

FACULTY CONSTRUCTION OF RECIPROCITY AND MUTUALITY IN COMMUNITY-  
ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

by

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(Under the Direction of Talmadge C. Guy)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the community-engagement phenomenon through the perspectives of faculty members involved in community engaged projects. The study was guided by the following research questions; How does a faculty: (1) Understand and define the process of reciprocity and mutuality? (2) Integrate reciprocity and mutuality in engaged projects? And, (3) negotiate the project engagement process? This study illuminated the perspectives of land grant university faculty in defining mutuality and reciprocity, negotiating disparities, and incorporating the tenets of community-engaged scholarship in university-community partnerships.

The findings showed that (a) the nature of the study and faculty knowledge influenced how mutuality and reciprocity were defined, (b) the integration of mutuality and reciprocity was done at different facets of the project, from conception of the research idea to the dissemination of findings, (c) integration had to be negotiated by the survey participants, and (d) factors such as funding, time, researcher positionality, institutional culture, access, and historical experiences affected the integration of reciprocity and mutuality.

The study concluded that (a) community-engaged scholarship was socially constructed, (b) mutuality and reciprocity was incorporated at different phases of the projects' process, (c) mutuality and reciprocity was characterized by contradictions, (d) there was a power relationship between the faculty and the community, and (e) expected outcomes prevailed over process and purpose in framing engaged scholarship.

The study advanced Stanton's model community engaged scholarship by proposing the role of negotiations and relationships to enhance reciprocity and mutuality. The practical implications of the study included: enriching faculty training and development content, understanding the challenges of integrating mutuality and reciprocity, understanding the definition of community-engaged scholarship across disciplines, and strengthening institutions' commitment to the community through research work.

The study recommended exploring how other actors in community-based projects defined and integrated reciprocity and mutuality, a greater understanding of the community's perspectives, focusing on the impact of institutional culture on the conduct of the project and the faculty, using quantitative approaches to establish the correlation between the challenges faced by the faculty, integrating of mutuality and reciprocity into community projects, and replicating the study in a different context.

**INDEX WORDS:** Reciprocity, Mutuality, Engagement, Scholarship, Negotiation, Relationship, Community, Power, Engaged scholarship, University-community partnership, Community-engaged scholarship

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## **DEDICATION**

“A wise man has great power and a man of knowledge increases strength”

(Proverbs 24:5). I dedicate this to you, Mum; even though you are gone, I still hear your loving voice encouraging me to forge ahead. I hope to share the joy of my success with my wife and son in a way that you would have wished. May the knowledge I have gained as a result of my dissertation journey be a tool to make their lives worthwhile, and the world a better place.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered in a new way of doing business in colleges and universities in terms of teaching and research in the United States (Bender, 1997; Flexner, 1930; Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997; Hofstadter, 1963; Jencks & Riesman, 1968; Peters, 2005; Sandmann, 2008). It started with an emphasis on social and civic service (Boyer, 1987). Boyer (1990) then gave impetus to the change in academia with his seminal work, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, where he called for “a more creative view of the work of the professoriate,” (p. xii) by defining “the work of faculty in ways that enrich, rather than restrict, the quality of campus life” (p. 1). He suggested that the role of enriching the university centers on four areas of scholarship—discovering knowledge, integrating knowledge, applying knowledge, and teaching or disseminating knowledge. His work had an impact on the idea of university-community collaboration and subsequently community-engaged scholarship (Sandmann, 2008).

Boyer (1990) suggested “a new vision of scholarship” that clarified the campus mission and related “the work of the academy more directly to the realities of contemporary life” (p. 13). Against this back drop, now more than ever, universities and communities have been involved in mutually beneficial relationships where they work collaboratively to address societal issues. Boyer described this relationship as community engagement, and was credited with conceptualizing the idea.

In response to Boyer's (1990, 1996) call for community engagement, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) introduced a new *Elective Classification* for institutions that work with communities in 2005 (Driscoll, 2008). The classification is voluntary and the questionnaire responses show the structures in institutions that demonstrate the promotion and support of community engagement (Zuiches, 2008). The responses also offer insight into how institutions define the process of community engagement, considering that institutions or disciplines define community engagement differently (Stanton, 2008). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classification was preceded by the Holland matrix (CFAT), which was an analytic instrument used "to describe and interpret the dimensions, approaches, and levels of institutional commitment to community service and service-learning" (p. 33). This analysis process was used by institutions for planning, decision-making and evaluation (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2008).

This study adopted the CFAT (2008) definition of community engagement to operationally frame the study. CFAT described community engagement as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities... for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (para. 3). This university-community relationship has been highly complex, because each partner was advantaged with a particular resource, and Dulmus and Cristalli (2012) described such a partnership as one that "combines resources to achieve mutual goals" (p. 195). Dulmus and Cristalli further suggested that in such a partnership where research is the objective, both the university and the community have a number of distinctive resources that they each may bring to the table at different phases

of the partnership (Stanton, 2008). Against this backdrop, it was imperative to identify an approach that will examine the phases of community engaged scholarship in order to understand the interplay between power and the fundamental tenets of engagement. Stanton's (2008) engaged research model offered a framework for exploring the faculty construction of mutuality and reciprocity.

Stanton (2008) identified three dimensions of engagement: (a) the purpose of scholarship, (b) the process of engagement, and (c) the outcomes of the processes. He suggested that "knowledge development for public education... community problem solving... promotion of democratic practice ..." (p. 25) are key ingredients for the purpose of engaged research.

The process dimension detailed how engaged research was carried out and described the continuum between high and low mutuality levels at the different phases of the engagement process. The outcome dimension sought to assess the level to which the project advanced knowledge and improved the welfare of the community. The model therefore provided an appropriate structure for exploring the projects undertaken by the faculty involving the community.

Stanton (2008) also offered a detailed way of illuminating the scholarship of engagement. Boyer (1996) described scholarship of engagement as the process of "connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities..." (p. 21).

This suggestion was further underscored by Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff (1997), who highlighted the importance of knowledge production in mitigating societal needs through scholarship of engagement. This knowledge production capacity of the university has a propensity to make the university the advantaged partner in the university-community relationship according to Dulmus and Cristalli (2012).

### **Background of the Problem**

Higher education institutions have been microcosms of the community; therefore as society and its needs have changed, so too has the role of the university. According to Boyer (1990), this role of the university centered on four areas of scholarship—discovery, teaching, application and integration— whose commonality lay in the scholarly standards proposed by Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff (1997).

Boyer (1990) highlighted the significance of reviewing the place and credibility of the scholarship of teaching as an integral part of a university's research endeavor. He also suggested the need to connect academic institutions to the society by posing the questions:

Can America's colleges and universities, with all the richness of their resources, be of greater service to the nation and world? Can we define scholarship in ways that respond more adequately to the urgent new realities both within the academy and beyond? (p. 3)

In response to his challenge, this study sought to understand how reciprocity and mutuality were defined and attained when institutions and the community collaborate in the daunting task of highlighting and mitigating societal issues. The resolution of these problems has called for inclusiveness and reciprocity, including respect for knowledge

and experience (Saltmarsh, Hartley & Clayton, 2009). It has been, therefore, important to understand how faculty members, who directly participated in such collaborations, nurtured their relationships with the community against the backdrop of competing interests (Ramaley, 2000) and inequality in power (Brookfield, 1986; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Kritek, 2002).

Davis and Chandler (1998) suggested that the distribution of power across partners was often unequal, and could be used to influence the other party. This inequality in power was referred to as the power differential (Brookfield, 1986). The overarching scope of this study therefore was to understand the way faculty involved in university-community partnerships constructed their relationship with the community.

University-community partnerships are strengthened by the perceived strong sense of shared benefit that the process bequeaths the partners (Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon, & Connors, 1998). This shared benefit was manifested through engagement and reciprocity (Sandmann, 2008). Reciprocity and mutuality are perceived as fundamental principles of community-engaged scholarship (Boyer, 1990; Sandmann, Kliewer, Kim, & Omerikwa, 2010) and many institutions have integrated these principles into their mission statements (Sandmann, 2008).

Sandmann, Foster-Fishman, Lloyd, Rauhe & Rosaen (2000) argued that faculty work has been framed within the context of an institution's mission. Yet, one of the significant challenges that emerged from the 2006 Carnegie community-engaged classification applications was in the area of establishing reciprocal campus-community relationships (Saltmarsh, Hartley & Clayton, 2009; Zuiches, 2008). As Driscoll (2008) reported, "most institutions could only describe in vague generalities how they had

achieved genuine reciprocity with their communities” (p. 41). Over time, the focus of mutuality has shifted from being solely outcome-based to instead include the purpose and the process of the partnerships (Stanton, 2008). And genuine collaboration has been emphasized in all dimensions of community-based research, with some universities even institutionalizing the practice (Sandmann, 2008; Sandmann et. al, 2009; Stanton, 2008).

Institutionalization of university-community engagement has been realized when the process of integrating civic engagement within and across research universities has been completed (Sandmann, 2006). It depicted the extent to which institutions have embraced all four domains of scholarship proposed by Boyer, in their mission and actions (Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, 2002). Curry (1991) suggested three facets of institutionalizing engagement (a) structural, (b) procedural, and (c) incorporation.

The structural facet encompassed the actions associated with engagement, including an understanding of how the actions are executed (Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, 2002), and the measure of the actions (Goodman, 1982). The procedural phase showed the actions preferred by individuals in the institutions. Additionally, it was at this part of institutionalization that the guidelines associated with engagement activities were incorporated as the standard operating procedure at the departmental or institutional level (Curry, 1991; Braxton et al., 2002). The practice of community-engaged scholarship has been interrogated at this level using the CFAT elective classification (Sandmann & Plater, 2009).

According to Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, (2002) incorporation was “the most in-depth level of institutionalization” where principals and standards that defined engagement are integrated into the institution’s ethos (p. x). The actual incorporation of

the tenets of engagement was done by faculty or researchers directly working with the community. The question therefore remained; how do individual faculty members perceive the engagement process? How do they relate to the community as representatives of the universities?

Holland (2009) suggested that for there to be success in community engagement, partners should move from the “margins of the institution to its core” (p. 85). The faculty members were part of the individuals who encompass the margin, yet they directly participated in the actual acts of mutuality and reciprocity. This, therefore, explained the need to explore the faculty’s experiences and to understand their perceptions of the engagement process with community partners. Key to this assessment was the understanding of how the faculty accomplished their roles and defined their relationship with the community.

The interaction between faculty members and the community partners existed within the realm of societal inequity in power relations (Foucault, 1988), characterized by the quest for a greater sense of power (Denton, 1997), and a disparity in resources (Dulmus & Cristalli, 2012). This often opened up the relationship to the possibilities of negotiation and empowerment (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Freire, 1972). Importantly, it was the relationship between researchers and communities that determined the achievement and meaningful sustainability of community-engaged projects (Altman, 1995), and thus the faculty construction of reciprocity and mutuality could be used as a lens to understand such researcher-community relationships.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Boyer (1990) challenged himself and the academy to improve the quality of life on campus through collaborative engagement in hands-on, community-based projects aimed at tackling societal problems. In keeping with this challenge, many institutions gave research grants to faculty members to work with a community (Rice, 2003). As this practice became ubiquitous, the role of academic faculty and the nature of their work in higher education have changed considerably from the traditional teaching and research roles to a community-oriented scholarship role (Ward, 2003). Many institutions have collaborated with communities (Strand, 2003), and the success of these relationships has been attributed to the input and actions of faculty members who have interacted directly with communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Colby, Erlich, Beaumont & Stephens, 2003).

Shared power has been important in university-community partnerships (Holland, 2003). The success of such partnerships has not only been contingent upon skillfulness and effectiveness of the faculty members involved, but also the nature of their relationships with the community's representatives (Altman, 1995; Wiewel & Lieber, 1998). This further underscored the need to understand how individual faculty members worked directly with a community and constructed the engagement process.

Boyer (1990) acknowledged the monumental role played by the faculty in actualizing engaged scholarship. He observed that success in community-engaged scholarship was dependent on the allotment of faculty time across their various responsibilities; a notion underscored by Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker (2001). However, many studies continued to focus on the institutional perspectives of

partnerships (Bartel, Krasny, & Harrison, 2003; Dana & Emihovich, 2004; Fear & Sandmann, 1995; Wise, Retzleff, & Reilly, 2002), and institutional leadership (Sandmann & Plater, 2009), yet “significantly little is known about what has led faculty to practice engagement” (Sandmann & O’Meara, 2007, p. 1). Additionally, not much is known about faculty member perspectives on the engagement process, even though their involvement has been the best predictor of institutional success in community engagement (Bell, Furco, Ammon, Muller, & Sorgen, 2000). Despite the presence of models that illustrated the sustainability (Altman, 1995) and the varying levels of mutuality and reciprocity in university-community partnerships (Stanton, 2008), the role of power relations in a partnership has been relatively unexamined.

In order to understand faculty member perspectives, this study interviewed faculty grant recipients to elicit their perspectives on the engagement process. Stanton’s (2008) model of engaged scholarship provided a useful framework for eliciting faculty perspectives on grant funded projects. Cervero and Wilson’s (2006) program planning theory provided a basis for analyzing how a faculty negotiated power relations in the projects. Boyer (1996) conceded that universities are advantaged in not only the distribution of resources, but also in power and operational latitude. Cervero and Wilson (2006) underscored the importance of addressing this inequality on “the planning table” (p. 2). Cervero and Wilson defined planning as “a social activity of negotiating interests in relationships of power” (p. 5). The planning theory was based on four central concepts: power, interests, negotiation, and responsibility, which were essential in perpetuating a democratic process, and a mutually beneficial outcome (Cervero & Wilson, 1994).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to understand the community-engagement phenomenon through the perspectives of faculty members involved in community engaged projects. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does a faculty understand and define the process of reciprocity and mutuality?
2. How does a faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in engaged projects?
3. How does a faculty negotiate the project engagement process?

Given the research questions and depth of understanding needed, the study utilized a qualitative research approach (Creswell, 1998). The theoretical perspective of the study was informed by the constructivist epistemology (Crotty, 2003).

### **Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that this study will have several theoretical and practical significances. First, it will increase the conceptual understanding of engaged scholarship through the lens of the faculty members. The practical implication of this lens is that scholars and practitioners will be able to better discern the complexity of relationships that exist between the universities and the communities and understand the key role played by the faculty in actualizing the goals of such partnerships. The understanding will also equip early career faculty members and novice researchers with knowledge to better prepare for community engaged projects.

Second, this study may help explain the reasons of perceived disparity in the integration of reciprocity and mutuality in university-community partnerships. The study also modified the community-engaged scholarship framework, by adding the power

relations aspect. Specifically, this study contributed to Stanton's (2008) model by exploring the power component of university-community collaboration. This aspect may assist faculty members to navigating partnership and understanding the continuum between high or low mutuality.

Third, because the study participants were selected from multiple disciplines, the inquiry may provide an understanding of how community-engaged scholarship is defined across disciplines. These definitions will help faculty members operationalize mutuality and reciprocity concepts into a set of procedures, thus contributing to future empirical interdisciplinary research on engaged scholarship. The emergent themes from the faculty members' perspectives of community-engagement process will also elicit additional future research agendas and discourse on the subject.

Finally, the study responded to the ever growing need of institutions to strengthen their commitment to communities through faculty work. This study aimed to optimize the benefits of university-community partnerships through both harnessing the strategies faculty members use to incorporate mutuality into their projects, and identifying ways to nurture the tenets of engaged scholarship into the work life of faculty.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Rice (2003) noted that United States higher education has faced changes of considerable magnitude in the role of universities, including the nature of academic faculty work. “Since 1850, major turning points have come about every 50 years – every two generations – and what is striking about these changes is that at each point the dominant meanings of both scholarship and engagement have been challenged” (p. 2).

