84	81	93	11-20	$Z_p = 0.51$	
N	12	13	7		$p = 0.609$	
NVT/NTAA	4	6	0	21+	$Z_p = -1.14$	$Z_p = -1.39$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.253$	$p = 0.163$
ii. <i>Familiarity</i> : I can recognize most of the people who live in my neighbourhood.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VT/FT	62	69	70	35-59	$Z_p = -0.65$	
N	0	16	9		$p = 0.517$	
NVT/NTAA	38	15	21	60+	$Z_p = -0.69$	$Z_p = -0.17$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.488$	$p = 0.867$
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
VT/FT	61	83	63	11-20	$Z_p = -3.30$	
N	16	6	11		$p = 0.001^*$	
NVT/NTAA	23	11	26	21+	$Z_p = -0.24$	$Z_p = 2.10$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.813$	$p = 0.035^*$
iii. <i>Pride</i> : I take pride in my neighbourhood.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VT/FT	62	90	93	35-59	$Z_p = -3.44$	
N	33	8	7		$p = 0.001^*$	
NVT/NTAA	5	2	0	60+	$Z_p = -3.37$	$Z_p = -0.73$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.001^*$	$p = 0.466$
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
VT/FT	89	86	85	11-20	$Z_p = 0.60$	
N	9	11	15		$p = 0.548$	
NVT/NTAA	2	3	0	21+	$Z_p = 0.57$	$Z_p = 0.14$
Total	100	100	100		$p = 0.569$	$p = 0.890$

The analysis of the focal item (i.e. I take pride in my neighbourhood.) for the pride sub-theme found no significant differences between length of residence categories

as the proportions across categories were similar (i.e. all proportions were in the 80% range). Yet, significant differences were found to exist between the following age group pairs: 18-34 and 35-59 and 18-34 and 60+. Therefore, middle-aged and older residents are more likely to feel more pride for their neighbourhood in contrast to young residents, irregardless of length of residency.

9.2.3 Physical Environments

Three survey items were explored as part of the *physical environments* theme (i.e. one for each of the two sub-themes and an additional supplementary item as part of the *natural environments* sub-theme). In terms of the *built environments* focal item, very low proportions of respondents, regardless of age category or length of residence agreed that the neighbourhood was too built-up. There were no significant differences between any of the tested pairs.

Table 19: Physical Environments Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Built Environments</i> : The neighbourhood is too built-up.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
SA/A	10	13	5	35-59	$Z_p = -0.46$ $p = 0.645$	
N	23	41	28		60+	$Z_p = 0.68$ $p = 0.496$
SD/D	67	46	67	$Z_p = 1.61$ $p = 0.107$		
Total	100	100	100			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
SA/A	8	14	15	11-20	$Z_p = -1.42$ $p = 0.155$	
N	39	32	33		21+	$Z_p = -1.19$ $p = 0.232$
SD/D	53	54	52	$Z_p = -0.14$ $p = 0.890$		
Total	100	100	100			
ii. <i>Natural Environments</i> : There is enough green space in my neighbourhood (e.g., mature trees, parks, etc.).						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
SA/A	57	57	86	35-59	$Z_p = 0.05$ $p = 0.959$	
N	19	23	10		60+	$Z_p = -2.73$ $p = 0.006^*$
SD/D	24	20	4	$Z_p = -3.94$ $p < 0.0001^*$		
Total	100	100	100			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
SA/A	61	66	78	11-20	$Z_p = 0.172$ $p = 0.863$	
N	21	20	11		21+	$Z_p = 1.18$ $p = 0.238$
SD/D	18	14	11	$Z_p = 1.05$ $p = 0.296$		
Total	100	100	100			

The proportion of respondents that agreed that there was enough green space in the SWM neighbourhood were quite high, however, significant differences were found to exist between age groups. 57% of respondents in both the 18-34 and 35-59 age groups in comparison to 86% of respondents in the 60+ age group selected the 'strongly agree/agree' option for the focal question. As a result, the 18-34 and 60+ age groups in addition to the 35-59 and 60+ age groups were found to be statistically different. In terms of the supplementary natural environments sub-theme item, *How likely are you to leave the neighbourhood because of the pollution?*, the proportion of respondents expressing concern about pollution were very low (i.e. a range of 10-18%). No significant differences were found to exist between any of the tested pairs. Thus, pollution does not seem to be an issue of concern for residents of the SWM neighbourhood.

9.2.4 Significance

Three items comprise the *significance* theme (i.e. one for each of the two sub-themes and a supplementary item for the *evaluation* sub-theme). The proportion of respondents who like their neighbourhood 'a great deal/a fair amount' are above 65% for all age groups and 80% and above for all length of residence categories. The proportions increase as age group and length of residence increase. 93% of respondents in the 60+ age group expressed that they liked the SWM 'a great deal/a fair amount'. Difference of proportions tests revealed statistically significant differences between the 18-34 and 60+ age groups in addition to the 35-59 and 60+ age groups. The proportions were evenly spread in terms of length of residence categories for the focal item and as a result there were no significant differences found to exist between pairs.

Similar trends were revealed in the analysis of the supplementary item, *There's no other neighbourhood where I would rather live*, as those in the 60+ age group were more likely to 'strongly agree/agree' (i.e. 53%) in comparison to younger age groups (i.e. 18-34 = 9% and 35-59 = 22%). As a result, the 18-34 and 60+ age groups and the 35-59 and 60+ age groups were found to be statistically different (i.e. $Z_p = -3.43$, $p = 0.006^*$ & $Z_p = -4.24$, $p = 0.0002^*$, respectively). Those with less experience in the neighbourhood expressed a lower tendency to 'strongly agree/agree' that there was no other neighbourhood where they would rather reside (0-10 years = 25%; 11-20 = 24% & 21+ years = 63%). As such, the 0-10 and 21+ years of residence and 11-20 and 21+ length of residence categories were found to be statistically different (i.e., $Z_p = -3.79$, $p = 0.00015^*$ & $Z_p = -3.79$, $p = 0.002^*$, respectively).

In terms of the *reputation* sub-theme, it was less important for respondents in the 18-34 age group to move within the same neighbourhood (i.e. only 14% felt it was 'very important/fairly important to remain in the same neighbourhood in contrast to 47% of the 60+ age group). As a result the 18-34 and 60+ age groups were found to be statistically different. Also, in terms of length of residence, those with longevity of residence (i.e. 21+) expressed a stronger importance to remain in the neighbourhood after a move (i.e.

59%) in comparison to those with shorter residency (i.e. 34% for both 0-10 and 11-20 years of residence). As a result, the 0-10 and 21+ years of residence in addition to the 11-20 and 21+ years of residence categories were found to be statistically different.

Table 20: Significance Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Evaluation</i> : How much do you like your neighbourhood?						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
AGD/AFA	67	79	93	35-59	$Z_p = -1.30$ $p = 0.193$	
N	33	18	7	60+	$Z_p = -2.96$ $p = 0.003^*$	$Z_p = -2.34$ $p = 0.020^*$
NVM/NAA	0	3	0	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
AGD/AFA	80	84	85	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	17	15	11	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVM/NAA	3	1	4	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	14	35	47	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	19	27	21	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	67	38	32	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	34	34	59	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	26	23	22	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	40	43	19	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	34	34	59	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	26	23	22	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	40	43	19	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	34	34	59	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	26	23	22	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	40	43	19	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	34	34	59	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	26	23	22	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	40	43	19	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	34	34	59	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	26	23	22	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	40	43	19	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	34	34	59	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	26	23	22	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	40	43	19	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Test of Proportions Results		
	0-10	11-20	21+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
VI/FI	34	34	59	35-59	$Z_p = -1.91$ $p = 0.056$	
N	26	23	22	60+	$Z_p = -2.66$ $p = 0.008^*$	$Z_p = -1.60$ $p = 0.109$
NVI/NAAI	40	43	19	Length of Residence (yrs.)		
Total	100	100	100		0-10	11-20

9.2.5 Social Environments

Four items comprise the *social environments* sub-theme (i.e. a focal item and supplementary item for each of the two sub-themes). In terms of the *sense of community* sub-theme, the proportions of respondents were quite low regardless of age group or length of residence (i.e. range of 5-20%). There were no significant differences found between any of the age group or length of residence pairs. Similar results were found in the analysis of the corresponding supplementary item for the *sense of community* sub-

theme, *How much does participating in community activities make you feel connected to your neighbourhood?*.