In the early 1990s, Ernest Boyer (1990) challenged the conventional understanding of scholarship. He suggested four types of scholarships: (a) the scholarship of discovery—investigates and finds new knowledge; (b) the scholarship of integration—gives meaning to isolated and discovered knowledge through synthesis; (c) the scholarship of application—using discovered and collate knowledge to solve social problems and generate new theory; and (d) the scholarship of teaching—a process of knowledge transition, encouraging creativity and empowerment. Then, he went beyond integration and application, and introduced scholarship of engagement.

This chapter will discuss seven areas of literature that inform this study: (a) the scholarship of engagement that will elaborate on the types of scholarship, the evolution of the field, and the principle that guides the practice, (b) exploration of the partnerships between institutions of higher education and communities, (c) faculty involvement in community engaged scholarship, (d) an introduction of the theoretical framework underpinning the study, (e) Stanton’s (2008) scholarship of engagement model,

(f) literature on power relations, and (h) the discourse on negotiating power differentials.

The review starts by defining scholarship of engagement, with significant emphasis on Ernest Boyer's work (1990).

### **Scholarship of Engagement**

Scholarship of engagement has been an emergent concept in the field of both university community partnerships, and engaged teaching and research inspired by Boyer's (1990) classic seminal work— *Scholarship Reconsidered*. Through this work, Boyer provided a re-conceptualization of scholarship in higher education.

Later, in 1996, he extended his discussion by suggesting that the role of higher education institutions has been “connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities...” (p. 21). Barker (2004) later described scholarship of engagement as a distinctive set of practices aimed at championing civic renewal in American higher education to bridge the divide between academics and the public.

Boyer (1990) discussed the importance of making the relationship between education and the public a focus of educational planning. He called for “a new vision of scholarship”, (p. 13) by rethinking the priorities of the professoriate. Boyer's ideas have helped shape the debate on academic work in terms of the role of teaching in higher education.

Boyer suggested the need to open up and connect academic institutions to society. He promoted a scholarship approach that cut across teaching, research and service, while it offered students and faculty alike a more meaningful college experience. For example, engaged teaching and learning could have been a hands-on, community-based projects in the community that were collaborative and aimed at tackling societal problems.

### **Types of scholarship.**

Boyer (1990) defined scholarship in an expanded scope that went beyond discovery to include three other important functions of the professoriate: integration, application, and teaching. He described discovery as a process that came closest to what was historically viewed as research, and it was one of the functions that was held in high regards in academia. The scholarship of discovery has contributed to human knowledge and the intellectual climate of a university. It has reflected the investigative tradition of academic life and may be manifested through teaching, research, or service. It has not just been measured by outcomes, but has also been valued for the process and the passion of those involved. This type of scholarship has demonstrated “the commitment to knowledge for its own sake, to freedom of inquiry and to following, in a disciplined fashion, an investigation wherever it may lead” (p. 17).

Boyer suggested that discoveries made by scholars were isolated and the scholarship of integration proposed their amalgamation. Integration has involved “making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illumination data in a revealing way” (p. 18), and in the process has educated those without expertise or knowledge. This scholarship was closely related to discovery because it created new knowledge by bringing together “isolated facts” and espousing

new insight from original research. The scholarship of discovery and integration mirrored the exploratory and the “synthesizing traditions of research life” (p. 21), in teaching, research and service.

After discovery and synthesis, knowledge needed to be applied for the betterment of humanity through addressing social problems. This constituted the scholarship of application. It answered the question; how can knowledge best be used to responsibly alleviate societal problems? How beneficial was the knowledge to individuals, institutions and communities? Knowledge has been used to formulate interventions which have been used for development and change. The scholarship of application has been a two-way street with theory and practice fundamentally interacting and renewing each other (Boyer, 1990).

Barker (2004) suggested the incorporation of “reciprocal practices of civic engagement into the production of knowledge” (p. 124). Whatever the form, it was found that such scholarship should be guided by qualitative research standards which included: (a) having a clear purpose and goal for the scholarship, (b) the research adequately considering the state of the field, (c) choosing appropriate methods that promote the achievement of the project goals, (d) ensuring that the results are significant, (e) effectively disseminating the results beyond the discoverer, and (f) rigorous reflecting and peer-reviewing of the work (Glassick et al., 1997). These standards, plus the community participation in the research process, have characterized action research (Whyte, 1991). Reason and Bradbury (2001) described action research as a “participatory, democratic process concerned with practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview”, that incorporated

“reflection, theory and practice in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people” ( p. 1). Because of the association between practice and research, scholarship of engagement may therefore be described as a genre of participatory action research that evolved into a discipline (Lattuca, 2001; Sandmann, 2008).

### **Evolution of the scholarship of engagement.**

Since Boyer’s challenge, the conceptualization of engagement has evolved and gone beyond discovery and application to become a transdisciplinary concept that integrated multiple genres of scholarship (Lattuca, 2001; Sandmann, 2008). While the contemporary focus and conversations of community engagement made reference to Boyer’s work, the concept dates back to the U.S. academic revolution of the 50s (Newman, 1985; O’Meara & Rice, 2005).

The promulgation of Dewey’s educational philosophy later in the 60s marked a pivotal point in the conceptualization of what has been the scholarship of engagement. Dewey suggested that education should be in concert with social transformation, and espoused that the rebuilding of society greatly depended on the school (Dewey & Archambault, 1964). In reviewing the conceptualization of the scholarship of engagement, beginning about a decade and a half ago, Sandmann (2008) noted four major developments: (a) the definition of engagement, (b) the manifestation of engagement through teaching and research, (c) engagement as a scholarly expression, and (c) institutionalization and socialization of engagement.

The first development in the conceptualization of the scholarship of engagement involved defining its “underlying values and principles of bidirectional reciprocity expressed through campus-community partnerships” (p. 95). This definition promoted a collaborative and mutually beneficial approach that differentiated engagement from outreach—which extended university resources to the community.

Scholarship of engagement has been expressed as engaged teaching and engaged research. As engaged learning, it could look like service learning (Sandmann, 2008). The Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (2005) defined service learning as:

[A] structured learning experience that combines community service with preparation and reflection. Students engaged in service learning provide community service in response to community identified concerns and learn about the context in which service is provided, the connection between their service and their academic coursework, and their role as citizens (p.11).

Consistent with Boyer’s (1990) call for “renewed commitment to service” (p. xii) engaged scholarship has come to the forefront of discussions on community based research. In order to be viewed as “scholarship, service activities must be related to one’s discipline and be a product of professional knowledge and activity” (p. xii). It should also be characterized by the “rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research activities” (p. 22), and then presented within the guidelines of their respective disciplines.

Scholarship of engagement has been transdisciplinary, and has often integrated multiple forms of scholarship, including a broader vision of scholarship (Driscoll & Sandmann, 2004) that has been manifested through instruction, knowledge generation with public participation or service (Sandmann, 2008). Scholarship of engagement has viewed collaboration with the public, research focused on civic participation in public life, and community or civic education as expressed forms of scholarly practice that fulfilled traditional academic functions (Barker, 2004).

Engagement as a scholarly expression has differentiated itself from the umbrella of community-based research, and scholars have been encouraged to step back from their inquiry and connect the theory to practice (Sandmann, 2008). The knowledge created can then be effectively expressed to the students (Boyer, 1990). The practice of engaged scholarship viewed collaboration with the public, research focused on civic participation in public life, and civic or community education as expressed forms of scholarly practice that fulfilled traditional academic functions (Barker, 2004), including the institutional mission (Sandmann, Thornton, & Jaeger, 2009).

Engagement could have been institutionalized or socialized in colleges and universities. It has been entrenched in the organizational mission or it could have been engrained in institutional structures of the universities (Sandmann, 2008). An indicator of institutionalization was the advancing of civic engagement within and across colleges and universities (Sandmann, 2006). The nearly two hundred institutes classified as community-engaged (Sandmann, Thornton & Jaeger, 2009) depicted the extent to which institutions have embraced Boyer's call in their mission and actions. More than ever, universities and communities have been engaged in mutually beneficial relationships

where they have been working collaboratively in addressing societal issues. The practice of giving grants intended for community-based scholarship has also become a norm in many land-grant institutions, a clear indicator of institutionalization of community engagement. Curry (1991) suggested three facets of institutionalizing the scholarship of engagement: structural, procedural, and incorporation. Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, (2002) argued that the attainment of all three was necessary to sustain the institutionalization of engaged scholarship.

As a result of the socialization, faculty and graduate students believed that research was more rewarding than the broader scope of faculty responsibilities, and there has been a significant shift of junior faculty across gender and institutional type from the traditional classroom-based teaching to community-connected research (Braxton, Luckey & Helland, 2002; Finkelstein, Seal & Schuster, 1998). Additionally Bartel, Krasny and Harrison (2003), posited that the adjustment of the reward and administrative structures in universities was important in perpetuating a more institutional socially-engaged scholarship.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2002) defined an engaged university as one that was “fully committed to direct, two-way interaction with communities and other external constituencies through the development, exchange, and application of knowledge, information, and expertise for mutual benefit” (p. 7). Barker (2004) further suggested that in addition to research, teaching, integration, and application scholarship, engaged scholarship has incorporated “reciprocal practices of civic engagement into the production of knowledge” (p. 124), a derivative of Boyer’s (1996) later work and a guiding tenet of engaged scholarship.

**Tenets of engaged scholarship.**

Drawing from many of the existing definitions of engagement, Bloomfield (2005) suggested that it is

the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good (p. 3).

This definition embodied the tenet of mutuality, characterized by a shared benefit in the university community partnership. This characteristic distinguished engaged scholarship from university outreach and service (Sandmann, 2002, 2008).

Reciprocity has been another key tenet of university-community partnership according to Adams (1975), who affirmed “that there are always at least two sides to a power relation and that, in the context of the relation, decisions will be made by all parties” (p. 27).

Giddens (1990) later argued that collaboration has been reciprocal when “autonomy and dependence in both directions” (p. 149) has been apparent. Thus the needs addressed by community-engaged scholarship should be directed by the community and that the partnership should be mutually beneficial to all parties in a reciprocal manner (Maurana, Wolff, Beck & Simpson, 2000).

## **University-Community Collaboration**

Boyer (1990) suggested an approach to scholarship “that both applies and contributes to human knowledge” in a way that addressed the community’s problems has redefined the “expert” model of university-community partnerships by adopting a more collaborative approach. Lindsay, Queeney, and Smutz (1981) described collaboration as an intense relationship between entities that has taken place when they are “working together jointly and continuously on a particular project towards a specific goal” (p. 5). Additionally, Saltiel (1998) suggested that in a collaborative learning partnership, the relationship between the two partners has been equally as important as the objective of the collaboration. It has been a relationship that views those involved as equal partners working side by side towards a common objective.

To achieve this, institutions have had to move beyond the historical conceptualization of outreach, public service and technology, which was rooted in the agricultural philosophy of land grant colleges (Sandmann, 2008). Fear and Sandmann (1995) proposed the need to “unpack the service category” in order to understand that engaged scholarship has gone beyond “service to” the community.

They described outreach as “a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research and service” and suggested that it entails “generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions” (p. 113). Jacoby (1996) described service learning as “experiential education” whereby those who are being taught “engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (p. 5).

Despite the immense contribution of service learning in preparing students to face real life challenges (Boyer, 1996; Cohen, 1998; Smith, 1994), scholars were encouraged to go beyond service—to work for the community, to collaborate—to work with the community (O'Meara & Rice, 2005). The focus on mutuality also shifted from being solely focused on outcomes to include the purpose and processes involved (Stanton, 2008); in addition to the key role played by faculty in interacting with the community as part of their professoriate work (Van de Ven, 2007).

### **Engaged Scholarship as Faculty Work**

Holland (2005) defined engaged scholarship as a specific conception of faculty work that connected the academic resources of the institution to socioeconomic issues in the community. This academic resource applied to both teaching and research, thus providing students and faculty with a profound insight into societal problems, compared to what was realized as service to the community or a civic duty.

The reconceptualization of faculty involvement in community based work presented a new definition of scholarship that has involved not only to sharing the results of such work with the wider community as well as academic colleagues, but also has involved bringing representatives of the community into the planning and discussion at the beginning of the process (O'Meara & Rice, 2005; Stanton, 2008). While the success of community-engaged scholarship has been notable at the institutional level (Strand, 2003; Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin & Prosser, 2000), it has been the individual faculty members rather than the university as a whole who have been hard hit by the slow turnaround of their efforts into outcomes or change (Fear, Rosaen, Foster-Fishman & Bawden, 2001). This has been because the implementation of the engaged scholarship

characteristically has taken time, effort and commitment (Calleson, Seifer & Maurana, 2002; Schein, 2004). The community and institutional outcomes may take even longer to achieve and document, a limitation that has threatened those intending to use the results and documentation for promotion and tenure (Calleson, Jordan & Seifer, 2005).

There have been few studies about how mutuality and reciprocity has been defined both by the faculty members carrying out community-based research, and the different disciplines that engage in participatory research despite Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff's (1997) suggestion for the standards of scholarly work. The question posed by Sandmann and Weerts (2008), "So, what does engagement look like at institutions?" has made the need to understand how mutuality and reciprocity, as defined in different genres of community based research, an imperative, both at the institutional and faculty level. This has been in order to better understand ways of optimizing utility and satisfaction in the projects (Kellogg Commission, 1999), while exploring ways to tackle power relations both theoretically and practically. Through such explorations, community-engaged scholarship has over time developed into an elaborate transdisciplinary field with its own theories (Sandmann, 2008) and practical benchmarks (Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theory and analytic frameworks are essential in providing lenses to see and examine complexities of societal phenomena (Crotty, 1998), and provides one for this study. Scholarship of engagement as a framework has been defined differently by different fields, institutions and individuals. A characteristic that makes the framework multidisciplinary in nature and has been underpinned by a social constructionist

assumption (Bushe, 1995) which proposed that reality has been socially constructed (Crotty, 1998). According to Stanton (2008), community-engaged research has been driven by a predetermined civic intention geared towards ensuring that the key players benefit from the process. The framework therefore provided a basis that will help in understanding the perspectives of faculty members involved in community projects. Additionally, against the back drop of standards of engaged work suggested by Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, (1997) community-engaged scholarship offered a lens through which the process of executing the grant projects can be investigated.

Scholarship of engagement, according to Boyer (1990) set the context of the institution's missions and the parameters within which community-based research grants were created, disseminated, executed and evaluated. It was also the basis upon which the university gave credence to the engaged work of the faculty. The framework also helped in determining the roles and rewards of the faculty involved in community-engaged projects (Sandmann, Foster-Fishman, Lloyd, Rahue & Rosaen, 2000).

The scholarship of engagement as a framework also has given this study multiple lenses of exploration because it has encompassed the four types of scholarships suggested by Boyer (1990), thus it has provided more robust approach to explore the phenomena of reciprocity and mutuality. Stanton's (2008) model expanded the scholarship thesis beyond the professoriate and provided a suitable framework for this study.

### **Stanton's Model**

Stanton's (2008) model of engaged scholarship provided a useful framework for eliciting the faculty's perspectives on the projects. The model encompassed three dimensions which included: (a) the purpose of scholarship, (b) the process of

engagement, and (c) the outcomes. The process dimension in Stanton's model detailed how engaged research was carried out, and described the continuum from the highest to the lowest levels of mutuality experienced by the partners at different phases of the engaged research process. Stanton discussed the "opportunities and challenges" to "expanding and institutionalizing civic engagement within research universities" (p. 20), and the model essentially provided the most appropriate structure for exploring the community-based projects undertaken by the faculty.

While engagement has been described differently across different disciplines, this study espoused Bloomfield's (2005) definition which suggested that

Engagement is the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (p. 3)

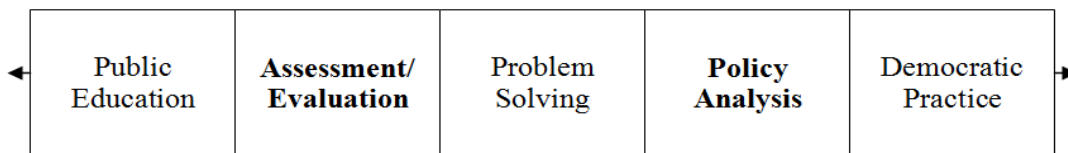
The conceptual framework of the study was underpinned by the three dimensions of engaged research discussed in Stanton's (2008) article.

#### **Purposes of engaged research.**

Stanton (2008) argued that engaged research should be driven by "an intentional public purpose" characterized by a "direct or indirect benefit to a community" (p. 24). He posited that research should focus on the community in every facet of the process ranging from validity of the instruments and the data, to generalizability of the findings, including the extent to which the method used was community focused. According to Stanton, "knowledge development for: public education... community problem solving...

promotion of democratic practice ...” (p. 25), are the key ingredient of an acceptable engaged research purpose in addition to evaluation and policy analysis (Figure 1)

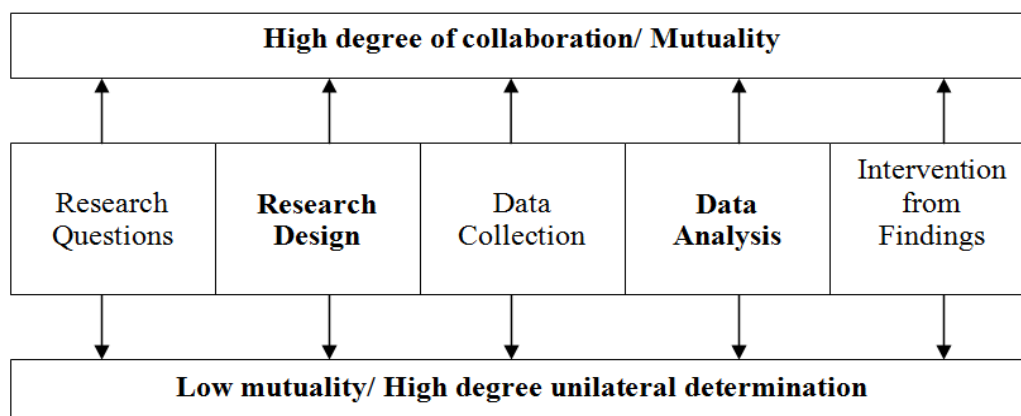
Figure 1. *Public Purposes of Engaged Research*



### **The engaged research process.**

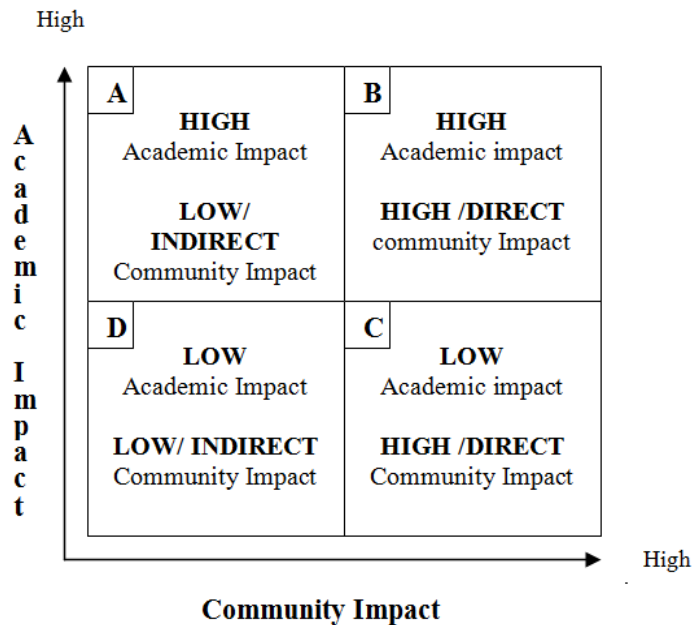
The process operationalized the community-driven purpose of engaged research. It detailed how engaged research was carried out and described the level of collaboration between the community and the university or faculty and community representatives, specifically the degree of collaboration between the partners. To assess the collaborative level of the different phases of the engaged research, the processes involved should be examined independently.

Some of the key activities suggested by Stanton have been consistent with the general phases of a typical research, which have included: (a) research question formulation, (b) creating the research design, (c) data gathering, (d) data analysis, and (e) application of the findings. If these phases have been determined and executed unilaterally by the faculty or researcher, the process has been deemed to be low on mutuality and thus *less engaged*, (Figure 2). High mutuality has been characterized by an evenhanded participation and contribution by all the partners involved, and made the research projects more collaborative. A collaboration characterized by unilateral determination diminished the degree of mutuality in community-based projects (Stanton, 2008).

Figure 2. *Degree of Collaborative Effort*

### **Engaged research outcomes.**

This dimension sought to assess whether the research improved the welfare of the community in addition to advancing knowledge. This facet has taken into account the range of outcomes that emerged from the research and who benefitted from such outcomes. The outcomes of engaged research usually mirrored the purpose and processes in the partnership or collaboration. If the purpose was skewed towards knowledge advancement, then the impact was likely to be high on theory, and low on community interventions (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Outcomes of Engaged Research*

Research that had a low impact on the community was not necessarily a bad project, it has merely fallen short of the true definition of an engaged research. Zone D—Figure 3—did not typically qualify as research because it had little to no impact on both academics and the community. Zone B was the ideal engaged research with a high impact to knowledge advancement and the improvement of the community welfare (Stanton, 2008).

The power inequity between the researcher and the participants or the institution and the community had an effect on the negotiation process of the collaborations (Giddens, 1990). Mutuality was the highlight of every community collaborative venture (Dewey & Bentley, 1949), and was defined as a relationship where entities were interdependent and benefit from the relationship in a commensurate manner (Costall, 2004).

Generally, the heart of this model was shaped and determined by the elasticity of reciprocity and mutuality and how the community and university defined it. Whenever entities interact, they usually have some form of relationship, and therefore power was apparent (Loomer, 1976). This power, according to Brookfield (2005), “is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network” (p. 130). Therefore the continuum between the purpose of public education and democratic practice, a high degree of collaboration and low mutuality, and high or low academic and community outcomes, were influenced in one way or another by the apparent power differential between the community and the university. This underscored Cervero and Wilson’s (2006) assertions that partnerships have not existed outside the realm of societal inequity, but instead have operated within the intersections of power inequalities and relations. They also suggested that power, interests, ethical commitment, and negotiation have been central to engaged partnerships.

### **Power Relations**

Ury, Brett, and Goldberg (1988) defined power as the capacity to compel other persons to engage in activities that they would not have normally done. Power has been considered a relative term, and everyone has some kind of power, according to Davis and Salem (1984). Deutsch (1973) suggested that power has been characterized by “wealth, physical strength, weapons, health, intelligence, knowledge, organizational skill, respect, and affection.” (p. 85)

Both power and power differential manifested themselves in different ways, ranging from resources owned by one partner, to the social construction of status (Brookfield, 1986). This suggested that each partner has been privileged with a certain

resource that can be shared. For example, the importance of knowledge production in mitigating societal needs has placed the university in a position of advantage because of the institution's knowledge production capacity (Bender, 1993), while the community has the advantage of having indigenous knowledge (Grenier, 1998; Slikkerveer & Brokensha, 1995).

This relative abundance or lack of resources has created a power differential between the community and the university. This notion of power differential was defined by Luke (1974) as a power capacity rather than the exercise of the capacity on the other actors. This capacity was called relative power advantage, according to Emerson (1962). The role played by power relations in the incorporation of mutuality and reciprocity in the community projects has been key to understanding the perspectives of the faculty members.

Bolman and Deal (1991) noted that “politics and political behavior is more visible and dominant under conditions of diversity than of homogeneity” (p. 188). Considering that the community and the institutions working with them have been in many ways characteristically diverse, power relations—a component of political behavior—have been profoundly present in the relationship and have affected the experiences of the partners (Parker, 1999; Sloan, 2000).

Therefore, the purpose of exploring power frameworks that have shaped adult education practices have been essential to understanding of how power was negotiated during the faculty interaction with community or community representatives in the projects.

In adult education practices and social influence literature, power has been primarily a socially constructed relational concept used to describe the perceived control an individual has over others in a relationship (Brookfield, 1986; Cervero & Wilson, 1994, Foucault, 1978; Gramsci, 1971). Salancik and Pfeffer (1974) suggested that the principal sources of an actor's power over others has included structural position, the personal attributes of the actor, subject matter expertise, and access to information.

According to Peters, (2005), these features were often associated with universities as compared to the community, and community members often see their local university as distinct from the rest of the community (Jacoby, 2003). Such inequity in power can be mitigated through empowerment in a mutually beneficial university–community partnership model (Boyer, 1996).

The Oxford English Dictionary described the verb empower as “authorize or delegate or give legal power to someone” while Burke (1986) suggested that to empower “implies the granting of power- delegation of authority” (p. 51). If we consider empowerment in terms of this relational dynamic between the university and the community, it becomes a process by which the relatively powerful university has shared its power with the community and vice versa in specific aspects where the community is relatively powerful.

According to Foucault (1978), power and the exercise of power merged within a give and take relationship in the empowerment process. Because power is extra personal, an increase in power has to be compensated by someone else ceding part of their power (Sheldon & Parker, 1997).

This transfer of power across entities has been referred to as empowerment (Gibson, 1991). This study adopted the definition that interpreted power as a function of the interdependence between the community and the university (Sandmann, Kliwer, Kim, & Omerikwa, 2010); despite the actual interactions in the grant funded projects often being between the faculty and individual participants representing the community. There was therefore an additional need for individual empowerment to enhance self-determination of the representatives (Bandura, 1986).

Both the exerciser who relinquished power and the object being empowered attempted to find a position of mutual gain, therefore, some responsibility was retained by the exerciser (McNay, 1994). Empowerment was defined by a partnership created to achieve a common objective (McCarthy, 2008; Rappaport, 1984) and was not simply an outcome of power and its exercise, according to Foucault (1978). In the context of engaged scholarship, empowerment constituted an important tenet of engaged scholarship – reciprocity.

Foucault (1978) offered a postmodern view on the concept of power in his assertion that the world was complex and that power originated from everywhere. He noted that although power must be viewed at the individual level, it was difficult to typify it because it was a product of human interaction.

The nature of power was “strictly relational” and characterized by “many points of resistance” (p. 477). Foucault (1997) further suggested that in human relationships power was always present and later (1980) categorized power relations into: (a) political relations –that occurred between individuals, learners or partners, and (b) ethical relations –which were characterized by one’s relation to the institution.

Both these relationships, according to Foucault (1999), do not exist in a “position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships” (p. 476). In both the traditional educational setting and community-engaged scholarship, the foregoing suggests that power was manifested through interaction of the partners or learners. This interaction usually resulted in the influencing of opinions and construction of the relationships. Regarding the relationship between productive power and the subject, and the subject’s location in productive power, Foucault (1983) argued that:

This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. (p. 212)

Accordingly, power and knowledge operate in tandem with one another in creating or sustaining the other and those involved can be both the object and the subject in relation to power simultaneously (Foucault, 1997).

Freire (1972) viewed education as a weapon in the fight for a more just, egalitarian society in which the advancement of oppression was curtailed through emancipation. He posited that it was the role of the adult educators to bring the disadvantaged to a state of critical consciousness in which they could discern the existing domineering social structures, including the suppressive attitudes, action and culture. Freire viewed empowerment as a facet of the learning process; a notion shared by Boyer (1990). Freire argued that although teachers and students are not on the same platform in terms of curricular knowledge, the teachers often learn and experience some change, both

from the student and the reflective process of teaching. This form of mutual learning experience between the teacher and the students characterizes engaged scholarship.

According to Freire, in most educational settings, it was the teacher who was viewed as being relatively powerful compared to the students. In such cases they should use their power to ensure that the learner's objectives were addressed and interests met. The same applied to community based projects, where the university was seen as powerful relative to the community.

Critical social theory has been associated with improving the living conditions of the underprivileged (Ward & Mullender, 1991). The use of critical social theory for research purposes was based on the assumption that people are capable of doing autonomous self reflection. The underprivileged groups were commonly identified as the oppressed groups and the oppression was often perpetuated by social institutions including the community.

Community was conceptualized differently in different contexts. Social theory described community as ideally comprising of symmetrical social relationships among people, reciprocal or balanced exchanges among equivalent social groups, and shared moral commitments, personal intimacies, and secures identities as members of a collective entity (Bauman, 2000, 2001). This was an ideal description that precludes real human behavior in actual communities, characterized by acts of violence, exploitation, cruelty and imbalanced exchanges among others (Moore, 1975). In the community-university partnerships, the community has been seen often as underprivileged relative to the university in terms of knowledge production ability, infrastructure, goodwill and other resources (Freire, 1972; Ward & Mullender, 1991).

Educational practice and programming are carried out within the parameters of policy, human interests, diversity of goals, perceptions of power, and traditions (Ball, 1987). This has been evidenced by the observation that, adult education as a field of scholarship and practice was perceived as not representing a unitary perspective. The field has been characterized by interplays of goal diversity, ideological disputes, conflict of interests in addition to power (Brookfield, 1986).

The empowerment of communities to take actions to assert and defend their own interests has depended in large measure on strengthening both individual and collective human development (Dokecki, 1996). According to Galbraith (1990), empowerment of community has been critical to creating “a sense of hope and dignity, a sense of responsibility for their own communities and lives, and a voice in the social and political arenas” (pp. 7–8) in learners.

Considering that people’s interests are partly exogenously defined by their place in society, the interests they have defended must at least partially be constructed by the institutions through which they lose or gain, taking into account the multifaceted nature of identities and the changing nature of social settings (Watts, 2001). Thus, in order to understand politics in adult education, one must comprehend the concepts of accommodation and resistance, and the development of a critical perspective that has helped us to understand the contradictions and conflicts that have shaped our practices (Brookfield, 2000). There was therefore a need to negotiate these shortfalls with the purpose of achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

## **Negotiating Power Differentials**

Brookfield (1986) suggested that power differential was a common feature in educational interactions and the prevailing political nature of the relationships was often characterized as a complex one-sided affair encompassed with hegemonic practices. While Kreisberg (1992) suggested that the resistance of such hegemonic practices “is readily apparent in most situations of domination” (p. 16), some forms of resistance was actually contradictory and lead to accommodation of oppressive exploitative structures (Giroux, 1983; Sissel, 2000).

It has been apparent that efforts to reduce power inequality in any given community have had significant consequences for those that have been relatively powerful. Therefore, the effort to reduce power inequality has needed parameters and a formula which should be negotiated by the parties involved (Kritek, 2002). In this sense, empowerment entailed working to strengthen the capabilities of a subset of interests in the community, and being aware of other subsets of competing interests in the community, which necessarily required dealing with powerful university interests within, as well as beyond, the community. According to Newman (1994), competing interests can be arbitrated, adjudicated or negotiated. Despite being a commonly used word, negotiation as a reconciliatory approach has been uniquely defined in different contexts.

### **Defining negotiation.**

Newman (1994) defined negotiation as “the process whereby two or more parties with both common and conflicting interests come together to talk with a view to reaching an agreement” (p. 124). The highlight of his definition was the acknowledgement of the presence of both common and conflicting interests between the parties involved. Also

important in the definition was the intent of the parties involved to reach an amicable agreement. According to Cornelius and Faire (1989) the negotiation process offered a “win-win” outcome in which common interests were strengthened and conflicting interests were conciliated without aggrieving either party. Kriesberg (1998) hypothesized there were two sources of conflict in a partnership; those that were caused by social systems affecting the partners, such as a lack of resources, and power divisions; and those that are caused by the nature of their relationship, such as perceived inequality.