Table 21: Social Environments Quantitative Results by Sub-theme and Focal Item

i. <i>Sense of Community</i> : How often do you participate in social activities with your neighbours (e.g. barbeques, coffee dates, etc.)?						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
ATT/O	5	12	19	35-59	$Z_p = -0.96$ $P = 0.338$	
S	9	29	48	60+	$Z_p = -1.58$ $P = 0.115$	$Z_p = -1.40$ $p = 0.161$
HE/N	86	59	33			
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
ATT/O	10	16	19	11-20	$Z_p = -1.29$ $P = 0.198$	
S	30	31	40	21+	$Z_p = -1.23$ $P = 0.217$	$Z_p = -0.27$ $p = 0.785$
HE/N	60	53	41			
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>			
ii. <i>Neighbours</i> : Many of my neighbours are close friends.						
Response (%)	Age Group			Test of Proportions Results		
	18-34	35-59	60+	Age Group		
					18-34	35-59
SA/A	5	21	35	35-59	$Z_p = -1.75$ $P = 0.080$	
N	24	23	32	60+	$Z_p = -2.54$ $P = 0.011^*$	$Z_p = -2.14$ $p = .033^*$
SD/D	71	56	33			
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>			
Response (%)	Length of Residence (yrs.)			Length of Residence (yrs.)		
	0-10	11-20	21+		0-10	11-20
SA/A	19	21	48	11-20	$Z_p = -0.332$ $P = .740$	
N	22	34	19	21+	$Z_p = -3.14$ $P = 0.002^*$	$Z_p = -2.69$ $p = 0.007^*$
SD/D	59	45	33			
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>			

The analysis of the focal and supplementary items for the *neighbours* sub-theme revealed several significant differences. Greater proportions of those in the 60+ age group and 21+ length of residence category agreed that many of their neighbours were close friends. As a result, the 18-34 and 60+ age groups and 35-59 and 60+ age groups were found to be statistically different. In addition, the 0-10 and 21+ length of residence categories and the 11-20 and 20+ length of residence categories were also found to be statistically different. In terms of the supplementary item, *If you had to leave, how many of your neighbours would you miss?*, similar results were found to exist between age groups and length of residence categories. The following tested pairs were found to be statistically different:

- 18-34 age group and 60+ age group ($Zp = -2.71, p = 0.007^*$)
- 35-59 age group and 60+ age group ($Zp = -2.49, p = 0.013^*$)
- 0-10 years of residence and 21+ years of residence ($Zp = -2.21, p = 0.027^*$)

Thus, older residents and those with more than 20 years of residency in the SWM neighbourhood were more likely to miss their neighbours in the event of a move in comparison to younger residents and those with less than ten years of residency.

9.3 Summary of Quantitative Results for Case SWM

The first section of this chapter examined perceptions of neighbourhood. The findings suggest that regardless of age group or length of residency, the majority of SWM residents perceive their neighbourhood for its access to services. The sense of belonging did not vary between age groups or based on length of residence category. However, those with longer residency were more likely to express a stronger desire to remain in the neighbourhood in addition to being more rooted in the neighbourhood, suggesting a greater sense of attachment. Residents were equally concerned about their neighbourhood but older individuals took more pride in the neighbourhood. Older individuals liked their neighbourhood more and they were also more likely to agree that there was enough green space in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, older residents and those with longer residency were more likely to move within the same neighbourhood and have stronger relationships with their neighbours. Finally, regardless of age group and length of residency, residents indicated low levels of participation in social activities with neighbours suggesting a poor sense of community in the SWM neighbourhood.

10 Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusions

10.1 Introduction and Chapter Format

The dearth of SoP studies conducted at the neighbourhood level and within a Canadian context provided the impetus for this study. Furthermore, this mixed methods study offers a novel approach in the examination of three separate variables to explore SoP perceptions: (1) age of resident; (2) resident's length of residency in neighbourhood, and; (3) neighbourhood type. A *Sequential Exploratory Design* was embedded within a case study research framework (outlined in Chapter 2: Methodology), which involved the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. In previous chapters, the results of both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study were presented separately. The last phase of the *Sequential Exploratory Design* dictates that the findings of both phases are integrated and analyzed together. Furthermore, previous chapters have followed a within-case framework whereby the two cases were presented independently. This final chapter will follow a cross-case framework whereby the findings of Case NEI and Case SWM, will be discussed jointly.

In order to describe the general trends and to draw conclusions in a coherent manner, material will continue to be presented according to the five overarching themes and corresponding sub-themes: (1) *attachment*; (2) *emotions*; (3) *physical environments*; (4) *significance* and; (4) *social environments*. The objective of this chapter is to not only integrate the findings of both cases together but to also present a comprehensive analysis of each theme through the fusion of the qualitative and quantitative findings.

10.2 Summary of Findings from Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Phases

Table 22 below provides a summary of results for both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. More specifically, the following symbols will denote whether: (1) the qualitative analysis suggests differences between either age groups or longevity of residency categories [*]; (2) statistically significant differences between groups were found in the analysis of focal items only [+] and; (3) convergence between the qualitative and quantitative findings [⊗].

Table 22: Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings for Both Study Sites

<i>Theme</i> <i>sub-theme</i>	Age		Longevity of Residence	
	NEI	SWM	NEI	SWM
1. Attachment				
i. <i>Belonging</i>	+		+	
ii. <i>History</i>	+	*	⊗	*
iii. <i>Rootedness</i>	⊗	*	⊗	⊗
2. Emotions				
i. <i>Concern</i>			+	
ii. <i>Familiarity</i>			⊗	⊗
iii. <i>Pride</i>	+	+	⊗	
3. Physical Environments				
i. <i>Built</i>	+			
ii. <i>Natural</i>	⊗	+	⊗	
4. Significance				
i. <i>Evaluation</i>	⊗	+	+	*
ii. <i>Reputation</i>	+	+	⊗	+
5. Social Environments				
i. <i>Sense of Community</i>				
ii. <i>Neighbours</i>	+	+	+	+

Note: [*] = qualitative differences between groups; [+] = statistically significant differences between groups for focal items only and; [⊗] = convergence between qualitative and quantitative findings.

As displayed in Table 22, the integration of the qualitative and quantitative phases for both study sites shows both convergence and dissonance within and across cases. The following section provides a cross-case analysis, beginning with a section on neighbourhood interpretations followed by an examination of each of the five themes and corresponding sub-themes.

10.2.1 Neighbourhood Interpretations

This chapter begins by revisiting the broad survey item that asked respondents to indicate how they thought about their neighbourhood. Residents were asked to make their selection from a list of options which included: (1) its physical characteristics; (2) its social ties and interactions; (3) its access to services such as shops, schools, parks it provides and; (4) the shared experiences and identification with other residents. Regardless of age group, length of residency and neighbourhood, the majority of respondents defined their neighbourhood based on its access to services such as shopping amenities, educational institutions and green spaces. This finding not only suggests that residents of the NEI and SWM define their neighbourhood in similar ways, it also suggests that individuals, regardless of age or length of residency, define their neighbourhood in the same way since no statistically significant differences were found

to exist between age groups and length of residency categories. This finding aligns itself with one of Eyles' (1985) ten SoP categories – *instrumental SoP*, whereby individuals find meaningfulness in what a place offers in terms of amenities, services and employment opportunities. This finding also aligns itself with the results of the thematic analysis for both cases. Members of the SWM and NEI focus groups, regardless of age or length of residency repeatedly referred to not only the wide variety of amenities in their neighbourhoods but also the ease of accessing these amenities. Peter, an older participant with seven years of residency in the SWM neighbourhood used the word 'convenient' to summarize the availability of amenities. In the same respect, Jane, also an older participant but with longer residency (i.e. 41 years) in the NEI neighbourhood cited the ease of accessing amenities and the close proximity of the Centre Mall as one of the reasons why she wants to remain in the neighbourhood.

Interestingly, the least popular option for NEI neighbourhood residents, regardless of age or length of residency, was viewing their neighbourhood based on social ties and interactions. This finding was inconsistent with the overwhelming number of references made to the strong relationships between neighbours during the NEI focus groups, which were outlined in the *social environments* theme as part of the *neighbours* sub-theme. This inconsistency may be attributed to the sampling bias acknowledged in Chapter 2: Methodology. As described previously, members of the neighbourhood association assisted with the recruitment of focus group participants and as a result, many participants were familiar with each other. It is possible that focus group members felt compelled to exaggerate and portray their relationships with neighbours in a favourable light.

Moreover, with the exception of older residents in the NEI neighbourhood³⁰, the second most popular option for all age groups in both study sites was the definition based on physical characteristics. The survey item did not operationalize physical characteristics or provide examples of what is considered to be a physical characteristic. Therefore, coupled with the results of the qualitative analysis, mainly the evaluation of the *physical environments* theme, it is possible to add some complexity to this particular quantitative item in an effort to enhance comprehension. According to the qualitative analysis of Case SWM, focus group participants seemed very satisfied with the amount of green space and the aesthetic appeal of landscaping in their area. Also, the review of outdoor recreational spaces in each neighbourhood (see Chapter 3: Case Profiles) revealed that the SWM surpassed the NEI neighbourhood in terms of the number of available parks/green spaces. On the other hand, discussions about the physical environment in the NEI neighbourhood was overshadowed by references to the pollution from nearby industry and the unkept neighbourhood park. Although long-time residents noted improvements in air quality over the years, the focus group participants acknowledged their ongoing concerns with air pollution. In contrast, there was no mention of air pollution as an issue of concern for members of the SWM focus groups.

³⁰ The second most popular option for older residents was the perception of the NEI neighbourhood based on shared experiences and identification with other residents.

Taken together, it is possible that residents of the NEI neighbourhood who think about their neighbourhood in terms of its physical characteristics are referring to negative aspects such as lack of green space and pollution whereas those from the SWM are referring to just the opposite.