Johnson and Johnson (1975) also described negotiation as a win-win approach characterized by problem solving strategies. They suggested that when negotiating, the parties involved should first and importantly “define the conflict as a mutual problem” then endeavor to “find creative agreements that are satisfying to both parties or present a mutually acceptable compromise” (p. 182). Second, the parties involved should create an environment that would allow them to interact at the same level of power during contact and explicitly discuss their wishes. Finally, they should uphold transparency, obviousness, and reciprocal appreciation through making an effort to have the utmost compassion of the other parties needs.

In community-university partnerships, the common interest usually has been to solve an existing societal problem, but the relationship has often been characterized by conflicting interests as a result of cultural differences at both the institutional and individual level (Bacon, 2002; Boyer, 1990; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). These differences have a potential of undermining the process and thus have to be negotiated. The theater in which this process has been mediated is often called *the table* and those involved in the process are the actors (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Newman, 1994). This

imagery has also been used by Kritek (2002) to illustrate the nature of conflict resolution. She used the uneven table as a metaphor to depict the feeling of being disadvantaged experienced by negotiators relative to their contending partners. She reviewed the traditional approaches in which negotiators have attempted to deal with an uneven table. Kritek proposed ten constructive ways of navigating an uneven table.

According to Newman (1994) negotiation and consultation were often used interchangeably despite being profoundly different. He argued that consultation was a phase in the negotiation and defines it as “the process whereby two or more parties whose common interests outweigh any conflicting ones come together to talk with a view to sharing information and solving problems to their mutual advantage” (p. 125). Even though negotiation was seen as process of reconciling conflicting interests, in community- engaged scholarship, it should also reinforce and optimize on the interests that are common to both parties.

These interests and power imbalance help in highlighting the all-important cultural social, political, and ethical dynamics of community engagement (Bacon, 2002; Boyer, 1990, Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). Both the community and the university may have relative power advantage, depending on the purpose and stage in the process of the collaboration (Dulmus & Cristalli, 2012). According to Cervero and Wilson (1994), the actors in the community-university partnership can derive power from their position as custodians of resources, or based on representation in terms of numbers, or even because of having expertise or vital information. They also suggested the need for the satisfaction of stake holder’s interest in the absence of a conflict even by leveling the power dominance of one party. This power dominance, according to Kritek (2002)

was a source of unevenness, and has given one partner the power to control the other. Kritek proposed the redefinition of relationships from one that was hierarchical and characterized by dominance to one that ensured equality on the uneven negotiating table.

**The negotiating table.**

Cervero and Wilson's (1994, 1998, 2006) program planning theory provided a favorable basis for interrogating how the faculty members involved in community-engaged projects negotiated power relations in their projects. Cervero and Wilson's (1994) framework focused on the relationship between the interests of planning actors, the outcomes and processes of planning. They provided adult educators with a lens that can be used to look at power and conflict in collaborative partnerships.

The framework defined planning as "a social process of negotiating power and interests" (p. 12). It offered an understanding of how power relationships operated in the planning of social and organizational activities, which they referred to as democratic planning. Cervero and Wilson posited that educators negotiate with and among personal, social, and organizational interests to achieve their practical purposes and the democratic aims associated with them. The negotiations ensured some form of mutuality in the community projects undertaken by the university and "profoundly affect their content and form" (p. 28) including the extent to which they meet the criteria of community-engaged scholarship.

Mills, Cervero, Langone, and Wilson (1995) suggested a social processes view that looked at the challenges of planning in a state's cooperative extension service. The cooperative extension service was a program similar to what has evolved to the present day community-engaged scholarship, according to Sandmann (2008). Cervero and

Wilson (1994) argued that the power and interests of planning actors should be in the foreground, instead of concentrating on the techniques. Their framework also suggested negotiation as the central mechanism of equalizing inherent tensions of power and was done at different levels. They described negotiation as “a process by which people confer, discuss, and bargain in order to reach agreement about what to do in relation to the educational program” (p. 6). They focused on activities, methods, or outcomes that characterize the surface level negotiation, while in deeper levels, it was the interests and power relationship that were the focus. According to Lusch and Brown (1996), the degree of negotiation within the surface and deeper levels was contingent upon relative power. They define relative power as the degree to which one actor was more powerful than the other.

In addition to relative power and negotiation, Cervero and Wilson (2006) hypothesized three other salient factors that impacted the realization of the interest of actors on the table: “(1) power relations enabled and constrained people’s access to and capacity to act at the planning table, (2) people represented interests at the table, and (3) ethical commitments defined who should be represented at the table” (p. 85). Negotiation was the highlight of Cervero and Wilson’s model, and its success depended on how the actors brought their power and interests to the table. Because human interactions were in part political, there need not be conflict for there to be negotiations. Additionally, the planners not only negotiated with their own interests, but also for the interest of those they represented, including the power relationships of those involved in the planning process.

Community-engaged scholarship has been guided by the ethos of ensuring mutual benefit for the partners in the collaboration (Boyer, 1990). Therefore, Cervero and Wilson's (2006) concept of ethical responsibility stressed the importance of "being politically answerable" to the stakeholders (p. 11). Despite the fact that each party on the negotiating table brought clear goals, it was their interest, power relations and the ethical commitment as espoused by the Cervero and Wilson model that impacted the outcome of engaged scholarship.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the review of literature related to engaged scholarship and power relationship. The chapter highlighted that it has become common practice for institutions of higher learning to work with the community in community-related projects. And community-university collaboration has become a desirable strategy for higher education institutions to connect with the community and help them solve some societal problems. To fulfill this role, many universities have created community-based research funds that are awarded to faculty for use in working with the community.

This collaboration has to incorporate reciprocity and mutuality in order to be defined as community-engaged scholarship. Despite institutions that have included the tenets of community-engaged scholarship in their mission, the task of actual incorporation of mutuality and reciprocity has depended on the faculty who carry out the projects. The chapter also discussed power differential as one of the key challenges that need to be negotiated to ensure that the collaboration was mutually beneficial to both the university and the community.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

The purpose of this study was to understand the community engagement phenomenon through the perspectives of faculty members involved in community-engaged projects. Of particular interest and concern was the extent to which grant funded projects embodied the two tenets of engaged scholarship, reciprocity and mutuality—as constructed by the faculty. Research questions that guided this study are:

1. How does a faculty understand and define the process of reciprocity and mutuality?
2. How does a faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in the engaged projects?
3. How does a faculty negotiate the project engagement process?

This chapter described the methodology utilized in exploring these research questions and has been organized into seven sections: (a) design of the study, (b) sample selection, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) validity and reliability, (f) researcher assumptions, and (g) general limitation of the methodology and chapter summary.

#### **Design of the Study**

While quantitative and qualitative inquiry have represented two legitimate ways to investigate community engaged scholarship, the latter offered the best approach to answer the research questions, given the depth of understanding needed (Creswell, 1998). Quantitative research begins with the premise that reality is fixed and measurable, and is based on the assumption that meaning grows out of the interaction of people with their

world, and that it fluctuates and changes (Merriam, 2002). Patton (1985) described qualitative research as “an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness” where the “understanding is an end in itself” and the approach does not seek to predict future happenings, “but to understand the nature of that setting” (p. 1).

Qualitative research can “help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2000) further described the approach as “a systematic, empirical strategy for answering questions about people in a particular social context” (p. 96).

Merriam (2002), suggested that, “If you want to understand a phenomenon, uncover the meaning of a situation for those involved, or delineate a process, then a qualitative design would be the most appropriate” (p. 11). The theoretical perspective of the study was underpinned by the constructivist epistemology (Crotty, 1998) against the backdrop that engaged scholarship is viewed as a social construct (Van de Ven, 2007). According to Schwandt (1997), constructivists posited that “knowledge of the world is not a simple reflection of what there is, but a set of social artifacts of what we make of what is there” (p. 20). These attributes and assumptions of qualitative designs made the approach most appropriate for studying the projects that involved engagement between university researchers and communities.

Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process and only secondarily with outcomes (Merriam, 1998), as was the case with this study, which explored the perspectives of how reciprocity and mutuality was integrated and negotiated in the community projects. Patton (1990) also suggested that the qualitative approach “is highly

appropriate in studying process because depicted process requires detailed description” (p. 95). The study sought an in-depth understanding of the engagement process between the university and community as perceived by the faculty members. This was reported in context using a detailed and thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Further, the approach facilitated the understanding rather than explaining reciprocity and mutuality from the perspective of the participants (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1988)

Qualitative research offered the best methodology to explore the little known phenomenon of how reciprocity and mutuality was incorporated in university-community partnerships, as perceived by faculty members (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, the inductive nature of the inquiry assumed the potential of the participants and the researcher to construct their own realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because of the philosophical assumption underlying qualitative research that meaning was created by individual’s interaction with their social environment, the researcher was the instrument of the inquiry in this study (Merriam, 1998; Merriam, and Simpson, 2000). This approach had the advantage of giving immediacy to the analysis process because the data collection processes were immediately responsive and analytical (Grbich, 2007). As “a process of understanding”, social phenomena this qualitative inquiry used different methods (Creswell, 1998, p. 15).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) discussed that qualitative research does not “have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own” (p. 6). Methods commonly found in educational research include: (a) basic qualitative study, which exemplified all the characteristics of qualitative research, (b) case study, which developed an in-depth analysis of a single case or multiple cases, (c) grounded theory, which developed a theory

grounded in data from the field, (d) ethnography, which described and interpreted a cultural and social group, and (e) phenomenology (Merriam, 1998). Because of the need “to understand the hidden meanings and the essence of an experience together with how” faculty members “make sense” of their experiences in community-engaged projects (Grbich, 2007, p. 84), this study utilized phenomenology.

### **Phenomenology.**

Phenomenology as a research tradition emerged from the philosophical perspectives of Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre (Cohen, 1987). According to Moustakas, (1994) the “understanding of meaningful concrete relations implicit in the original description of experience in the context of a particular situation is the primary target of phenomenological knowledge” (p. 14). Spiegelberg (1982) posited that phenomenology was a movement that lacks a rigid definition, and Crotty (1998) viewed the approach as both a theoretical perspective and a methodology. Phenomenology, as a theoretical perspective, was developed as an alternative to the empirically based positivist paradigm (Spiegelberg, 1982). As a methodology, phenomenology used interviews as a data collection tool (Merriam, 1996).

Edmund Husserl has been viewed as the father of phenomenology (Cohen, 1987; Koch, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1983; Scruton, 1995). Husserl developed transcendental phenomenology with the intention of exposing the absolute truth using description from in-depth exploration of reality (McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis, 2009; Cohen, 1987; Dreyfus, 1988).

This study used the hermeneutic phenomenology developed by Husserl's student called Heidegger (Cohen, 1987). Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology and Husserl's transcendental phenomenology differed in their view on background understanding of the phenomenon being explored and the role of presuppositions in the interpretation of data (Koch, 1996).

### **Two traditions in phenomenology.**

Husserl viewed phenomenology as path for attaining true meaning from in-depth exploration of reality (Cohen, 1987), and was credited with introducing the study of lived experience (Koch, 1995). He advocated the use of phenomenological *bracketing*, which was the process of setting aside any predetermined ideas in order to expose the true essence of the lived experience also called *epoché* (Moustakas, 1994). According to Patton (1990), data gathered in lengthy interviews that described the shared experiences of informants are "bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon" (p. 70) when using the Husserlian phenomenology.

Heidegger described hermeneutics as a "way of studying all human activities" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 2) that was concerned with interpretation and uncovering experiences (Mulhall, 1993). The focus of hermeneutic phenomenology was creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding from details of human experience as it is lived (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991), and replaced the Husserlian themes of consciousness and perception (Nicholson, 1997). Heidegger (1998) contended that the world of human beings was always one of practical experience which was described by Richardson, (1963), as a "profound intimacy" with the environment (p. 52).

Interpreting phenomena according to the Heidegger (1962) involved examining and re-exploring data for further possibilities until the data was saturated. These ever-expanding circles with infinite possibility of ideas was known as the hermeneutic circle; which stops spiraling at the moment when the exploration has reached a place of sensible meaning (Annells, 1996; Kvale, 1996; Koch, 1995). The four constructs that compose the hermeneutical circle include: (a) what happens prior to reflection also known as *Dasein*, (b) the shared described as understanding that we already have with one another or pre-understanding, (c) the assumptions and knowledge we already have about a phenomenon or background, and (d) construction of knowledge through dialogue or co-construction (Heidegger, 1962; Koch, 1995).

*Dasein* was the foundation upon which Heidegger (1962) grounded his view, and he posited that “*Dasein*, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being—a relationship which itself is one of Being” (p. 12). Therefore, meaning emerged because of the unitary relation between human beings and the world. This therefore meant that *Dasein* did not sit as a separate entity with a world around it that was being explored, and must be understood from all experiences of all human beings.

Pre-understanding was an important construct in the hermeneutical circle because understanding was a fundamental form of being. Understanding was about how individuals construct their existence and not merely how we know the world. Understanding was also a fundamental form of being; (Polkinghorne, 1983). Pre-understanding was described as a state of knowledge that pre-exists the interaction with an idea or the occurrence of an event being explored (Heidegger, 1962). An example of

what the literature implies was that when identifying a gap in research and justifying a study prior to the research, pre-understanding was often the basis.

Heidegger suggested that consciousness was a creation of historically lived experience(s), which Koch (1995) described it as an inseparable harmony of a being and the world. Pre-understanding was about the “meaning and organization of a culture” (Koch, 1995, p. 831). Heidegger further argued that interpretive research that is free of researcher subjectivity was ideally unattainable because pre-understanding cannot be fully “bracketed” or eliminated.

Heidegger (1962) hypothesized that it was only possible to conduct a hermeneutic inquiry if one has some background of the phenomenon being explored. Background transmitted from one individual to another includes the knowledge and thoughts about a phenomenon or how to interpret the world. These prior knowledge or fore-structure often influenced how humans understand phenomena (Koch, 1995) and ensured that the questions asked are pertinent (Thompson, 1990).

Heidegger (1962) argued that it was not possible to bracket the world around a being, and that the world around constructs the being. This meant that while the world in which one lived, the culture, and background constructed the essence of the person, the individual’s background and experiences construct the world. Additionally, knowledge construction and meaning making was a result of dialogue between subjects and the researcher (Koch, 1999). A relationship, Walters (1995) described as co-construction which helps in the interpretation of artifacts. This interpretive process can also explore phenomena or cultural activities through language or texts using the Heideggerian phenomenological approach (Annells, 1996; Grbich, 2007; Kvale, 1996).

Hermeneutic phenomenology as a vehicle for exploration in this study was particularly valuable in helping to make the often inaccessible phenomenon of reciprocity and mutuality more open to interpretation using the hermeneutic circle engagement (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). The hermeneutic circle's "openly dialogical nature: the returning to the object of inquiry again and again, each time with an increased understanding and a more complete interpretive account" made Heideggerian phenomenological approach most appropriate for this study (Packer, 1985, p. 1091).

### **Sample Selection**

Silverman (2005) suggested that qualitative researchers tend to favor detail over scope because in-depth understanding was more important than being able to generalize findings across large numbers of people. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research studies have had a tendency of utilizing a smaller number of participants or even a single participant in some cases. The selection of the subjects was rarely done randomly, but instead done purposefully using defined criteria.

Maxwell (1996) suggested the use of purposeful sampling when persons need to be chosen because they were in a position to provide significant information that cannot be availed by other sources. Additionally, Merriam (2002) asserted that purposive or purposeful sampling was the process of selecting the participants from whom most can be learned. The selection of participants in this study was purposefully done from a pool of faculty members from institutions that are members of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium in the US.

The specific selection was based on a criteria defined by the study, an approach described by Patton (2002) as criterion-based sampling. The criteria for this study was that the participant must be a faculty member who: (a) was a recipient of a grant intended for working with the community engagement; (b) has completed the project(s) and received the full grant disbursement; and (c) has fully documented and disseminated the research.

The records of the grant recipients were retrieved online from their respective institutions and the abstracts examined to identify the ones that met the criteria threshold. In addition to their academic discipline a deliberate attempt was made to ensure diversity of the sample in terms of career stage and type of career. Those selected were contacted using an introductory letter that was sent to the contact information provided in their project and publications. Twenty one prospective participants met the criteria, and were contacted; only thirteen responded favorably.

Thirteen participants were interviewed and the interviews were audio taped, and then transcribed. Out of the thirteen sets of data, eleven were analyzed and the other two were not used in the study. Two sets of data were not used in the study. In one case, the participant declined to answer a number of pertinent questions during the interview. In the second case, the respondent requested that her interview be excluded from the study. She opted out because the project she discussed was ongoing, and it was in the interest of her continued interaction with the community they were working with that the information shared should not be used as data.

Table 1. *Summary Description of Participants*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Topical Area</b>	<b>Appointment</b>
Betty	Female	Education	Environment	Tenure Track
Stella	Female	Health Sciences	Health education	Research
Emily	Female	Health Sciences	Health education	Clinical
Grace	Female	Gender Studies	Leadership	Joint and Affiliations
Irene	Female	Political Science	Political participation	Tenure Track
Kate	Female	Education	Non-profit	Tenure Track
Lucas	Male	Family and Consumer Sciences	Economic empowerment, and housing	Tenure Track
Nancy	Female	Political Science	Youth empowerment	Tenure Track
Victor	Male	Education	Professional education	Tenure Track
Tina	Female	Social Work	Human rights	Tenure Track
William	Male	Social Work	Human rights	Tenure Track

The composition of the participants included three male and eight female faculty members whose ages ranged from the 40s to the 60s. The faculty members were made up of Whites and African-Americans that were affiliated to 7 different tier-one research universities. The research institutions represented diverse geographical areas in the USA.

## **Data Collection**

Glesne (2006) suggested that “ideally, the qualitative researcher draws on some combination of techniques to collect data, rather than a single technique” (p. 36) and this study used in-depth interviews and project reports as the key sources of data to enhance the richness of the data and validity of the findings respectively (Creswell, 1998). The interviews were characterized by an informal conversation that allowed the researcher and the participant to be highly responsive to each other while adapting to changes that emerged (Patton, 1985). The participants were given pseudonyms that had no meaning in the lives of the participants to conceal their identity as stated in the consent form. The following pseudonyms were allocated to the research participants: Betty, Emily, Grace, Irene, Kate, Lucas, Nancy, Stella, Tina, Victor and William.

### **Qualitative research interviews.**

Kvale (1996) described qualitative research interviews as “attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 1). He further suggested that an interview was “literally an interview, an inter-change of views between two persons having conversation about a theme of mutual interest” (p. 14). This study specifically used in-depth, qualitative interviews that were informed by the hypothesis that the viewpoint of others was significant, unavoidable, and can be illuminated (Patton, 2002). According to van Manen, “the art of the researcher in the hermeneutic interview is to keep the question open, ... to keep himself or herself and the interviewee orientated to the substance of the thing being questioned” (p. 98).

As suggested by Kvale (1996), the interviews were characterized by open-ended questions guided by an interview protocol containing questions that were explored without a definite order for the purpose of eliciting richer responses. Additionally, semi-structured questions and conversations were used to probe for deeper meaning and understanding while providing a smooth transition from one topic to the next. The initial interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes, and observations were made and recorded as field notes and journal entries. The entries included actual occurrences, observer's comments, and participant's actions, which were used in tandem with the interview transcriptions for analysis and triangulation (Merriam, 1988).

The initial and follow-up interviews were conducted between 22<sup>nd</sup> May and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The responses given by the first three participants to be interviewed, specifically in regard to the second overarching question — How does a faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in the engaged projects? — described when, instead of how, reciprocity and mutuality was integrated. Because of the inclinations of the respondents to the interview questions, the second overarching question was changed from “how” to “when” in the question guide and subsequent interviews.

In addition to the interviews, feedback was sought from the participants both in cases that needed clarification and themes needed to be validated by the participants through member checks (Corben, 1999; Maxwell, 1992; Merriam, 1998). As suggested by van Manen (1990), the identified themes became the subject of reflection in the member checks which were done through the phone and emails.

### **Project documentation.**

Documents are a convenient secondary source, because they already exist in the situation, according to Merriam (1998). The secondary source acted both as a source of prior knowledge, as suggested by Koch (1995), and as the basis of data verification (Patton, 2002). One of the criteria for selecting participants for this study was that the participant must have published a report. Based on the premise that there was a need to verify data collected using different methods, the secondary data gathered from the documents was used to confirm the consistency of the data generated from the interview feedback. This process has been described as triangulation, and contributed to the verification and validation of qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002).

The advantage of documents as a data source was that they are not affected by the presence of the investigator, and thus do not need relationship building. Additionally, reference can be made to the documents as many times as needed to confirm details and clarify gray areas. Merriam (1998), stated that the reports written by the faculty could be a secondary source of data, as they could also “furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development, and so on” (p. 126).

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis, according to Merriam (1998) was essentially the meaning making process that allows the researcher to construct credible and reliable findings from a data set. Bogdan and Biklen (1992), suggested that data analysis involves “systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable

you to present what you have discovered to others” (p. 153). The process began during data collection (Wolcott, 2001), and required the ability to inductively and deductively identify patterns in order to develop interpretations (Ruona, 2005). According to Patton (1985), “analysis strives for depth of understanding” (p. 1), therefore this study used the constant comparative method to achieve a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the faculty members (Patton, 2002). The interviews conducted elicited varied responses which were thematically analyzed under the respective guiding questions using the constant comparative method.

The constant comparative method was the classification and comparison of relevant units of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which according to Merriam (1998), “involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts; between inductive and deductive reasoning, between descriptions and interpretations” (p. 178). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that “the process of constant comparison stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories” (p. 341). It involved comparing and contrasting techniques of categorizing themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Merriam (1998) suggested that constructing categories “begins with reading the first interview transcript, the first set of field notes, the first document collected in the study” (p. 181). The interview was sorted and arranged (Creswell, 2003); this provided an opportunity to get immersed into the data during transcription (Patton, 2002). Notes were being taken while transcribing the interviews after which the verbatim transcription was verified by re-listening to audio files (Merriam, 1998).

Moustakas (1994) suggested that the essence of the meaning is usually expressed in a word, phrase, sentence or paragraph. After reading the first interview, the ideas or thoughts were noted and organized into separate “meaningful chunks”, or data bits, using a basic word-processing program (Ruona, 2005, p. 251). The data were then analyzed in two levels; within a participant’s data, and across participants. The data from episodes in the interview transcript or field notes were compared with other incidents within the same data set to identify tentative categories within the context of power relations.

Based on Merriam’s (1998) premise that “categories should reflect the purpose of the research” (p. 183), the analysis generated categories, while keeping the research questions in mind. Key words extracted from the research questions were assigned to the categories to ensure congruency of the categories with the study purpose (Grbich, 2007). These words formed the category descriptor or code, and the ones identified in the first few interviews were used to review the interview guide in the subsequent interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), notably the second overarching research question.

After descriptively coding the data generated from interview transcripts, the codes were then rigorously analyzed by comparing incidents in the data to different incidents, incidents to categories, and then categories to different categories while making notes about emergent constructed perspectives (Creswell, 2005; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The process involved constantly comparing and contrasting various successive segments of the data using a content-specific scheme until the data was saturated. The scheme was developed from Stanton’s (2007) model and the cyclic movement, of questioning and then re-examining the text, resulted in an ever-expanding circle of ideas and is called the hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 1962).

Finally, comparisons were made between incidents, categories and notes across participants looking for patterns (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The codes were compared to find consistencies and differences until the category was saturated (Strauss, 1987). The analytical process of using the hermeneutic circle was unique to the Heidegger's phenomenological approach. The researcher was part of this circle, moving repeatedly between interpretations of parts of the text and interpretations of the whole text, representing an emerging understanding of the phenomenon. This means that the interpreter participates in making the data. The process ensured an exhaustive interrogation of the participant's perspectives, thus creating deeper meaning-making and a fuller understanding of reciprocity and mutuality, while contributing to the transparency and trustworthiness of the research findings (Heidegger, 1962; Koch, 1996; Moustakas, 1994).

### **Trustworthiness**

Research findings are often evaluated based on their validity and reliability (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), even though the credibility and quality of the qualitative research has been greatly contingent on the "skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Merriam (1998) suggested that the issue of validity and reliability "can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" (p. 199).

Reliability addressed the question of the extent to which a study can be reproduced with the same findings as the original. The highlight of a qualitative study is the interpretation and applicability the data collected. This was supported by Creswell's

(1994) assertions that “the best studies have a strong inquiry procedure” (p. 27).

Importantly, the inability to replicate a study does not render its findings worthless (Merriam, 2002).

There are two forms of validity, external and internal validity. External validity is the extent to which the study’s findings will generalize to other situations (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). However, the intention of qualitative research precludes generalizability (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993; Yin, 1994). According to Merriam and Simpson (1995) internal validity addressed the question “How congruent are one’s findings with reality?” and the extent to which the findings provided the intended description of participants’ interpretations of the world (p. 101). This study attempted to confront the issue of internal validity by using three of the strategies suggested by Merriam (1998). First, the study utilized two data sources by triangulating the participant’s feedback with documented records. Second, the understanding of the data was confirmed with the participants through member checking (Maxwell, 1992; Merriam, 1998). The provisional themes were also repeated in follow-up interviews to elicit more feedback from participants (Cho & Trent, 2006) while gray areas in the findings were verified (Patton, 2002). Finally, researcher subjectivities were reflected on at the beginning and during the study (Merriam, 1998).

### **Personal Orientation and Assumptions**

Qualitative research has been suitable for conducting a study which aimed at the understanding of any phenomenon associated with human perspectives, but it has not been without challenges in the form of subjectivity caused by the researcher’s biases and assumptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Patton (1985) noted that because subjectivity was

unavoidable, it was imperative to be aware and acknowledge how one's perspective affects an inquiry. According to Kvale (1996), these personal orientations should be made explicit because, "Unacknowledged bias may entirely invalidate the results of an interview inquiry. A recognized bias or subjective perspective may, however, come to highlight specific aspects of the phenomena investigated, bring new dimensions forward, and contribute to a multi-perspective construction of knowledge" (p. 286).

Researchers are human beings and have their own understandings, convictions, and conceptual orientations about what they hear and observe (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The Heideggerian phenomenological approach adapted by this study does not bracket the researcher's personal experiences which form part of the meaning construction and assumptions (Crotty, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Peshkin, 1988). This researcher seeks perspectives rather than the truths, and has views largely underpinned by assertions (Patton, 1985). According to Stake (1995), when we make assertions, "we draw from understandings deep within us, understandings whose derivations may be some hidden mix of personal experience, scholarship," or "assertions of other researchers" (p. 12).

Therefore as a researcher, I brought my own perceived definition of engaged scholarship into this study. I subscribed to the notion that that everyone constructs meaning from their experiences and interaction with the world (Crotty, 1998). My definition was influenced by my attitude, which has been molded and informed by my past experience, specifically as a participant in community projects administered by institutions, my close association with the topic of engaged scholarship, and the stories I have heard from my peers over time.

I defined community engaged scholarship as community-based research whose fundamental goal should be to optimize mutuality and reciprocity in every facet of the interaction between the researcher and the participant; a research where the outcome was secondary to the experience of the process. Further, I believed that genuine collaboration touched on all the dimension of the research process and is characterized by multidirectional sharing of experience and knowledge with the intention of mutually benefiting the participants. These perspectives introduced biases to the study; an important construct of the hermeneutical circle in the Heideggerian phenomenological approach (Heidegger, 1962). Additionally, as a graduate student studying the perspectives of faculty members, my insider status may also offers its own subjectivities.

Merriam et al., (2001), described the insider or outsider status in a research process as the role of the researchers in various aspects of the inquiry relative to the subjects being studied or the phenomenon being explored. An insider can be someone of the same language, the same ethnic group, or the same profession (Bartunek & Louis, 1996). I considered myself as an insider during the data collection process in because I was a part of the university or institution.

My insider (emic) perspective provided me with an understanding of the normal processes of applying for faculty research grants, and helped me in conducting the research. Having had an experience on an actual project, working as a research assistant for a faculty member, I was privy to some of the challenges involved, including the institutional protocols. This knowledge helped the study place some of the perspectives espoused by the participants in context. Conversely, I also had an outsider status being a doctoral candidate interviewing faculty members, a foreign student interviewing faculty

in U.S. higher education institutions, and a Black male working with participants from a pool of predominantly White faculty.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed the qualitative design of my study. The section also discussed the epistemological underpinning of the study. Phenomenological research, which was the methodology adapted by the study is described. Specifically, the use of Heideggerian phenomenological hermeneutics was justified and juxtaposed against Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. This chapter highlighted the procedures used for data collection and data analysis. The chapter also discussed issues of validity and reliability in addition to reflecting on the researcher's personal orientation and assumptions that influenced the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to understand the community engagement phenomenon through the perspectives of faculty members involved in community-engaged projects. The study was guided by the following research questions: (1) How does a faculty understand and define the process of reciprocity and mutuality? (2) How does a faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in the engaged projects? (3) How does a faculty negotiate the project engagement process?

This chapter will introduce the faculty members who participated in this study and will present findings that resulted from an analysis of their responses to interview questions. The projects undertaken by the faculty will be described and a summary of the research findings discussed, including a summative wrap up of the areas discussed in this chapter.

#### **Participants and Project Description**

Thirteen participants were interviewed. The responses from the faculty were audio taped, then transcribed. Out of the thirteen sets of data that were audio taped and transcribed, eleven were analyzed, and the other two were not used in the study. The participants were given pseudonyms that had no meaning, out of respect to the participants to conceal their identity, as was stated in the consent form. The following pseudonyms were allocated to the research participants: Betty, Emily, Grace, Irene, Kate, Lucas, Nancy, Stella, Tina, Victor and William.

Overall, the community-engaged projects explored were diverse in nature. The projects were also propelled by different specific objectives; even though they categorically seemed homogeneous, considering that they met the set criteria of selection. Interestingly, the faculty utilized different processes towards community engagement, and their projects were geared toward varied outcomes. Table 2 presents a summary of the project descriptions.

Table 2. *Summary of Project Descriptions*

Topical Area	Area of focus in the community based project
Community Health	a) Preventive health and health education
	b) Economic empowerment and literacy
Gender Issues	c) Leadership and empowerment
Civic Education	d) Political participation
	e) Participation and youth empowerment
Education	f) Non-profit organizations management
	g) Environmental management
	h) Continuing professional education
Community Welfare	i) Child support enforcement
	j) Immigrant community, human rights and culture
	k) Economic empowerment, frugal spending and housing

Some of the projects were interventions or further research recommended from previous research studies, others were driven by personal life experiences of the faculty members, three were community-based participatory research, and one was a community-

based project, while the others were qualitative and quantitative studies that focused on the community. For example, one of the projects has looked at how poor people who lived in a certain community have survived the difficult economic environment and if they were saving any money for the future.