10.2.2 Attachment

The examination of survey items representing the theme of *attachment* revealed inconsistencies between the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods. The survey item, *I feel a sense of belonging to my neighbourhood*, was analyzed as part of the sub-theme, *belonging*. Findings indicated that the propensity to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with this statement did not vary among individuals, based on age or length of residency in the SWM neighbourhood. The calculated proportions for each group were quite high, suggesting that residents felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood regardless of age or length of residency. On the other hand, the propensity to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with the statement increased by age group for residents of the NEI neighbourhood. In addition, NEI residents with more than 20 years of residency had a stronger sense of belonging than those with less than ten years of residency. These findings suggest that for the NEI neighbourhood, the sense of belonging varies as a function of age and longevity of residency. However, the qualitative analysis of the focus groups for the *belonging* sub-theme in both cases revealed that the majority of residents felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood regardless of age or length of residency. This qualitative finding is consistent with the survey results for the SWM but not the NEI neighbourhood. Interestingly the sense of belonging was clearly manifested in different ways in both neighbourhoods. The sense of belonging for NEI focus group members developed from feeling comfortable in the neighbourhood and accepted by others. On the other hand, the sense of belonging for SWM residents seemed to develop through active participation in neighbourhood activities with their children and as such many residents noted a diminished sense of belonging once their children grew older and participated less frequently in activities.

The NEI survey findings converge with the results of the 2003 General Social Survey (GSS) on Social Engagement, conducted by Statistics Canada, whereby three aspects of social capital were examined, including (1) sense of belonging; (2) confidence in institutions and; (3) trust; these were examined on three different scales: (1) national; (2) provincial and; (3) community (Schellenberg, 2004). The findings suggest that Canadians have the weakest sense of belonging towards their community (i.e. strongest sense of belonging towards Canada followed by province) and that the sense of belonging increases with age and length of residency in their community. More specifically, the results showed that those aged 60 and over were more likely to have the strongest sense of community in comparison to their younger counterparts. In addition, the results of the GSS found that those with more than five years of residency in their community were two times as likely to feel a ‘very strong’ sense of belonging in contrast to those with less than three years of residency.

The next survey item that was examined as part of the *history* sub-theme was: *I want to remain in my neighbourhood because it is a storehouse of memories for me (e.g. I built the home I'm living in, my children grew up here, etc.)*. Findings suggest that the propensity to 'strongly agree/agree' with the statement varies by length of residency for both study sites and also by age group for the NEI neighbourhood (i.e. propensities increase as age groups and length of residency categories increase). Since memories develop and accumulate over time, it seems logical that residents with lengthier experiences in their neighbourhoods would exhibit a greater sense of attachment. This corresponds with Tuan (1974) who stated, "... a person in the process of time invests bits of his emotional life in his home and beyond the home in his neighbourhood... As some people are reluctant to part with their shapeless coat for a new one, so some people – especially older people – are reluctant to abandon their old neighbourhood for the new housing development" (p. 99). The results of the analysis of this sub-theme for both focus groups supports the quantitative findings given that many older residents had intentions to age-in-place (i.e. to grow old in their homes and neighbourhoods). In addition, several of the residents from both study sites were raised in or around the neighbourhood and cited this as one of the reasons why they chose to return there to raise their own families. This coincides with what Eyles (1985) referred to as a *nostalgic* SoP, which is the product of recalling past sentiments related to place.

The results of the analysis of the *rootedness* sub-theme was similar to that of the *history* sub-theme, whereby the propensity to 'strongly agree/agree' with the survey item, *I feel rooted in my neighbourhood*, increased according to length of residency for both study sites as well as by age group for the NEI neighbourhood (i.e. as age groups and length of residency categories increase so too did propensities to 'strongly agree/agree'). Two supplementary items were included as part of the *rootedness* sub-theme, (1) *If you had to move away from your neighbourhood how disappointed would you be?* and; (2) *I would like to stay in my neighbourhood for as long as my health allows me to do so*. The results of the analysis of both items revealed that responses varied according to age group for both neighbourhoods. The findings suggest that older residents in both neighbourhoods would be more disappointed if they had to move out of the neighbourhood than younger individuals. For instance, Aaron, a 21 year old resident from the SWM was enthusiastic about the prospect of moving out of his parents' home and as he put it, "laying down my own roots".

In addition, older individuals showed a greater propensity to 'strongly agree/agree' that health-permitting, they would like to remain in their neighbourhood. This finding suggests that older individuals are more likely than younger individuals to consider health to have an effect on their residential mobility, which is consistent with findings from the focus group sessions. Older participants from both study sites primarily cited health-related problems that would hinder their ability to remain in the neighbourhood; this was not the case for the majority of younger participants. For instance, Jessie, an older participant from the NEI neighbourhood stated, "Only one way

I'll be moving now [implying death] ... Unless I fall and break my hip again". Similarly, Angela, another NEI resident, explained that she did not want to move out of her home and into an apartment; she specified that a move would be contingent on whether her husband could continue caring for their property. Polly, an older resident from the SWM explained that like her husband, she planned to remain in her home and neighbourhood until her final days. On the other hand, younger individuals from both neighbourhoods made no reference to health issues that would cause them to leave the neighbourhood with the exception of Roger, a younger middle-aged participant from the NEI study site who experienced breathing problems which he attributed to poor air quality. For the most part, younger participants were more likely to cite personal reasons for moving out of the neighbourhood such as career opportunities or marriage.

10.2.3 Emotions

The sub-themes included as part of the *emotions* theme included *concern*, *familiarity*, and *pride*. The sub-theme of *concern* was examined through two survey items. The analysis of the focal item, *I care about what the neighbourhood will be like in ten years*, as well as the supplementary item, *How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood?*, revealed inconsistencies between the two neighbourhoods. The responses from SWM residents for both of these survey items were quite high, in fact, responses were well above 70% for all age groups and length of residency categories. These findings suggest that SWM residents are concerned about the future of their neighbourhood and also that they feel extremely safe in their surroundings. During the focus group sessions, SWM residents voiced a wide range of concerns from the loss of green space due to new development projects to problems with teenagers littering and vandalizing properties. These concerns, although different, were connected by the fact that they were voiced by individuals with a vested interest in their neighbourhood and for this reason, it is not surprising that the majority of SWM residents care about the future of the neighbourhood.

In contrast, it was found that those with more than 20 years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood showed greater concern about the future of the neighbourhood than those with less than ten years of residency. Furthermore, those with more than 20 years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood as well as older residents felt safer than those with less than 20 years of residency and younger residents, respectively. This finding suggests that levels of concern in the NEI neighbourhood varies according to age and longevity of residence such that older residents and those with longer residency showed more concern about the future of the neighbourhood than younger residents and those with less experience in neighbourhood. This finding is corroborated with evidence from the focus groups, whereby older, long-time residents who had witnessed the evolution of the neighbourhood, voiced concerns about the closure of shops along Kenilworth and Ottawa Street in addition to the closure of the neighbourhood elementary school. Taken together, these findings suggest that feelings of concern develop over time, suggesting

that there is a temporal process involved in developing an emotional connection to the NEI neighbourhood, which does not seem hold true for the SWM.

A temporal component was also found to influence feelings of familiarity. Through the analysis of the sub-theme, *familiarity*, a general trend emerged between neighbourhoods. The focal item, *I can recognize most people who live in my neighbourhood*, in addition to the supplementary item, *I know many of my neighbours on a first name basis*, were analyzed and the findings suggest that familiarity with neighbours varies according to length of residency. For instance, those with less than ten years of residence in the SWM neighbourhood were less familiar with neighbours in comparison to those with 11-20 years of residence. Likewise, those with less than ten years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood were less familiar with neighbours in comparison to those with more than 20 years of residency. This finding seems logical given that familiarity and relationships tend to develop over time. These results are consistent with focus group findings. Peter, an older participant from the SWM lived in his neighbourhood for seven years but still considered himself as a newcomer. With regard to his neighbours, he stated, “I rather expect that as time goes by, [they] will lose some of their distance”. On the other hand, Danielle was born and raised in the NEI neighbourhood and now in her mid-twenties, she described knowing her neighbours and neighbourhood “like the back of my hand”.

Longevity of residence was also found to discriminate levels of pride among NEI residents but not SWM residents. The survey item, *I take pride in my neighbourhood*, was analyzed as part of the *pride* sub-theme. For the NEI neighbourhood, levels of pride increased with length of residency with those having more than 20 years of residency showing a greater propensity to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with the statement than those with less than 20 years of residency. Although the propensity to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with the statement did not vary according to length of residence for SWM residents, the proportions for all three-residency categories fell into the 80% range. This suggests that, overall, SWM residents feel proud living in their neighbourhood in spite of the length of residency. The findings also suggest that as age group increases, levels of pride increase as well. Older residents in both the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods expressed greater levels of pride than younger residents. This finding was not corroborated by the thematic analysis results for both neighbourhoods as the general consensus among all focus group participants was that they felt proud to live in their neighbourhood. However, the sources of pride differed between neighbourhoods. For instance, a number of SWM focus group participants were proud to live in an area that was recognized as a preferable place to live in the wider community of Hamilton. On the other hand, the NEI residents acknowledged the negative stereotypes associated with living near industry. Sarah, a younger resident, shared that she was initially uneasy about moving into the neighbourhood based on the negative stereotypes. However, after seven years, Sarah was proud to be a resident of the neighbourhood.