Another example of a community-based project was a project that has been looking at child support enforcement; another project explored the challenges faced by refugees in their resettlement and prescribed interventions to mitigate the gaps that existed in the resettlement, literacy social integration and language acquisition; a different project was an intervention arising from interactions between the faculty and non-profit organization leaders that focused on how to improve their board communication and interaction among others competencies.

### **Synopsis of the Findings**

The transcribed interview data from the participant's experiences was organized according to the guiding research questions, and the following is a synopsis of the findings for the three research questions. The first research question explored how the participants understood and defined the process of reciprocity and mutuality. For this question, the findings showed that reciprocity and mutuality were defined differently depending on the nature of the projects, the experiences of the participants, the processes involved, and the output of the project being undertaken, but overall the definitions as constructed by the faculty implied a sense of equal benefit to both the researcher and the community representative or participants in projects undertaken.

The second question, which focused on how the faculty integrated reciprocity and mutuality in their engaged projects, the findings showed that the projects included the two principals of community engaged scholarship. While attempting to respond to the question on how they incorporated mutuality and reciprocity, the faculty inadvertently and repeatedly indicated that it depends on the phase of the process involved. In response to the modified question — When does a faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in the engaged projects? —the faculty asserted that mutuality and reciprocity were incorporated at different phases of the projects' process, using different approaches that were defined or informed by the context under which they were carried out.

In response to the third overarching research question that sought to understand how the participants negotiated the project engagement process, the interviews showed that the interaction between the faculty and the participants was relational. These relationships were characterized by power differentials between the researcher and the community or individual community members, including that of the institutions they represented.

Because of these factors, the study found that there were indeed negotiations at different levels between the stakeholders in the community projects. Common in all the projects was the negotiation between the researcher and the community members. Some of the negotiations were vibrant and involving, while others were passive and dominated by one partner.

Table 3. *Summary of the Research Findings*

Themes	Sub-themes
Perception of reciprocity and mutuality	Nature of the research
	What faculty do and what they know
Integrating reciprocity and mutuality	Conception of the research idea
	Formulating the research questions
	Designing the study
	Data collection
	Data analysis
Negotiating the engagement process	Dissemination of findings
	Insistent negotiation
	Subtle persuasion
Factors affecting the integration of reciprocity and mutuality	Submitting to the demands of the community
	Funding
	Time demands
	Positionality
	Institutional culture and reward system
Access and response	
Historical experiences	

The participants reported to have ceded ground during negotiations because they perceived that they had a lot more to lose if there was an impasse. This faculty members' submission to the communities' demands was also compounded by factors such as the

time frame defined by the funding institutions, lack of sufficient funding to restart the process with a different population, pressure to complete the project for publication or presentation and use of the results of the project as evidence for promotion and tenure.

In the interviews, it emerged that the respondents had common challenges that related to their positionality relative to that of their community partners. Specifically, issues touching on their perceived privilege in terms of resources, their association with the university, social cultural differences and issues related to race and gender.

The participants reported on how these factors unwittingly shaped the nature of their projects, their experiences, what they did in their projects and how they went about doing it. In some cases these factors even determined how long the project took including the resultant output. These factors were, in some cases, barriers to the actualization of mutuality and reciprocity. Table 3 presents a summary of the findings.

### **Perception of Reciprocity and Mutuality**

The first research question discussed how the participants define mutuality and reciprocity. The participants gave a unique perspective of the terms mutuality and reciprocity based on the context of their projects and their understanding. Most of the respondents used reciprocity and mutuality interchangeably, and some even used one to describe or define the other. Despite the difference in their responses, they all had three key thematic denominators that influenced how they defined mutuality and reciprocity: (a) the nature of the study, and (b) their procedural and professional knowledge.

#### **Nature of the research.**

The participants' definition of reciprocity and mutuality was greatly influenced by the nature of the study. Specifically, how the study or project was framed, and the

demands or gains it would place on the researcher and the community participants. The primary purpose of the study and the nature of the interactions of those involved, including the context in which the projects were undertaken, also shaped the definition of reciprocity and mutuality.

Tina defined reciprocity as “the ingredient of a joint venture between the community and an institution that will equally benefit both parties”. Grace described reciprocity and mutuality as “a clause in a proposition that defines how the engagement between partners should be.” The nature of the study or project in which the participants were involved in also determined how they defined mutuality and reciprocity. The participants also described mutuality and reciprocity as a process of giving back to the community. For example Irene described mutuality and reciprocity as a process of “giving back to the participants of a project in equal measure to their efforts while making gains as a researcher or scholar.”

The respondents suggested that in the very nature of community-based research there should be a relationship that ensures everyone involved in the partnership benefitted from it. They described this relationship as reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Lucas specifically reiterated that community-based research should be “rewarding to all those involved in order to ensure that the participants co-operate with future researchers” and according to him, the only way to achieve this was through “reciprocity and mutuality which defines the ideal relationship between the researcher and their subjects in the world of research.”

Additionally, William said that “the very interactive nature of this type of research influences how we perceive it, and we tend to look at what each party will achieve at the end of the day and by extension how we define the relationship”. He underscored that the nature of the research influenced how he defined reciprocity and mutuality.

Generally, the participant argued that the process, including the nature of interactions involved in community based research, depicts and defines reciprocity. Grace reiterated that “reciprocity is a manifestation of the extent to which the researcher or one doing the project involves the participants and rewards their effort while respecting their positionality.” The participant further said that “the product or intervention that results from such a collaborative activity cannot easily reflect reciprocity but may to some extent show mutual benefit.” This notion was supported by Irene, who argued that the outcome of the community-engaged process was essential in defining and determining reciprocity and mutuality. Irene also underscored that “how the outcome benefits the stakeholders in the research process shows equity and describes mutuality of the relationship”. Lucas used an analogy to distinguish and define mutuality and reciprocity. He asserted that:

Research that involves the community is like a journey of partners; the partners are the researcher who represents their institution, and the community involved in the project. This journey is normally tough, and the participants have different destinations, which in our case are the unique outcomes each one anticipates to get. This could be as basic as incentives to participate, or as complex as a cure for an ailment. Importantly, we have the means to get there, which includes all the processes involved. How the two parties work to ensure that the means are

effective enough to get them to the destination reflects reciprocity, while the destination is the mutual benefit.

Irene also argued that “to a very big extent the level of engagement or mutuality in a project will be determined by the deliverables in the project, and this is more so in the perspective of the non-academic public.” Nancy highlighted that when you have approached a community and have asked them to be part of a project that you claim will benefit them the first thing they have sought to know is

How will the research be done? What processes are involved? What beneficial outcome it will have for humanity and specifically the participants? Some will even go as far as asking for incentives before they participate in the projects or even engage in the initial dialogue.

Nancy added that

It is how you answer the questions raised by the subjects that determines and defines mutuality and reciprocity. It is not merely the answer you give, but the extent to which the projects deliver on their concerns, and this has to be convincingly demonstrated and followed through. In short, the community members should equitably benefit, and the researchers should also get what they set out to achieve.

In addition to the process, the participants described the outcome as a focal aspect in defining reciprocity and mutuality.

The projects described by the participants were characterized by a myriad of outputs or products. A common theme across all the responses was the fact that in every project, there were expectations both from the researcher and the community. When

writing the proposal for their projects, all the participants stipulated expectations or outcomes, most of which they reported attaining. All the participants underscored that they were all committed to fulfilling the expected goals. For example, in Tina's project, the intention was to help the refugees settle in their new country and community better; and this outcome gave definition to that project.

Generally, the participants argued that the extent to which their proposed outcomes benefited the community was used to define mutuality. Despite the process of achieving the determined goals being a basis for defining mutuality and reciprocity, the outcome was what the community talked about more. For example, Lucas asserted that

I put in place a plan that was inclusive in every way. I really engaged the community. Despite the numerous involvement and inclusion that I ensured during the project, the community was just focused on the outcome. They kept on talking about the output.

Nancy also said that during her interactions with the community, the outcome of the projects was the major concern to the community members. They were not keen on the processes, and reminded of her promises to ensure she delivered them. Even as Nancy's participants were being interviewed, most of them were asking when the output of the process will be ready.

#### **What faculty do and what they know.**

The respondents used procedures undertaken during their research to descriptively define reciprocity and mutuality using scholarly adjectives. The respondents, who comprised faculty members that were directly or indirectly involved in community engaged scholarship as a discipline, described mutuality and reciprocity using models.

Some even directly quoted definitions put forth by scholars in the field. For example Nancy said that

Reciprocity and mutuality is a collaboration that incorporates the tenets espoused by Boyer, and ensures that at the end of the involvement between the community and the university or the community and an organized structured group... everyone is left feeling like they participated, and they have gained from the process.

Nancy added that it was only because of her extensive reading about issues related to community based research that she was able to define the two terms.

William defined reciprocity and mutuality as “the key components in the interaction between the community and the subjects while doing participatory research within the community, which is intended to mutually benefit all the partners”. He added that before he started the project, he did a literature review which clearly highlighted the characteristics of such a mutual relationship and the knowledge gained has influenced his perception of community engagement. He also said that he had done some community based work and research before, and if he was asked to define what community engagement was at that time, the response would have been different from his present understanding.

Interestingly, Betty said that she defined the concept of mutuality and reciprocity the way she was taught by her professor in class. She affirmed that the course she took shaped her world view, and how she defined community based scholarship. According to Betty

You cannot just define a phenomenon. There must be a source of the knowledge we use to make such descriptions. I was introduced to the concept of reciprocity and mutuality in class. The concept was elaborately explained, and my professor used practical examples to reinforce her definition of the concept of mutuality and reciprocity. I have a vivid memory of the class interactions, and will define the concepts in the same way I was taught.

She attributed her definition to the knowledge transferred to her in class, and insisted that community-engaged scholarship was a field whose tenets included reciprocity and mutuality. She added that the two concepts defined what community-engaged projects should perpetuate.

### **Integration of Reciprocity and Mutuality into the Projects**

The participants attested that the attributes of the community influenced the extent to which the community members were involved in the project processes, and the stage at which they were engaged. Some of these attributes were strengths, while others limited the extent to which reciprocity and mutuality were integrated into the projects. The process of integrating these two tenets was also informed and guided by a myriad of underpinning philosophies including experiences. The participants attested that the integration of reciprocity and mutuality was generally influenced by the point of engagement with the community.

This integration of mutuality and reciprocity was done at different levels of the research or project and the participants discussed five points at which the community was engaged: (a) conception of the research idea, (b) formulating the research questions, (c) designing the study, (d) data collection, and (e) dissemination of findings or output.

### **Conception of the research idea.**

When the participants were asked how they integrated reciprocity and mutuality into their research, they indicated that they actually included the community to formulate the research idea. The participants argued that the community was involved in the conception of the research idea in different ways for example reviewing literature related to the subject area.

Most of the participants sat down with the community and came up with the research idea. In one case, the participant was part of the community and initiated the idea as an insider before crossing over and carrying out the research. Generally, there was an agenda directing the conversations about the conception of the idea, which was being directed by the faculty. According to William, who came up with the research idea in conjunction with the community, it all started in a class that William taught. As part of the class assignment, the students, who came from diverse backgrounds, were required to team up in groups of four and choose a community issue that they wanted to explore. For the purposes of meeting and executing the assignment efficiently, the students were allowed to choose their own team members. It turned out that one of the groups was not only made up members of the same gender, but also the same race, and they happened to live close to each other. The group chose to look for a research topic that addressed the everyday issues they faced in their community. According to William

this class interaction marked the beginning of a study that has defined my scholarship and work with the community... as much as I feel that I have really engaged the community as far as research is concerned, I am fully cognizant that I

started this journey with the community, and we have all learned and benefitted along the way.

The team that started the project continued to be the community representatives in subsequent interactions, in addition to providing the faculty with access to the community.

Irene also described how the community was involved in the formulation of the problem statement. This happened during a conference that brought together practitioners who were interested in community-based projects. In one of the sessions attended by some community representatives, the practitioners sought to know whether the model Irene was discussing as part of her presentation could be used to solve a problem that had been affecting their youth. It was in the process of attempting to address this concern that Irene, after further research, conversations, and input from the community, decided to initiate the project.

Grace asserted that the community was fully involved in coming up with the research idea. Interestingly, Grace was part of the community, and had previously experienced the social problem that she later sought to address as a faculty member. Grace sought to address the issue after she moved out of the community and joined the university system as a non-teaching employee, then went to graduate school. She argued that

As much as I did the project as an outsider, the social problem that I sought to demystify was what I lived through for the better part of my adult life, and at times when I interviewed my participants and they told me their stories I fully

related with them... it was so hard to listen to some of their shared experiences, because they brought vivid memories of my past experiences.

Tina's interest in the project she undertook was also as a result of her lived experiences. Her experience as an immigrant triggered her interest in helping immigrants overcome the challenges of settling in a new country.

According to Betty, the community contributed to the shaping of the research idea when she met with the community leaders. During the meetings, she gave a presentation detailing what the research was about. The community leaders in return asked many questions, and gave very resourceful suggestions. Betty then examined all the suggestions made by the community and adopted one suggestion "that did not have a profound effect on the original idea I had in mind, and it gave the community a feeling that they were consulted".

#### **Formulating the research questions.**

The participants said that they came up with the questions independently, and argued that these were driven and molded by the restrictions of funding requirements and time constraints. Victor said that "we didn't get new questions; we looked at two questionnaires from existing studies... so most of the questions in the instrument were like copy and paste". According to him, one of the previous studies they got the questions from was a study that he was involved with as part of his graduate school dissertation study, while the other questions were extracted from an instrument validation exercise that he was part of.

Lucas described the question formulation as one that was done in conjunction with the state agencies, who suggested the questions when they were going through some

law changes. He said that “it was the suggested questions that I edited based on what was possible to achieve and those that were a quick win for my tenure process”.

Tina attested that the community played a great role in the process of formulating the research questions. This was done by having candid conversations with the refugee resettlement organizations in the area, about problems facing the communities. After talking to the organizations, Tina met with the opinion leaders in the community through an informal workshop where the participants came up with suggested questions. These questions, according to Tina, were based on the thematic areas informed by the social challenges identified during an earlier conversation she had with the community members. Tina said that “the discussions were driven by the leaders and they all endorsed the comprehensive questions and gave me the leverage to break it down into executable components.”

In addition to the question formulation, the meeting was aimed at extending the network and building rapport with the community representatives, so that as the project progresses, emergent issues can be identified and addressed through modification of the research questions. According to Irene

The process of coming up with the research questions was a combined effort between me and the former director of our Institute of Non-profit, who in this case could be regarded as the community; at least in the engaged scholarship perspective. The questions that guided the study were an aggregate democratic resolve of all the stakeholders who participated in the process.

Irene further said that the research questions were formulated using an inclusive process, and she explained that

What we did first was a small pilot with community leaders, 16 of them. We did the study, and they gave us feedback about some of the questions they thought will be appropriate. We changed a few things, and adjusted a few areas, then after the pilot study we spoke with the community leaders again. We asked them questions, and they gave us very good feedback on how to improve the questionnaire.

The participants appreciated that the research question formulation was a technical process of converting the research problem into a researchable form. For example, William stated that once the social problem was identified with the help of the community, “the rest was up to me, I had to go back to the drawing board and establish the research questions that would guide the study”. William then came up with a number of questions but “being cognizant of the limitations of the grant and the time I had at hand, I narrowed them down to three achievable ones and sought the affirmation of the community partners”.

Nancy acknowledged that the community members had made enough sacrifice by accepting to be part of the project. She asserted that

Once you have identified the problem, it is not prudent to burden the community member, who is often a busy person with the technicalities of question formulation as prescribed by academia. What is important is to capture the salient concerns of the community, and articulate in a way that meets the standard research layout.

Kate justified her inclusion of the community in the research question formulation to a historical experience. What was unique about her case was that she strongly felt that if

the whole process was not participatory, the progress in her study would have been slowed down. Despite not engaging the community in the formative stages of the question formulation, Kate invited the community to “pick the relevant question from a menu of 20 robust questions she had prepared”.

Stella said that the project was a follow-up of her dissertation study, and the questions were part of what she left out of her dissertation, since it was not achievable at that point due to lack of funding. She said that

The topic had generally been my passion for a long time and it started during my graduate studies; I even did a pilot for it and the need for funds to accomplish the study was one of the reality checks from the pilot. I fully sought the input of the community when I started off my dissertation.

She added that the availability of the funding that she got was an opportunity to answer the questions that she had held on for a long time. After interacting with the community and determining their level of education, Stella strongly felt that the question formulation should be left to the experts, considering that she had to take a couple of research classes in graduate school to prepare her to formulate such research questions.

### **Designing the study.**

The participants involved the community in different ways when designing the research. Some fully included the community, some used a pre-existing template from studies that involved the community and propelled the project, while others chose to do the designing independently and co-opting the community for a buy-in in its complete state.

Grace wanted the project to produce a publishable peer-reviewed paper, and thus she used her behavioral science knowledge, and the expertise she had in research to design the study. She then shared the completed design, including variables, with the community for their feedback and input. Grace asserted that

I was hoping for something longitudinal, but I was worried about data problems, specifically the amount of data that I would require, so I was just going for a cross-sectional. It was basically based on the data I thought I would get the community to give me, so I gave them a list of all the variables I wanted, and it took about a year for them to get back to me about what was possible. In the end I got something and it was very limited. This dictated the research design, which ended up being a descriptive study and was endorsed by the community.

Grace underscored that her effort was mainly to get support and ownership of the project from the community, while ensuring they keep the design within the parameters of the variables that she wanted to use in the project.

Tina used parameters from both her own personal experiences as an immigrant and the thematic variables she had got from exploring literature. Her study design was also supported by outcome of a pilot study she had done. Tina asserted that her study was “divided into the various themes that we found needed to be addressed in respect of the specific community issues”. She emphasized that

The community issues were thoroughly discussed and agreed upon in one of the several meetings we held with the community leaders. During the meetings, the nature of the variables agreed upon drove and determined the approach to be used to accomplish the project in terms of the design.

Irene asserted that her project was collaboratively designed by her, a colleague — who is a tenured faculty member— and two graduate students in her department’s doctoral program. She explained that they “worked together to come up with the plan, only consulting the community partner on the modalities of data collection and about what would work for them, but we primarily directed it”. The community role though limited, was present, because according to her

We talked to the community about what we wanted to do, and highlighted the kinds of information that might be helpful to the project, for example; they recommended that we observe the way some of committee meetings were being conducted. They also recommended that we interview their staff members and the board, which we did.

The community therefore “played a role in making suggestions on the data that they thought will be useful in the study, and thus mildly influenced the study design in terms of the methodological approach and time lines”, according to Irene.

Nancy and William sat down with the community and the community representatives respectively to design the study. In the case of Nancy, the inclusive process of designing the study was a pre-requisite to the execution of the grant-funded project, and was fully described in the terms of reference. The requirement to involve the community was part of the action points that had to be achieved before the full disbursement of the funds for the project was done. Nancy said that

Critically, when I look back I can say that how I was supposed to relate to the project subjects was already predefined in the terms of reference. I was expected

to bring the community on board in the study design process. That was my intention, but the requirement brought it early in the project and reinforced it.

In his endeavor to engage the community, William was guided by both his knowledge of community based research, and his “altruistic urge to fully engage the community”. He attested to including the community in every step of the study design process. He said that

It was an action driven by my deep understanding of what a truly engaged scholarship research or project should entail... I would equally feel bad if I did not fully involve the community not only for ownership but also to enlighten them on the rudiments of the research processes that many scholars subject them to, time and time again.

Having lived in a community situated in a college town, he recounted his experiences as a participant in numerous studies that were conducted by the neighboring university. He feels that “the university students and professors came into the community, asked for their assistance, benefited and left without giving the community any tangible benefit... and this happened over and over again”. After reflecting on his experiences, William asserted that his research endeavor was “driven by the zeal of not letting any community I work with experience the non-mutual, one sided benefit that people in my home town were treated to”.

Lucas described the study that he did as “a quantitative cross sectional study” whose questionnaire was constructed from two existing instruments. He stated that “most of the questions and constructs there had already undergone a validity and reliability test

in a pilot we did a pilot with some community leaders to make sure that the questions were responsive to the people.”

Victor used previously existing questionnaires to conduct his research project. Because he was replicating a study that was carried out previously, the process of designing the study was dictated by the approach used in the previous study, in which the community was consulted. According to Victor, the study design was predetermined when he opted to use the questionnaires and survey instruments, and therefore did not involve the participant in the study design. Cognizant that the community had been engaged in coming up with the design in the previous study, Victor convinced the community representative that the approach he used was the best way of doing the project.

Interestingly Victor confirmed that he had already designed the structure of the study before he even interacted with the community for the first time. He said “I already had the design in mind what I was looking for was the population from which I would get the sample”. At best, Victor consulted a member of the community who also happened to be a student at the university, and had worked with him previously on a similar project.

When Emily shared her study’s theoretical framework with the community; they had a hard time understanding the study because of the complexity of the proposal thesis. Emily stated that

The study design was greatly influenced by my philosophical inclinations, and the process of coming up with the actual design of the research was solely done by myself, considering the rigor my proposal was supposed to go through before approval. Sincerely, as much as I wanted to co-opt the other partners in the

research, my hands were tied by the stringent IRB requirements, the time available between when I started the process, and when the proposal was due and my strong. It was also influenced by my belief that the people I was working with could not bring much to the table in terms of the technical knowledge of how to structure an academic proposal, because the level of education of the group I was working with was very low.

She underscored the fact that even if she had worked with the participants in designing the study they would not have added any value in the process but “would have just felt good about being consulted”, which was an aspect of the whole engagement that she thought was lost, despite the \$50 gift card incentive which she gave them.

#### **Data collection.**

Data collection was a key component of all the projects undertaken by the faculty, and they used a number of data collection methods. Despite the various methods of data collection, the community was fully involved in the data collection process. The participants revealed that data collection was the most challenging part of the project, because it solely depended on the community or participants. This was because at times the researcher’s expectations in terms of response rate and quality of feedback was not always met with ease, or in some cases not met at all. For example, Nancy asserted that

At one point, we thought we would do interviews, but the person who was supposed to help us with the interviews told us it would be very hard to collect data from refugees. This, he said, was because getting them to agree to an interview would be hard, because of their skepticism. And even when they accept to be interviewed, it would be difficult to schedule the actual interview, because

most of them work multiple jobs. Because of all these hurdles, we didn't do interviews, and opted to use secondary data, in addition to the data we got from the initial meetings.

In the projects where interviews were done, the process was participative, and the conversations were reported as mutual.

Stella described the way her team approached the community to identify where they could get information about their projects. The community members gave them references of documents that had the information they were looking for. Stella said that "we didn't do any interactive primary data gathering as far as the participants were concerned; instead, we got the direction from the community, then pulled out information from our secondary data sources".

Betty uniquely co-opted a community "opinion leader", who also happened to be a non-academic employee of the university as the second investigator in the study. As an investigator in the study, the community member was the one who did all the data collection by immersing himself into the community to do observations. The opinion leader also used his networks and influence to organize focus groups and facilitate interviews.

One notable downside of this approach that Betty acknowledged was that the opinion leader was very subjective in the data collection process. She said that

During the data collection, the opinion leader did not involve any of his historical adversaries, according to one community member. As shown by the data, he also did not involve community members who were below his social class. ... I mean

the demographics of the respondents reflected his immediate social environment, and none came from a lower income bracket.

The unique observation during the data collection gave Betty an opportunity to explore the emergent theme, and propelled her subsequent projects.

### **Data analysis.**

The participants used different data analysis approaches in their projects. The findings also show that other than their participation in the design of the study, where the analysis approach was formulated by the faculty and accepted or shared with the community, the community was not involved in the data analysis process. The faculty attributed the community's exclusion to the intricate nature of the analysis process and the need to ensure confidentiality of individual participants.

Additionally, the faculty observed that the involving nature of the analysis process would have taken up a lot of the community participants' time. For example, Betty asserted that she had the intention of working with a knowledgeable community member in the analysis process, but realized the raw data that was to be analyzed would have made it easy for the community member to identify the participants. Emily asserted that

After my experience with the community members at the beginning of the project, I realized that if I depended on them in the analysis process, I would not have been able to complete my project in time. I also doubted whether they had the capacity to use the analytical tools that the study had proposed in the analysis process.

Grace admitted that she did not at any point envision having conversations with the respondent about the analysis and asserted that

When I walked out of the interview place, I knew that the rest laid squarely on me, and most of the grant money went to paying a research assistant, who was a doctoral student, to do the data cleaning and converting it into a usable form. In all this, the participants did not feature, nor was their input sought, for the very fact that the process was very technical, and expertise of the community partners was limited.

Nancy did not include the community in the analysis process, because of the sensitive nature of the information that her participants gave during the interviews, which if accessed by a fellow community member, would have “compromised their well-being”.

Victor did not also involve the community in the analysis process, having argued that “for the purpose of expediency and the need for subject matter knowledge I did not involve the community, as this would have taken a lot of time and limited the analysis to the basic knowledge of the participants”. He also claimed to have used data analysis software to analyze some of the data, and this needed proficiency in the software. He said that at one point during the process, he welcomed a graduate student who was also a community member to assist him in the analysis process, and that “slowed the process down because of the software learning curve”. Victor asserted that

Incorporating the subjects in the analysis process would have been an expensive and time consuming exercise. This is because they were not involved in the actual proposal writing, and might have not been aware of the assumptions guiding the analysis process; taking them through would have been time consuming considering that there will be a learning curve.

Victor also believed that analysis should be done by persons with expertise, and the participant should only be involved if they have the requisite knowledge, and if the same has been stipulated in the proposal.

Irene had the interviews transcribed professionally, after which she spent a lot of time coding the transcripts to answer the various research questions. It was at this point and the realization that there was a lot of work to be done, that Irene sought the help of the contact person in the study, who was also the coordinator of the project. The team further grew with the selective inclusion of a graduate student and a community member, who was very knowledgeable in many aspects of what the study was exploring. Irene said that

It was not my intention, neither was it in my plan to include the team that I ended up with in the analysis, I just had underestimated how rich the data was, and the number of people that would agree to participate in the study. The data was humongous, to say the least. I resolved the situation by including some community members who I wittingly selected because of their knowledge and experience.

Irene added that in her opinion the involvement of the community in the analysis process could be a tedious affair, if the community member was not equipped with the necessary expertise, and therefore needed to be approached with caution despite the fact that it worked for her. Kate advised that researchers to weigh their options in terms of what one wants to achieve, adding that “if the analysis experience on the part of the subjects is an end to itself, go that route. Otherwise avoid it as much as you can”.

**Dissemination of findings.**

The study reports compiled by the faculty was one of the methods used to determine whether the projects met the set out criteria, therefore all the faculty members interviewed had documented their findings. The documentation and dissemination of the output was done differently across the different projects undertaken by the faculty. Interestingly, despite promising in the consent forms that they would share the output of the project with individual participants, most of the faculty members did not reconnect with individual community members, but instead disseminated their findings to the general public.

Specifically, the faculty disseminated their output at academic conferences, some of which were held miles away from the community they worked with. Most of the publications written as a result of the community-engaged projects have been published in top tier journals that are not only inaccessible to the community, but whose existence is not known by the community. Additionally, for the journals that are accessible to the community, the language used to disseminate the output was in most cases designed for scholarly consumption. For example, Emily and Stella published their research in practitioner journals that used medical terminology that was not easily understood by people who are not in that profession.

**Negotiating the Engagement Process**

The relational interaction between the participants and the community in their projects shaped how they experienced reciprocity and mutuality. These experiences were specifically attributed to the diversity of the people involved in the project, the context of

their interactions and the divergent views including the apparent conflict as a result of all the above factors.

Common among all the participants was the experience of negotiations between them and the community partners, including the institutions where the faculty members were working. These negotiations were determined by the nature of relationship between the researcher and the community. Even though all the participants attested to having experienced power relations phenomena, the nature of power relations and how they negotiated the situation varied across the participants. For example, some approached it using insistent negotiation, other employed subtle persuasion, while the rest just submitted to the demands of the other party.

#### **Insistent negotiation.**

The participants described how inherent the power of the institutions they represented was, and how the institutions were key in determining the success of their projects. Both the power wielded by the institutions they represented and that which the participants exercised as researchers shaped the relationship they experienced with the community. For example, Emily and Stella reported engaging in very aggressive bargaining when undertaking their projects. These negotiations occurred at different levels of the project, and the negotiations involved different stakeholders. For example, Emily had to negotiate for the conversion of a face-to-face class that she taught into a web-based class. This was met by a lot of resistance from the department. She requested a meeting with the department leadership and made her case. Among those present on the presentation was the Dean; when she understood the importance of the project, she endorsed the program.

Despite getting funding from the department of the university that dealt with community-based projects, once her program had begun, Emily realized that the money was not sufficient. Instead of working with what she had, she opted to negotiate with other funding units within the organization to get more funding for her project. For example, she introduced a question in the study that targeted “gender issues” and managed to negotiate for more funding from the Gender and Women studies department, which was not her parent department. Emily said that

I was so passionate in what I was doing, and nothing was going to come in my way. I was prepared for a battle if that was the option. I had to see the project through. The hurdles I faced were numerous, and I endeavored to overcome each of them. Essentially I was fighting for time to do the project then, the battle for the money to do it, and finally I had to insistently submit my findings to a number of journals for publication. Without my resilience, the project would have failed, or I would have ended up doing part of it.

Emily attributed her ability to negotiate to her six-year professional practice as an attorney. Additionally, in the process of making alterations to the project proposal, Emily had to prove to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) that those changes did not constitute a change of study direction. This negotiation was characterized by “a back and forth emailing between me and the IRB office and at one point I had to physically visit their offices and make my case before finally articulating it into writing”.

Stella described her project experience as one that “was full of unpredictable situations attributed to the nature of human relationships”. She attested that from the very first time she interacted with the community, there was “tension”. The community

attitude was that she was coming from the University, and that she had money to spend on them. According to Stella

The first step of our interaction was to sit them down and tell them that I absolutely had no money like they thought. This was hard, but I stood my ground and told them if they insisted on being paid, I would look else where for another receptive group. This might have come across as arrogance, but I believe that was my only bet. To say the truth the project was going to change the quality of life of the community even if in a small way, and I knew if I told them I will back out they would give in; and this they did.

As the project moved to the data collection phase, Stella ran into another hurdle. This time, it was about whom to select for the interviews. Every one who was to be interviewed was given a thirty dollar gift certificate, and Stella had settled on a sample of twenty-four respondents with a balanced gender distribution. According to Stella,

The \$30 gift certificate was truly an enticement; every one wanted to be interviewed and I had to convince the community that I was only going to interview a few of them. To persuade them I held sessions with small groups in the community over a period of three weeks to enlighten them on the criteria I will be using to select the participants. Some of these sessions were very heated, and in one instance a community member insinuated that what I was doing amounted to discrimination. If I had the funding, I would have interviewed as many as I could, but I was limited by finances and time in a situation where the participants were very willing.

Despite the fact that Stella had clearly stipulated in the IRB that the participants would be anonymous, and would be allocated pseudonyms, one of the participants who had been the face of a popular project in the community insisted that his identity should not be concealed. According to Stella, he wanted his contribution to the community to be known, and even promised to include his participation on his online portal, including social media websites. Again she managed to convince the IRB office that this would be acceptable.