10.2.4 *Physical Environments*

The *physical environments* theme encompassed elements of the built and natural environments. Findings from the qualitative phase of the study suggested that residents of both study sites were satisfied with the amenities in their neighbourhoods. Several concerns were raised in both sets of focus group with regard to aspects of the built environment. For instance, members of the NEI focus groups expressed concern over the closure of the neighbourhood elementary school, Lloyd George. According to participants, the closure of the school had a negative ripple effect on social ties within the neighbourhood since parents no longer had a common meeting ground and children were dispersed at various catchment schools in the area.

SWM focus group members did not have any issues with schooling but several focus group members did make comments about the ongoing development in the area. As a result, some of the SWM residents were concerned that construction projects were infringing on the availability of green space in the area. Yet the concerns of SWM focus group participants did not corroborate with the survey item, *The neighbourhood is too built-up*. The propensity of respondents to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with this survey item was quite low for both study neighbourhoods. However, opinions about the natural environment from both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study did converge. Focus group members from the NEI neighbourhood expressed concerns about the lack of upkeep at the local park. In addition, the examination of parks and recreation listings on the City of Hamilton webpage revealed a lack of park/green spaces in the NEI neighbourhood in comparison to the SWM. The general consensus among SWM focus group participants was that they were satisfied with the amount of green space in the area. This is best illustrated by Marnie’s quote about the multi-purpose parks located in close proximity to her home. According to Marnie, “there are parks in the area for young people and there is a creek... it’s a nice open environment too where kids can go fishing or just go for walk with their family or pets”.

In accordance, the quantitative analysis of the survey item, *There is enough green space in my neighbourhood*, revealed that residents in the SWM neighbourhood were more likely to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with this statement in comparison to those living in the NEI neighbourhood. In addition, a trend emerged between both neighbourhoods whereby younger residents were less likely to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with the statement than older residents. This suggests that younger individuals (i.e. 18-59 years) and older individuals (i.e. 60+ years) perceive the natural environment in different ways. A possible explanation for this difference is that younger individuals may use green space for recreation purposes more so than older individuals and as a result, younger individuals are more likely to form stronger opinions about green space. In a similar regard, Kianicka, Buchecker, Hunziker and Muller-Boker (2006) examined SoP differences between local citizens and visitors to a Swiss Alpine village. Their findings show that the components that influenced the two groups’ SoP were the same but that the level of significance attached to each component varied between groups. For local

citizens, SoP was most influenced by personal aspects such as social networks, their homes and their personal histories associated with place, whereas for tourists, SoP was most influenced by dimensions of the natural environment that contribute to their recreational experience of place. The tourists did not associate with the village in the same way as the local villagers and this might also be the case for younger versus older residents in the study sites. Older individuals might not associate their neighbourhood with recreational experiences to the same degree as younger individuals.

Younger residents and those individuals with less than 20 years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood were more likely to move out of the area because of pollution. The examination of the survey item, *How likely are you to leave the neighbourhood because of pollution (e.g. air quality, water quality?)*, found statistically significant differences between younger and older age groups as well as between those with less than 20 years of residency and those with more than 20 years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood. However, no significant differences were found to exist between age groups or length of residency categories for this item in the SWM neighbourhood; the propensity to 'strongly agree/agree' with the statement was quite low among both age and length of residency groups. These findings were supported by the results of the qualitative analysis for both neighbourhood sites. As previously mentioned, focus group members from the SWM did not mention any pollution-related issues. However, environmental pollution was discussed at all three NEI focus groups. Comments from Roger, a younger participant, illustrate how his health has been impacted by the poor air quality in the neighbourhood since he moved to the NEI neighbourhood five years earlier. Roger and his wife Kacey were seriously contemplating a move out of the area due to breathing problems that he attributed to pollution from nearby industry. Long-time residents of the NEI neighbourhood acknowledged the pollution in the area but in doing so, they were quick to note improvements in air quality over the years. For instance, Dottie, an older participant with 61 years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood did not believe that there was a link between environmental pollution and health-related issues. She offered examples of individuals, who resided in the neighbourhood well into old age without experiencing environmental health-related issues and she did not attribute her own experience with cancer to the environment. Here, the qualitative findings add to the comprehension of the survey item results.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the natural environment influences the SoP perceptions of younger individuals to a greater extent than older individuals. Also, as previously noted, those with more than 20 years of residency showed higher levels of attachment to the NEI neighbourhood. Therefore, it is possible that attachment to the neighbourhood overrides environmental issues leading long-time residents to negotiate and compromise living in an area with poor air quality.

10.2.5 Significance

The survey item, *If you were to move, how important would it be that you remain in the same neighbourhood?*, was analyzed to further examine the sub-theme, *reputation*. The proportions of respondents selecting the ‘very important/fairly important’ option for this item were low in both neighbourhoods, regardless of age group or length of residency category. However, a general trend emerged for both neighbourhoods such that older residents and those with more than 20 years of residency would choose to move within the same neighbourhood in contrast to younger residents and those with less than twenty years of residency. Several of the focus group participants with short-term residency in the NEI neighbourhood revealed future moving plans, including Sarah, a younger participant who resided there for 8 years. Sarah and her young family planned to move to a rural property in the near future. Aaron, a younger participant from the SWM resided in his neighbourhood for entire life (i.e. 21 years). Having recently graduated from teacher’s college, Aaron was unsure of where his career would take him but he did maintain that if the opportunity arose, he would prefer to remain in the SWM neighbourhood. He joked that he would also consider residing in the upscale Lakeshore neighbourhood, which demonstrates that he holds his neighbourhood in high regard.

Similar to Aaron, the consensus from the majority of SWM focus group members was that they preferred their neighbourhood to all others in the City of Hamilton. This finding converged with the results of the *evaluation* sub-theme and the analysis of the focal item, *How much do you like your neighbourhood?*, as well as the supplementary item, *There’s no other neighbourhood where I would rather live*. The proportions of residents selecting the option ‘a great deal/a fair amount’ in terms of how much they like their neighbourhood were highest among the SWM residents regardless of age and length of residency, suggesting that residents from the SWM like their neighbourhood more than those from the NEI neighbourhood. A general trend emerged between the two neighbourhoods showing older residents to like their neighbourhood more than younger residents. Younger residents and those with less than ten years of residency were also less likely to ‘strongly agree/agree’ with the supplementary item in comparison to older residents and to those with more than ten years of residency, respectively, for both neighbourhoods. This finding suggests that younger residents and those with short-term residency might be less committed to their neighbourhoods than older residents and those with more than 20 years of residency. However, this finding might also be attributed to the fact that younger individuals tend to be more mobile than older individuals and therefore more open-minded to considering other neighbourhoods. For instance, Peter, an 84-year old focus group participant from the SWM and Jessie, a 70-year old participant from the NEI neighbourhood both shared that they might have entertained moving if they were younger. Both Angela, an older participant with 41 years of residency in the NEI neighbourhood and Polly, an older participant with 50 years of residency in the SWM area cited their long-time residency as one of the reasons why they would not consider living in another neighbourhood.

10.2.6 Social Environments

The *social environments* theme included the sub-themes, *sense of community* and *neighbours*. The analysis of both the focal survey items (i.e. *How often do you participate in social activities with your neighbours e.g., barbeques, coffee dates, etc.?*) and supplementary survey items (*How much does participating in community activities make you feel connected to your neighbourhood?*) for the *sense of community* sub-theme showed similar findings across the two study sites. No statistically significant differences exist between age groups or length of residency categories for both the NEI and SWM neighbourhoods. The proportions of those selecting the ‘strongly agree/agree’ option were quite low across age groups and length of residency categories for the two study areas, suggesting low levels of social interaction among neighbours in both neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the analysis of the supplementary item revealed that active participation in community activities did not enhance residents’ sense of community. These findings were consistent with information gained from both sets of focus groups. The closure of the local elementary school, Lloyd George, led to the loss of a community center for the NEI neighbourhood. Many focus group members felt that the loss of a community/neighbourhood association headquarters had a negative effect on the sense of community as there was no longer a venue for meetings and activities. The closure of the school also meant that children in the neighbourhood were sent to a number of different schools. According to Christa, the dispersion of children to several schools impacted relationships between parents who were no longer connected through the school. Also, several focus group members found themselves leaving the neighbourhood to participate in volunteer activities as none were available in the area. Hettie and Jon, an older couple resided in the NEI neighbourhood for five and a half years and found themselves volunteering and participating in programs outside the area due to the lack of opportunities in the immediate area, especially for seniors.

In the same regard, members of the SWM focus groups stressed the need for social programs geared towards seniors since the majority of community services were for children and youth. Therefore, it is possible that the lack of neighbourhood program infringes on the sense of community since that residents no longer have opportunities to engage in social activities with their neighbours. In addition, if residents are forced to leave the neighbourhood for volunteer and social program engagements, their absence alone will infringe on opportunities to engage with neighbours. In addition, Williams et al. (2008) found volunteering to be positively correlated with SoP. On the other hand, the lack of social cohesion might also be attributed to what Jackson (1985) describes as a decline in neighbourhood living:

The real shift, however, is the way in which our lives are now centred inside the house, rather than on the neighbourhood or the community. With increased use of automobiles, the life of the sidewalk and the front yard has largely disappeared, and the social intercourse that used to be the main characteristics of urban life has

vanished. Residential neighbourhoods have become a mass of small, private islands... There are few places as desolate and lonely as a suburban street on a hot afternoon (p. 279-280).

Interestingly the quantitative analysis of the *neighbours* sub-theme (i.e., focal item: *Many of my neighbours are close friends.*; supplementary item: *If you had to leave, how many of your neighbours would you miss?*) dispels Jackson' (1985) point of view. Despite the lack of participation in social activities with neighbours, some residents perceive their neighbours as close friends. More specifically, older residents and those with more than 20 years of residency in both the NEI and SWM neighbourhood were more likely to consider their neighbours as close friends and miss 'many/some' of their neighbours in the event of a move in comparison to younger residents and those with less than 20 years of residency. This finding suggests that bonds between neighbours develop over time since those with longer residency indicated stronger relationships with neighbours. Furthermore, it is possible that older residents (i.e. 60+ years) have stronger relationships with neighbours since older individuals usually spend more time in their local areas and therefore develop relationships with those around them. This is supported by evidence from both sets of focus groups as several residents noted being mindful and 'keeping an eye on' senior citizens in the neighbourhood. Older residents are more likely to rely on their neighbours for assistance. For example, Noreen, a younger participant from the NEI neighbourhood pointed out that her sons maintain a senior neighbour's lawn. Also, Valerie, a senior citizen from the SWM neighbourhood looks out for an older gentleman in her neighbourhood who suffered from a heart attack. In sum, the impression from the qualitative analysis was that relationships between neighbours were stronger in the NEI neighbourhood than in the SWM neighbourhood. However, this may be the result of the aforementioned recruitment bias in the NEI neighbourhood.

10.3 Conclusions

In the introductory chapter, the following quote by Frumkin (2003) was cited:

Some places are romantic, and some places are depressing. There are places that are confusing, places that are peaceful, places that are frightening, and places that are safe. We like some places better than others. Place matters (p. 1451).

The findings from this study underline the fact that indeed place does matter since the findings suggest that individuals from two contrasting neighbourhoods perceive their surroundings in different ways. Although the majority of residents from both sites defined their neighbourhoods in the same way (i.e. in terms of its access to services such as shops, schools, parks etc.), the analysis of themes and corresponding sub-themes revealed both convergent and dissonant results between neighbourhoods. In effect, as discussed in Chapter 4, individuals will formulate their SoP in a variety of ways. As

such, the analogy of an equation was used to illustrate SoP as the sum of component parts that are arranged and weighted in various ways. One's age, length of residency and neighbourhood type were shown to influence SoP perceptions, some more so than others. For instance, age nor length of residency in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study was shown to have an effect on one's sense of community, suggesting that this SoP perception is shaped by extraneous variables such as the availability of community services in one's neighbourhood.

According to Relph (2007), SoP will differ among individuals, he stated:

Sense of place is synaesthetic. It combines sight, hearing, smell, movement, touch, memory, imagination and anticipation. It is a faculty that varies widely between individuals. Some are not very interested in the world around them and devote themselves to matters such as fashion or economics; places for them are little more than incidental backgrounds to other concerns and their sense of place is weak (p.19).

The results suggest that for some individuals, neighbourhood takes on additional meaning in contrast to others. The findings from this study add that SoP perceptions will vary between younger and older individuals as well as between those with short-time and long-time residential status in their neighbourhood. Pretty, Chipuer and Bramston (2003) agree that place does matter but they contend that "location itself is not enough to create a sense of place. It emerges from the involvement between people, and between people and place" (p. 274). In accordance, this study showed that interactions between people and between people and place will vary according to life stage (i.e. age) and experience in a certain place (i.e. longevity of residence).

10.4 Limitations

Mixed methods were used to examine the research question following a *Sequential Exploratory Design*. In effect the qualitative results were used to guide the quantitative phase of the study, which involved selecting survey items that best captured the essence of the theme/sub-themes. There were several instances where the survey item captured an aspect or several aspects of the sub-theme in question but not its entirety. This may have contributed to divergent findings between the qualitative and quantitative phases.

In addition, as previously mentioned, sampling bias may have caused focus group participants from the NEI neighbourhood to over-exaggerate their connection to the neighbourhood and to their neighbours. Furthermore, the survey sample was not representative of the population. This may be due to the poor response rate as well as the fact that certain demographic groups tend to respond to surveys more so than others. Together, these factors may have contributed to the lack of convergence between qualitative and quantitative findings for both neighbourhoods.

Lastly, the two study sites were selected based on a previous study by Eyles and colleagues (1999), as close approximations to two distinct neighbourhoods. However, the two study neighbourhoods are divided into a number of different neighbourhoods by the City of Hamilton. Therefore, the neighbourhood boundaries perceived by residents may differ from those boundaries defined by Eyles and colleagues since neighbourhoods, in general, are defined and perceived in many different ways (Schwirian, 1983; Coulton, Korbin, Chan & Su, 2001 & Luginaah et al., 2001). Based on the level of spatial aggregation, it must be noted that the results of the analyses may not be applicable to the smaller neighbourhoods (i.e. those defined by the City of Hamilton) located within the boundaries of the larger study neighbourhoods.

10.5 Future Research & Final Thoughts

Although mixed methods were used in an exploratory design, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods proved to add breadth to the interpretation of the research results. The findings from the qualitative phase not only informed the quantitative phase of the study but also helped to comprehend the quantitative results. In effect, the same level of comprehension would not have been attained using only a single method.

The findings from this study revealed that the SoP perceptions of older and younger individuals vary. For instance, from the analysis of focus group transcripts, it became evident that a number of the older participants were planning to age-in-place. As such, older individuals expressed a strong desire to remain in their neighbourhoods, health-permitting. Although this study did not focus solely on older individuals, it might be worth further exploring this demographic since Statistics Canada (2005) projections show the proportion of seniors will double by 2031. As such, there is a growing need for knowledge about the rapidly aging (& fastest growing) population in Canada, particularly those aging-in-place. According to Health Canada (2002), over 90% of seniors are currently aging-in-place. On the other hand, the results also revealed that younger individuals are not as rooted as older individuals in their neighbourhoods. These findings may be useful for researchers examining areas such as youth out-migration.

Lastly, although the findings from this study added some clarity, there is still much to be learned about the SoP concept. This study was focused on the level of neighbourhood, however, a future study might consider examining SoP at the community level, similar to the aforementioned General Social Survey (GSS) on Social Engagement, conducted by Statistics Canada.

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Appendix 1: SoP Survey



***Defining 'Sense of Place'
A Survey of Hamilton Residents***

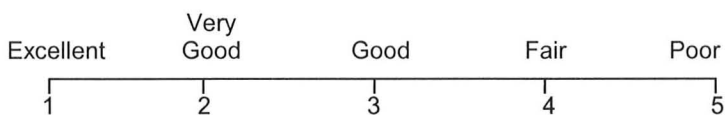
*Institute for Social Research
York University*

2006

To complete this survey, please circle the number that best reflects your opinion or experience for each of the following statements or questions.

SECTION A

1. We'd like to start off with a very general health question. Would you say that your health is...



2. When you think about your neighbourhood, do you think of it in terms of ...
(please circle all that apply)

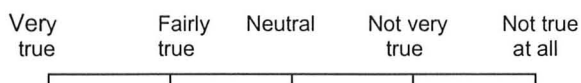
- a) Its physical characteristics 1
- b) Its social ties and interactions 1
- c) Its access to services such as shops, schools, parks it provides..... 1
- d) The shared experiences and identification with other residents 1
- e) Other (please specify)_____ 1

The following statements and questions have to do with your feelings about your neighbourhood in general.



- 3. I feel a sense of belonging to my neighbourhood..... 1 2 3 4 5
- 4. My neighbourhood is a place where I can relax..... 1 2 3 4 5
- 5. My neighbourhood means a great deal to me 1 2 3 4 5
- 6. I want to remain in my neighbourhood because it is a storehouse of memories for me (e.g., I built the home I'm living in, my children grew up here, etc.) ... 1 2 3 4 5
- 7. There is enough green space in my neighbourhood (e.g., mature trees, parks, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5

8.	There's no other neighbourhood where I would rather live	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The neighbourhood is too built-up.....	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I feel at home in my neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5



11.	I do not feel like I am a part of my neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5
12.	My neighbourhood is a part of who I am	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Being a resident of my neighbourhood has little to do with how I feel about myself	1	2	3	4	5
14.	My neighbourhood reflects the kind of person I am	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I like to associate myself with my neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I believe that it is my responsibility to look after neighbourhood property that everyone shares (e.g., park space)	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I care about what the neighbourhood will be like in ten years	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I take pride in my neighbourhood.....	1	2	3	4	5
19.	When other parts of my life are too stressful, the thought of coming home to my neighbourhood is comforting	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I would like to feel more a part of my neighbourhood.....	1	2	3	4	5

21.	How has your general experience been, while living in your neighbourhood?					
	Very good	1				
	Good.....	2				
	Neutral	3				
	Bad.....	4				
	Very bad.....	5				

22.	How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood?					
	Very safe	1				
	Safe.....	2				
	Neutral	3				
	Unsafe	4				
	Very unsafe.....	5				

23. How rooted do you feel in your neighbourhood?

- Very rooted 1
- Fairly rooted 2
- Neutral 3
- Not very rooted 4
- Not at all rooted 5

24. How connected do you feel to your neighbourhood?

- Very connected 1
- Fairly connected 2
- Neutral 3
- Not very connected 4
- Not at all connected 5

25. How much does participating in community activities make you feel connected to your neighbourhood?

- A great deal 1
- A fair amount 2
- Neutral 3
- Not very much 4
- Not at all 5

26. How much do you like your neighbourhood?

- A great deal 1
- A fair amount 2
- Neutral 3
- Not very much 4
- Not at all 5

SECTION B

The next set of questions asks about your experience with and feelings about your neighbours. Please select the answer most appropriate to you.

1. I can recognize most of the people who live in my neighbourhood.

- Very true 1
- Fairly true 2
- Neutral 3
- Not very true 4
- Not at all true 5

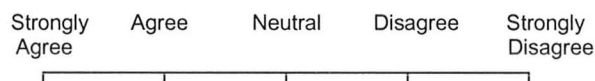
2. I know many of my neighbours on a first name basis.

- Very true..... 1
- Fairly true 2
- Neutral 3
- Not very true 4
- Not at all true..... 5

3. How often do you participate in social activities with your neighbours (e.g., barbeques, coffee dates, etc.)?

- All the time 1
- Often..... 2
- Sometimes..... 3
- Hardly ever 4
- Never 5

For each of the statements below, please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.



- 4. There are people in my neighbourhood who I think of as close friends..... 1 2 3 4 5
- 5. The friendships I have with neighbours are meaningful to me..... 1 2 3 4 5
- 6. Many of my neighbours are close friends 1 2 3 4 5

SECTION C

The following questions concern your feelings about moving away from your neighbourhood. Please select the answer that best reflects your opinion for experience.

1. If you had to move away from your neighbourhood how disappointed would you be?

- Very disappointed 1
- Disappointed..... 2
- Neutral..... 3
- Not very disappointed..... 4
- Not at all disappointed 5

2. I would like to stay in my neighbourhood as long as long as my health allows me to do so.
- | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|
| | Strongly agree | 1 |
| | Agree | 2 |
| | Neutral..... | 3 |
| | Disagree | 4 |
| | Strongly disagree..... | 5 |
3. If I were to live somewhere else, it would be difficult to move away from my neighbourhood.
- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| | Very true | 1 |
| | Fairly true | 2 |
| | Neutral..... | 3 |
| | Not very true | 4 |
| | Not at all true | 5 |
4. I would prefer to live in another neighbourhood.
- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| | Very true | 1 |
| | Fairly true | 2 |
| | Neutral..... | 3 |
| | Not very true | 4 |
| | Not at all true | 5 |
5. If I were to move away from my neighbourhood, it would badly impact my health.
-
- | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|
| | A great deal | 1 |
| | A fair amount | 2 |
| | Some | 3 |
| | Not very much..... | 4 |
| | Not at all | 5 |
6. If you had to leave, how many of your neighbours would you miss?
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| | Many of them | 1 |
| | Some of them | 2 |
| | Neutral..... | 3 |
| | Hardly any of them..... | 4 |
| | None of them | 5 |

4.	Environmental problems in my neighbourhood (e.g., air pollution, run-down buildings) influence my health	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Social problems in my neighbourhood (e.g., racism, violence) influence my health.....	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The personal safety of myself and my family in my neighbourhood affects my health.....	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Vandalism in my neighbourhood affects my health.....	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Good memories about my neighbourhood influence my health	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E

Now, some final questions about your background.

1. How would you rate your general health status?

Very good.....	1
Quite poor	4
Poor	5

2. In what year were you born? 19____ ____

3. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	5

4. Are you: (*circle more than one if applicable*)

White	1
Black	1
Korean.....	1
Filipino	1
Latin American	1
Japanese	1
Aboriginal	1
Chinese	1
South Asian	1
Southeast Asian	1
Middle East or North African	1
Other (<i>please specify</i>) _____	

5. Were you born in Canada?

Yes	1
No.....	2

6. Currently, are you....
- Single/never married 1
 - Married, common law, or living with a partner 2
 - Separated..... 3
 - Divorced..... 4
 - Widowed 5
7. What is the HIGHEST level of education you have completed?
- Less than grade nine 1
 - Some high school 2
 - High school diploma 3
 - Some trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college 4
 - Diploma or certificate from a trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college 5
 - Some university 6
 - University graduate 7
 - University post-graduate 8
8. During the past 12 months, were you MAINLY...
- Working full-time..... 1
 - Working part-time 2
 - Unemployed 3
 - Retired..... 4
 - Homemaker/caregiver 5
 - Student 6
 - On disability leave, maternity leave, etc. 7
9. Into which of the following categories would your total HOUSEHOLD income fall, before taxes, in the past year?
- Less than \$10,000 1
 - \$10,000 to less than \$20,000 2
 - \$20,000 to less than \$30,000 3
 - \$30,000 to less than \$40,000 4
 - \$40,000 to less than \$50,000 5
 - \$50,000 to less than \$60,000 6
 - \$60,000 to less than \$70,000 7
 - \$70,000 or more 8
10. Including yourself, how many PEOPLE live in your household? _____ people
11. How many CHILDREN under age 18 live in your household? _____ children

12. Do you....
- Own your home..... 1
 - Rent your home..... 2
 - Other (*please specify*)_____
13. How many years have you lived in this, or a nearby, neighbourhood? _____ years
14. How many years have you been a full-time resident of Hamilton? _____ years

***Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.
Please return the questionnaire and your consent form in the envelope provided.
No postage is necessary.***

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**Appendix 2: Photographs of the NEI and SWM Neighbourhoods
(Source: Liliana DeMiglio, 2007)**

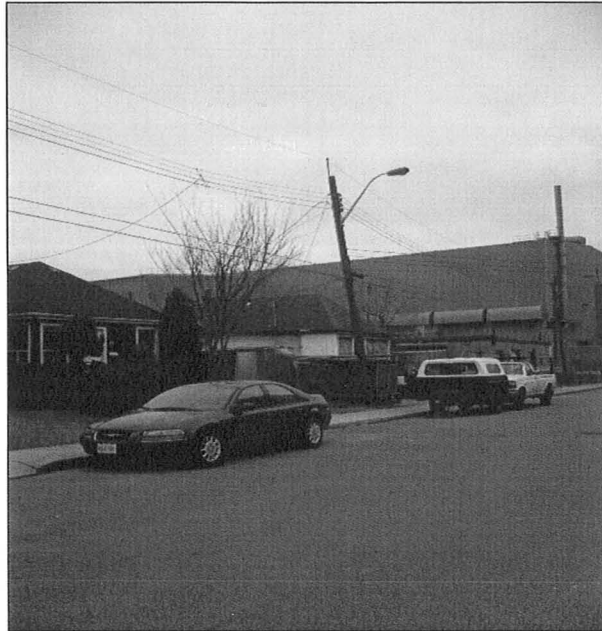


Image 1: NEI Neighbourhood

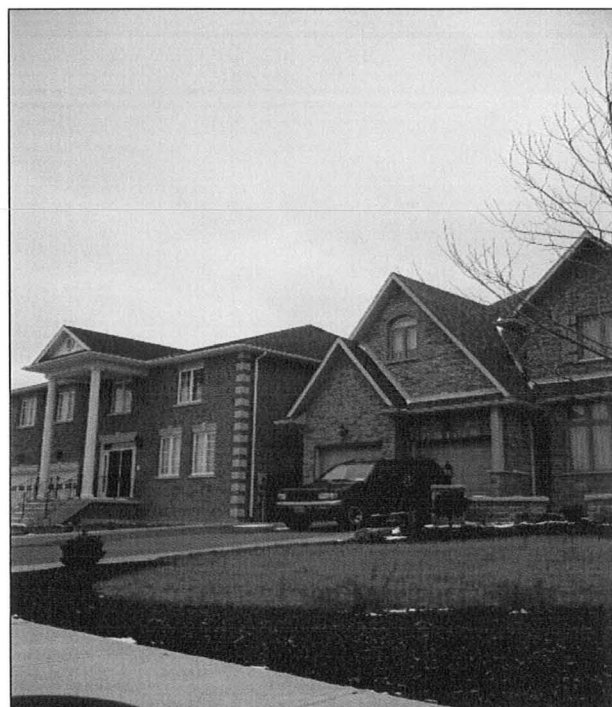


Image 2: SWM Neighbourhood

Appendix 3: Focus Group Recruitment Poster / Newspaper Ad

NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTS NEEDED to participate in focus group discussions

Researchers in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences are investigating how residents feel about or perceive their neighbourhood.
The success of our research study depends on the participation of neighbourhood residents.

We are seeking the help of participants who meet the following criteria:

1. You must be 18 years of age or older.
2. You must have lived in one of the following neighbourhoods for two years or more: Falkirk East, Falkirk West, Sheldon, Mewburn, Ryckmans, Barnstown, Carpenter, Kennedy East or Kennedy West

Participants receive a stipend for their time (\$25.00).
Focus group sessions will run from 6:30-8pm the week of June 12th.

**If you would like more information about participating in our study,
please contact Lily DeMiglio at 905-525-9140 ext. 23336,
or e-mail demigllf@mcmaster.ca**

All focus group sessions are conducted under the supervision of Professor Allison Williams in the School of Geography & Earth Sciences at McMaster University

Appendix 4: Letter of Information and Consent Form for Focus Group Participants

Letter of Information

Title of the Study: Operationalizing Sense of Place: Establishing a Survey Measurement Tool

Investigators:

Principle Investigator: Dr. Allison Williams
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
905-525-9140 ext. 24334

Co-Investigators: Dr. John Eyles
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
905-525-9140 ext. 23152

Dr. Bruce Newbold
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
905-525-9140 ext. 27948

Dr. David Streiner
CPTL Baycrest Hospital North York
416-785-2500 ext. 2534

Dr. George Maslany
Saskatchewan Population Health & Evaluation Research
307-337-2436

Student Investigator: Lily DeMiglio
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
905-525-9140 ext. 23336

Research Sponsor: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

Please read this information form carefully. If you have any questions, ask the investigator before signing the form. You have been asked to participate in a focus group.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the subjective meaning and importance individuals give to where they reside, a term referred to as *sense of place*. More specifically, we want to define *sense of place* through the development of a survey research tool. The ultimate goal of this study is to determine how an individual's health is influenced by their perceptions of their own environments. However, during the focus group sessions, we will not pose questions that pertain to your health status.

Procedure:

If you volunteer to participate, you will be a member of a focus group that will be asked to respond to a series of questions about your neighbourhood. For instance, we will ask you to describe your sense of belonging to your neighbourhood and to describe the physical aspects of your neighbourhood as well. Focus group discussions will be audiotaped. The duration of the focus group is about 60 minutes.

Potential Risks:

The risks associated with participating in the study are no greater than risks you encounter in everyday life. You do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. You will also have the opportunity to request a copy of the focus group transcripts by indicating so on the attached consent form.

Focus group participants might experience a loss of privacy and/or reputation based on responses to questions. For this reason, we ask that you make only those comments that you would be comfortable making in a public setting, and to refrain from comments that you would not say publicly. Please remember that you do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer.

Potential Benefits:

You might gain a better understanding of your relationship to your neighbourhood. In a broader sense, the results from the study will help the scientific community gain a better understanding of environment as a health determinant. Therefore, your involvement in this study might benefit society as research findings could be applied to solutions directed at improving health through health promotion programs in neighbourhoods.

Remuneration for Participation:

As a focus group member you will receive \$25 at the end of the group discussion. Please note that if you choose to leave before the end of the focus group discussion, you will not receive remuneration.

Confidentiality:

Anything that you say or do in the study will not be told to anyone else by the researchers and we have asked members of the focus group to do the same. Anything that we find out about you that could identify you will not be published or told to anyone. Your privacy will be respected. Any information that you provide during the study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Principle Investigator and only the research team will have access to it. The information will be destroyed after the report is completed.

Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to stop participating, there will be no penalty to yourself. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to but you can still be in the study. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study at any time.

Study Debriefing:

You may obtain information about the results of the study by indicating so on the consent form. The research findings will be mailed to the address you provide.

Rights of Research Participants:

You may withdraw your consent at any time during the study without consequence. If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please feel free to contact Dr. Allison Williams (905-525-9140, ext. 24334).

This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions regarding your rights as a research participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: 905-525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Office of Research Services
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Consent Form

I understand the information provided for the study “Operationalizing Sense of Place: Establishing a Survey Measurement Tool” being conducted by Dr. Allison Williams at McMaster University. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I choose to do so, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

You would like to read the transcripts to check their accuracy? _____ Yes _____ No

You would like a copy of the research summary? _____ Yes _____ No

Participant Address (for transcript review and/or research summary)

Apt/House # and Street: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Signature of Investigator:

In my opinion, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Name of person who obtained consent

Date

Signature

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for Focus Group Participants

Operationalizing Sense of Place: Establishing a Survey Measurement Tool

Step 1: Generating *sense of place* themes

Focus Group Interview Schedule

We are keen on gathering your everyday experience of where you live. Please introduce yourself, providing the length of time you have resided in Hamilton, and in the neighbourhood you now live in.

1. If you were asked to describe _____ (name of neighbourhood), what would enter your mind?
2. Please tell me how you feel about _____ (name of neighbourhood).
3. Does your neighbourhood hold a sense of meaning for you?
 - a. If so, what does it mean?
 - b. Do you think your neighbourhood is different from others? If so, how is it different?
4. Do you feel you belong to this neighbourhood?
 - a. If yes, how so?
 - b. If no, why not?
5. Do you feel your neighbourhood identifies who you are?
 - a. Do you feel proud of being a resident of your neighbourhood?
6. Do you feel rooted in this neighbourhood?
 - a. If so, how is this experienced?
 - i. Do you trust your neighbours?
 - ii. If you had to move to a different home, how important is it that it be in the same neighbourhood?
7. Are you satisfied with your neighbourhood?
 - a. If yes, how so?
 - b. If no, why not?
8. Do you feel emotionally attached to your neighbourhood?
 - a. If yes, how so?
 - b. If no, why not?
 - c. How upset would you be if you had to move out of your neighbourhood?
9. Tell me how you feel about the physical environment of your neighbourhood.
10. Does this neighbourhood provide all of what your family needs?
 - a. Friendship/social ties
 - b. Amenities/shops/parks, etc.
 - c. Other
 - d. Is there anything missing from your neighbourhood? If so, what?

Appendix 6: Letter of Information and Consent Form for Survey Respondents

Dear Respondent:

You are invited to participate in a survey about the subjective meaning and importance individuals give to where they reside, a term referred to as *sense of place*.

Your assistance in completing the attached survey will be greatly appreciated. More specifically, the information that you provide will be used to determine whether the survey that we have developed to measure *sense of place* is valid and reliable. The ultimate goal of this study is to determine how an individual's health is influenced by their perceptions of their own environments. However, the survey does not contain questions that pertain to your health status.

Your individual survey responses will remain confidential. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose not to answer all of the questions. You have the option to withdraw from participating in the survey at any time without consequence. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do hesitate to contact me at awill@mcmaster.ca or at 905-525-9140 ext. 24334.

If you choose to participate in the study, your survey will be entered into a draw for two \$100 gift certificates to Home Depot and Home Sense. You may also receive a summary of the research findings by indicating so on the consent form.

The Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University is assisting us with the distribution and collection of surveys. As such, if you do not want to participate in the study, please indicate so by returning the contents of this package (i.e., the blank survey) in the pre-addressed postage-paid envelope. By doing so, this will ensure that you are not sent reminder letters by ISR.

If you do choose to participate, please fill-out and return the attached survey and consent form at your earliest convenience in the return envelope provided.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Allison Williams
Principle Investigator

Letter of Information

Title of the Study: Operationalizing Sense of Place: Establishing a Survey Measurement Tool

Investigators:

Principle Investigator: Dr. Allison Williams
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
905-525-9140 ext. 24334

Co-Investigators: Dr. John Eyles
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
905-525-9140 ext. 23152

Dr. Bruce Newbold
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
905-525-9140 ext. 27948

Dr. David Streiner
CPTL Baycrest Hospital North York
416-785-2500 ext. 2534

Dr. George Maslany
Saskatchewan Population Health & Evaluation Research
307-337-2436

Student Investigator: Lily DeMiglio
School of Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
905-525-9140 ext. 23336

Research Sponsor: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

Please read this information form carefully. If you have any questions, please contact the Principle Investigator before signing the form. You have been asked to respond to a survey.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the subjective meaning and importance individuals give to where they reside, a term referred to as *sense of place*. More specifically, we want to define *sense of place* through the development of a survey research tool. The ultimate goal of this study is to determine how an individual's health is influenced by their perceptions of their own environments. However, the survey does not contain questions that pertain to your health status.

Procedure:

If you volunteer to participate, you will be asked to fill out a survey about *sense of place*. The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. The Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University is assisting us with the distribution and collection of surveys. If you do not want to participate in the study, you will be asked to return the survey package in the envelope provided to ensure that you are not sent reminder letters by ISR.

Potential Risks:

The risks associated with participating in the study are no greater than risks you encounter in everyday life. You do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer.

Potential Benefits:

You might gain a better understanding of your relationship to your neighbourhood. In a broader sense, the results from the study will help the scientific community gain a better understanding of environment as a health determinant. Therefore, your involvement in this study might benefit society as research findings could be applied to solutions directed at improving health through health promotion programs in neighbourhoods.

Remuneration for Participation:

As a survey respondent, your survey will be entered into a draw for two \$100 gift certificates to Home Sense and Home Depot.

Confidentiality:

Your individual responses will not be attributed to you personally. Your individual responses will be compiled with those of all other survey respondents. Any information that you provide will be kept confidential. After ISR completes the data collection for our study, all surveys will be returned to the Principle Investigator and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Principle Investigator and only the research team will have access to it. ISR will also keep and archive a record of the collected data but this data will not contain the personal identifying information of survey respondents.

Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to stop participating, there will be no penalty to yourself. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to but you can still be in the study. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study at any time.

Study Debriefing:

You may obtain information about the results of the study by indicating so on the consent form. The research findings will be mailed to the address you provide.

Rights of Research Participants:

You may withdraw your consent at any time during the study without consequence. If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please feel free to contact Dr. Allison Williams (905-525-9140, ext. 24334).

This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions regarding your rights as a research participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: 905-525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Office of Research Services
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Consent Form

I understand the information provided for the study “Operationalizing Sense of Place: Establishing a Survey Measurement Tool” being conducted by Dr. Allison Williams at McMaster University. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I choose to do so, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

You would like a copy of the research summary? _____ Yes _____ No

Participant Address (for research summary)

Apt/House # and Street: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Appendix 7: Confidentiality Statement for Focus Group Participants

Confidentiality

Anything that you say or do in the study will not be attributed to you personally, however it will be attributable to this group. Anything that we find out about you that could identify you will not be published or told to anyone else, unless we get your permission. Your privacy will be respected. We ask that what is said during the focus group discussion is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee that all focus group members will do so. We ask that you make only those comments that you would be comfortable making in a public setting, and to refrain from comments that you would not say publicly.

Please remember that your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop and leave at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the discussion. If you decide to stop participating, there will be no penalty to yourself. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to but you can still be in the study. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study at any time.

The information obtained will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and be only available to the research team. The information (raw data) will be destroyed after the report is completed.

Do you have any questions about this?

Appendix 8: Summary of Focus Group Findings for Participants



School of Geography
and Earth Sciences

1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
L8S 4K1

Dear Participant:

On behalf of the “Operationalizing Sense of Place: Establishing a Survey Measurement Tool” research team, I thank you for participating in focus group sessions in May and June, 2006. At the focus group, you indicated on your consent form that you would like a copy of the research summary. Please find a summary of the research findings attached. If you requested a copy, a transcript has also been included. Please note that you might find some differences between the transcript and the focus group session. These discrepancies are mainly due to the quality of the tape and the fact that sometimes parts of the tape were muffled and difficult to hear.

Over the summer, the audiotapes from the focus group sessions were transcribed. A member of the research team analyzed the transcripts for themes. The information gathered from the focus group sessions helped the research team to form survey items. These survey items have since been reviewed by a group of experts in the “Sense of Place” field. We also asked several residents in your neighbourhoods to complete a draft of our survey and provide feedback about the items. The survey was sent to members of the community and we are currently awaiting the results.

Again, we sincerely thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Allison M. Williams



School of Geography
and Earth Sciences

1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
L8S 4K1

Sense of Place: Common Themes in Two Different Areas of Hamilton, Ontario

Residents of neighbourhoods in the Northeast Industrial and Southwest Mountain areas were asked to participate in focus group sessions. The demographic characteristics of the Northeast Industrial area include low income, low education and high unemployment rates whereas the Southwest Mountain is just the opposite, with high income, high education and low unemployment rates. Given both the locational and socioeconomic differences between the two areas, differences in themes were expected from the analysis of focus group transcripts. With the exception of some air quality concerns from participants in the Northeast Industrial area, common themes were found to emerge between the two groups.

In discussing their everyday experience in their neighbourhood, participants from both areas of interest repeatedly referred to social contact with neighbours. However, participants from neighbourhoods in the Northeast Industrial neighbourhood made more references to the reciprocation and extension of support from neighbours than participants from the Southwest Mountain. For instance, participants revealed appreciation for neighbours whom assisted them with the upkeep of their property (e.g. mowing lawns). Participants from both areas were also satisfied with closeness to amenities such as grocery stores and malls. Interestingly, participants from the Southwest Mountain referred to the ease in accessing amenities more often than those from the Northeast Industrial area. Overall, participants from both areas shared similar emotions about living in their neighbourhoods. Participants emphasized feelings of rootedness, comfort, pride and belonging. Participants from both areas also emphasized feeling safe (i.e. material and personal) in their neighbourhood and shared the feeling of being 'at home'.

Focus group members from neighbourhoods in the Northeast Industrial area shared concerns about the physical environment that were not presented by those from the Southwest Mountain focus groups. Concerns about the air quality in the Northeast Industrial neighbourhood were raised in the focus groups. Some longstanding residents tended to note improvements in air quality over the years while others focused on high levels of dust. On the contrary, participants from the Southwest Mountain did not report concerns about the air quality in their neighbourhoods. Instead, most of the comments made about the physical environment related to satisfaction with natural areas. The Southwest Mountain participants noted the natural characteristics of their neighbourhoods including mature trees and plenty of green space (e.g. parks). Overall, participants described their everyday neighbourhood experience with repeated reference to social interaction with neighbours, closeness to amenities and the feeling of comfort, pride and safety.

Appendix 9: Summary of Survey Findings for Respondents

Hello,

Several months ago you filled out a survey about *sense of place*, as part of a study being conducted by a research team at McMaster University. We thank you again for your participation.

At the time of questionnaire completion, you requested a summary of the research findings. Please find this summary enclosed, with our gratitude for your involvement in this important work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Allison Williams,
Principal Investigator

Operationalizing Sense of Place: Establishing a Survey Measurement Tool
Research Summary

It is well known that health is affected by a number of different factors, including the characteristics of your neighbourhood. The goal of our study was to determine how an individual's health is influenced by their perceptions of their own environments. In order to accomplish our goal we designed a survey to allow us to measure a concept called *sense of place* - the meaning and importance people give to where they live.

Designing a survey is a lengthy process involving many steps. First, we asked residents from two areas of Hamilton - the Northeast Industrial and Southwest Mountain – questions about their everyday experience in their neighbourhood. Using this information, as well as consulting experts in this area of research, we were able to come up with survey questions. Next, we asked a small group of people to give us feedback on these questions. Finally, we sent out the survey to 1250 residents from the Northeast Industrial and Southwest Mountain, with the help of a research centre at York University. We chose these two areas of Hamilton because they are quite different from each other in terms of location, and their social and economic aspects.

We found that people from the Southwest Mountain generally have a greater *sense of place* – that is, more people from this area consider their neighbourhood to be very important to them, compared with people from the Northeast Industrial area. Also, we found that older people have a stronger *sense of place* than younger people in both neighbourhoods. While we are still looking at the results, it seems that there is a very weak connection between *sense of place* and health, no matter which neighbourhood you live in. This may mean that our survey needs to be changed and that next time we have to ask different questions. This will be part of our future research for this project.

This work was helpful in the training of young researchers – two students were directly involved with the project as part of their graduate studies. We will be sharing the findings with people in different ways, including scientific journal articles, presentations at conferences, and books for students. Once the research is finished, we want to share our final results with community leaders and planners, because we think it will help to improve community spaces.

Thank you again for taking the time to fill out the survey and for your interest in the results. Your participation is greatly appreciated by the research team!

Appendix 10: Map of Census Tracts Corresponding to NEI and SWM Study Sites

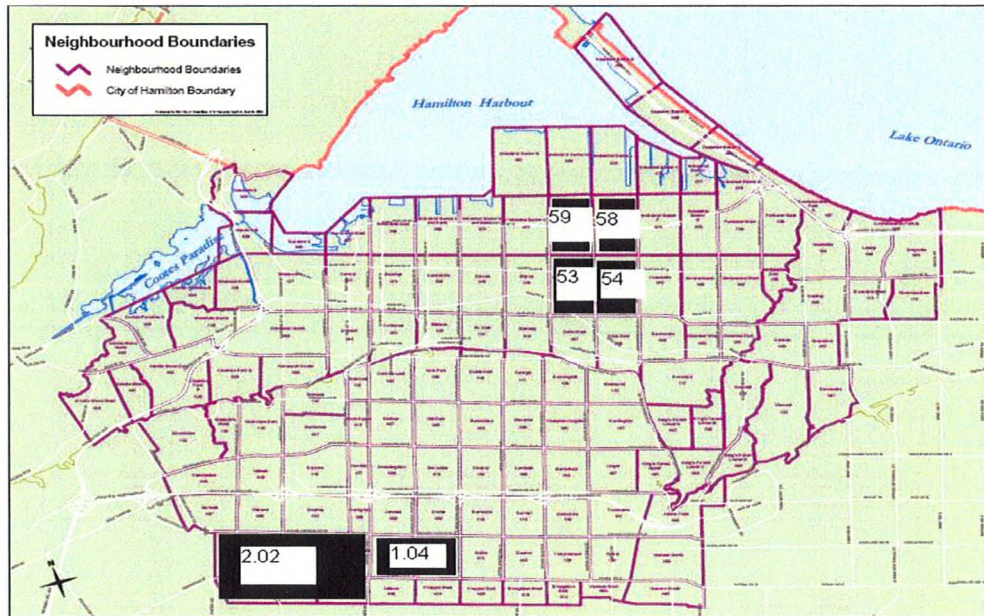


Figure 10: Study neighbourhoods and corresponding census tracts in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada (Source: City of Hamilton, 2004)