**Subtle persuasion.**

Betty, Grace, Victor, Kate and Stella made attempts to convince the community to follow their suggestions and work plans. They used a very friendly approach, and in some cases, the negotiations had financial implications. Betty reported that all through the process, she had to negotiate with the institution, the community leaders and the participants themselves. She described the experience in the project as one that “needed to be negotiated at every step of the way”. Betty further disclosed that

From the onset, I had to convince the committee that was awarding the funding that the project needed more time than the period allocated for the completion of the project, this was tough, but we succeeded after a series of back and forth correspondence. The second challenge that needed negotiation skills was to convince the community leaders that what I was doing was different from what the previous researchers who ‘exploited’ them had done. I had to give reassurances, and take the leaders through the project details. The hardest individuals to convince were the community members who were to be the actual

subjects of the study. One of the key aspects of the project that they dwelt on was the issue of the incentive, which I tactfully negotiated my way out of.

Betty felt that the negotiations also offered her an opportunity. She asserted that “despite the test on our negotiating skill, these interactions laid a very good relational foundation that made our work very easy when we started the project”. This good relationship made it simpler for Betty to gain access to the community members, and it also emboldened the individuals in the community to both voluntarily participate in the projects and candidly answer questions during the interviews.

Grace’s project was divided into two phases; the first phase was carrying out the study and coming up with recommendations and interventions that would form the basis of the next phase. The second phase encompassed implementation of the interventions from the previous segment and using research methods to evaluate the changes experienced by the community.

When Grace started the project, the Director of the institution she was coordinating with to get the data for the study was supportive and enthusiastic about the project. Four weeks after the beginning of the project, when Grace was still designing the instruments and validating them, the Director moved to a different institution, and a new one was appointed. According to Grace

The appointment of the new Director marked the start of my troubles. First of all, from the very beginning she did not think the project was of any use to the organization, in addition to being very leery about allowing outsiders to access their internal information. She then demanded a renegotiation of the terms of reference under which I should work, this we did. That was not the end of the

frustrations, she also requested to be dealing with my departmental Chairperson at the university and all the correspondence she wrote to my team was channeled through the department, and copied to the Dean. The hardest part of this experience was to convince her to give us access to some of the information she thought was sensitive. I succeeded in getting the data by first, using my network to get audience with the Dean, who happened to be a very good friend to one of the organizations board member. Through him I was able to negotiate for the data we wanted from the new Director. We ended up getting all we asked for. Having successfully completed the first phase of the project, we submitted a report to the relevant office, and to date we are still negotiating for funds to complete the second phase of the project.

According to Victor, the relationship between the research team and the community was very professional. This was because all the community leaders that were directly involved in interrogating the social problems were also “well schooled” individuals. This accomplishment on the part of the community on the one hand made it easier for Victor and his team to explain the concept of the project to them; on the other hand the

Eclectic philosophies and schools of thought harbored by the community’s lead persons really slowed the process of designing project. Every one wanted what they did in school, or in previous projects to be incorporated. I remember that we had to vote on a couple of issues and the majority decides approach won the day every time.

In one instance, Victor had to use a series of examples from previous similar projects to convince the team about the importance of having a demographically inclusive sample of participants in the project.

Kate had a lot of difficulty convincing the participants to accept her into their community. Kate reported that

When I made my first contact with the community, they told me that they had been studied three months earlier by a professor from my university, and I was not welcome to carry out my research in their community. I made several attempts to convince them before I decide to contact the professor they said did a study there.

In the process of discussions with the ‘professor’, it emerged that the only way Kate could access and work with the community was by seeking an audience with the local church minister in that community. Apparently, the meeting included taking the minister and his team out for dinner, during which Kate managed to convince them to accept being part of the study.

The actual data collection in Stella’s project started four months after the first contact with the community. This, according to Stella, was due to a number of reasons. First, the person that she first made contact with, and worked throughout the conception of the study with, thought that the project had a lot of funding, and he wanted to be paid for his role in facilitating the project.

When the contact person was notified by Stella that participation was voluntary, and he was not entitled to the any compensation “he started poisoning the minds of other community members, to an extent that I received a threatening e-mail from a prospective

participant from that community.” Because of this, it took Stella a couple of weeks to convince the community to be part of the project. Stella said that

I had to literally beg the community. I organized a forum within the university and invited some of the community members to explain myself to them, and convince them the importance of the study. It was a tough day for me, but I managed to get them on my side and I even identified two volunteers who accepted to be my recruiters for interested participants.

Second, Stella was very apprehensive about community involvement, because during the negotiations with the community members, she had learned that there was a graduate student who had approached the community with intention of doing a study. Stella said that she feared that if the student went into the community before her, she would be judged by how he treated them.

Against this backdrop, Stella had to locate the student and convince him that they needed to divide the community into two samples then synchronize their data collection. This was hard, according to Stella, and she had to “diplomatically negotiate with student including promising to help him with his dissertation editing”.

### **Submitting to the demands of the community.**

Lucas, Stella, Tina, Nancy and William reported to having submitted to the demands of the community. Some of them made attempts to negotiate, while others just agreed with what the participants prescribed. According to Lucas, the fear of not being able to actualize the project due to resistance from the community if she championed her views, drove her to accept the decision of the community. According to Lucas

The money had been released to me; in fact the grant was structured such that I got all the money in one installment, and the fear of not being able to accomplish it send shivers down my spine every time I thought about it. I moved from really caring about the finer details of the project, to hoping that I just get done with it. I accepted everything that the community suggested, and consoled myself by saying that after all that what I am doing is characteristic of a truly community engaged scholarship projects. I mean I literally did what the community demanded and they were happy.

Lucas said that looking back, she would have done so many things differently, and she acknowledged her naiveté then. She regretted having allowed the community pressure to take control of her research agenda.

Stella said that her project was “smooth all the way apart from during the design of the study”. She specifically had a problem with the data collection method, because the community refused to be tape recorded during the interviews. She said that

Considering that the project included in-depth interviews, it was going to be hard for the person collecting the data to be writing what the respondents is telling you. I understood the fears that the community harbored, considering that we were dealing with a vulnerable group. With the recognition of their vulnerability and opinion, I just had to accept what they suggested. I must admit that I lost some rich data in the process.

Stella thought that the fact that the interviews were not recorded also gave the participants courage to discuss issues that they would have likely held back had the interview been tape recorded.

As Tina's project progressed, she realized that her budget could not accommodate the intended transportation of the participants to the venue where the focus groups and interview meetings were to be held. The only option then was to change the plan and have the data collecting team go into the community and collect the data to save on the transportation overhead. This meant that she had to communicate the change of plan to the community. She had to request the community to allow the data collection team to visit them, instead of providing them with transportation to the University as earlier planned. Unfortunately, the community declined the proposition. This forced Tina to look for other sources of funding to supplement the deficit.

Additionally, Tina reported that she was requested by the community to change her lead data collector, who was White, because the community they were working with was predominantly African-American. She lamented that

Replacing my graduate research assistant, who was so passionate about the study and played a big role in the project, with one who would be more acceptable to the community was one of the toughest decisions I had to make. I really tried to convince my community partners that she was best placed to collect data, but they would hear nothing of it.

When Tina's efforts to convince the community failed, she then convinced the research assistant to step down and help in selecting her replacement. Tina described this experience as the "the lowest point in the research journey" and she even contemplated abandoning the project.

Interestingly, when Nancy was introducing her project to the community partners, she mentioned that she would present the research findings in an international

conference. The community then insisted that they had to be represented in the conference. Considering that the conference was being held across the country and the registration and accommodations was very expensive, Nancy tried to convince the community that they would be furnished with the research findings. According to Nancy, the community partners were adamant, and threatened to withdraw their participation in the project. This threat forced her to give into the community's demands.

William had a difficult time trying to defend the relevance of his study to the community. This was as a result of having a retired faculty member as part of the community he was working with, who "vehemently contested the model that informed the study". William described how his team had to adopt the retired faculty member's suggestion, because they realized that he was an opinion leader, and commanded a lot of respect within the community, in addition to being a well-published scholar. According to William

The retired professor literally held us at ransom; we had to tow the line or lose the support of the community. He repeatedly told us how influential he was in the community, and how much he had published in a subject area that is closely related to what we were exploring. At this point, I started looking at his suggestions objectively, and decide to adopt some of them. Funny enough, I ended up enjoying using the model he suggested. I guess there was a silver lining in the whole episode.

William conceded that he submitted to the demands of the "natural community leader", and did not attempt to negotiate because of the fear of a fall-out with the community.

### **Factors Affecting the Integration of Reciprocity and Mutuality**

The participants reported having successfully completed their projects in which they worked with the community. Despite this success, the data collected from the participants attested that they experienced a myriad of challenges while undertaking their projects. Some of these were anticipated and factored into their project planning process, while others were unforeseen and had to be mitigated when they occurred.

Interestingly, according to some of the participants, there were situations which manifested themselves as challenges, but ended up enhancing the achievement of the project objectives. In most cases, the traditional methods of recruitment and selection were foreseen as a challenge and the necessary steps were taken to redesign the process. The interviews also illuminated the intricate role the relational interaction between the participants and the community in their projects shaped how they experienced reciprocity and mutuality. The experiences were specifically attributed to the diversity of the people involved in the project, the context of their interactions and the divergent views including the apparent conflict as a result of all the above factors.

Some of the salient structural and procedural factors that were highlighted as having affected the projects include (a) funding, (b) time, (c) positionality, (d) institutional culture and reward system, (e) access and response, and (f) historical experiences. Most of these challenges manifested themselves at different phases in the project process, with some challenges at the onset of the projects, and others emerging during the actual data collection.

**Funding.**

Funding emerged as one of the key determinants of the success of the community based research initiatives and projects. All the faculty members highlighted that funding was a pivotal factor in their projects. All the participants mentioned that they made their work plan and designed their study with funding in mind. They said that the viability and initiation of the projects they were part of was totally contingent upon the availability of funds.

Lack of sufficient funding was a challenge to most of the faculty members interviewed, and they reported that this limited the extent to which they could fully ensure that the process and output of their research reflected the tenets of reciprocity and mutuality. They asserted that because of the lack of funding, they often had to settle for what could help them achieve their objectives, which in many cases was at the detriment of the community partner.

Most of participants complained that the funds allocated to them did not sufficiently take care of their research needs and believed that they would have done better if the funds were sufficient. For example, Tina said that funding was one of her biggest concerns as she delved into the project. Tina realized that in order to succeed and fully accomplished her goals; she had to discontinue funding her graduate assistants, and allocate the money to other operational aspects of the project.

Victor, Nancy and Stella said that they had conceptualized the projects before they applied for the funding. But because the funding organizations specified the thematic areas, defined the time lines, and prescribed terms of reference, they all adjusted their research thesis to fit these specifications. Essentially, it was the funding process and

the actual funds available that ultimately shaped the projects. Victor said that even though he had a clear direction of what he wanted to do in terms of the research design, the number of questions and the sample size, he ended up “customizing” these aspects to fit the funding he received. Nancy underscored the fact that she used the terms of reference prescribed by the funding agency as “a rubric to define and trim” her problem statement. She also lamented that

Looking back, I think the funding agency imposed their agenda on my research and ultimately influenced the milestones I set and key deliverables I made. I mean, I was reporting to them in every step of the way, and the funds were also disbursed in chunks, depending on whether I delivered what they asked for. I even remember that one representative from the ... Institute attended one of my focus group sessions, where he was openly pushing their agenda.

Stella also asserted that the “call for papers” from the funding institute was what determined the composition and characteristics of her sample. Her initial intended study was designed for a diverse group, but because the grant was targeting a specific minority group, she had to adjust her study and even ended up changing her theoretical framework.

Generally the participants cited the inclusion of more participants as one of the things they would do differently if they were to repeat the project. The faculty members said that despite the fact that the response rate depends on how well the researcher did their recruitment, the availability of funds usually determined the number of participants the researcher can recruit. They argued that the greater the funding, the greater the reach, and hence the higher the number of respondents, depending on the time available.

Victor observed that the community had high expectation from the project. What excited the participants at the beginning of the interaction was the knowledge that they would get some incentive for participating in the study in the form of gift vouchers.

Interestingly according to Victor

A big part of the population that we were targeting had a very low level of education, and during our first meeting with the community leaders; some of them misunderstood the objective of the project and reported it differently to the community. This is something we realized at the early stages of the project when we went to the field to talk to some of the community members. We were amazed that some of them thought the project was a scheme to supplement their house rent.

Victor underscored the challenge that the lack of sufficient income posed to his project, and endeavored to look for a big grant to implement some of the recommendations that resulted from the research. Specifically in Victor's study, the results of the study meant that Victor and his team would set up an individual development accounts for the community.

#### **Time demands.**

Most of the grants awarded to the participants in this study had a clearly stipulated completion period in the terms of reference. The duration of the projects and the time available to execute them affected the processes and output of the community-engaged projects, according to the faculty members interviewed in this study. They stated that the duration of the project had affected how the relationship between the researcher and the community turned out.

The participants also aggregately associated trust building with repeated interactions over time. They suggested that having a longer interaction with the participants was both good and bad, depending on the context. They reported that on one hand, if the duration is long, it gives the researcher a chance to build trust. On the other hand, an elongated interaction cultivates familiarity, which in some cases turned out to be detrimental to the relationship.

Tina described the long relationship that her team had with the community as a double-edged one. She reported how they managed to gain the trust of the community participants at the formative stages of the study. Interestingly, towards the end of the project some of the participants, and specifically two community members, had formed a very strong bond with Tina. The familiarity between her and the two community members was so extensive that they even used to call her night, wishing to discuss their personal problems. Tina said that

Some of these community members had no family members, or even friends, and when I approached them, they saw a friend in me. They were good people, and we struck a good rapport, and I inadvertently led them on to think we were friends, they took the cue, and it turned out for the worst. I used to get late night calls, requests for football game tickets; it was scary at times.

Other participants also underscored the role time played in solidifying their relationship with the community. Lucas disclosed how his prolonged interaction with the community enriched his data. The more he interacted with the participants, the more they became very generous with intimate details that were not forthcoming at the early stages of the project.

The time available to do the project also came up as one of the key challenges in fully executing the project. All the participants were recipients of grants, and the funding institution prescribed the time lines. In order to receive the grants, most of the faculty members had to submit a work plan with the proposals. These work plans stipulated points at which certain deliverables should be communicated to the funding institutions. Because of slow starts, challenges in recruitment, the need for time to build trust and the exigency of data collection and analysis among other things, the time planned for was not always sufficient. In some of the projects, the faculty member had to use interventions such as: reducing the number of participants, increasing the number of investigators or contracting the services of professional transcribers in an attempt to fit within the prescribed time frame.

Generally, this adjustment affected the spirit of mutuality and reciprocity that was intended to drive the processes in the project. For example, Kate observed that

When you asked me about time, I recalled how I ignored the need for mutual benefit and inconvenienced the participants by asking them to avail themselves for an interview on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. I felt so guilty, but that was the only option I had if I was to meet my deadline.

Victor also described how he made one of the subjects wait for over thirty minutes because he “squeezed an interview” an hour before that planned session, because that was the only opportunity to do a member check with a previously interviewed participant.

Kate, William and Nancy reported that the time they spent working with the community was not sufficient, and more time with the community would have yielded more robust findings and interventions. Kate underscored that she would have done a

better project had she had a whole year with the community. William observed that he was at the end of the process when key elements of what was driving his research started emerging, and he said “I wish I had resources to take the agenda further, the time was short but I had to do what I had to do”. Additionally, Nancy said that even though she had a definite number of participants she had hoped to work with, as she delved deeper into the study she realized that some of the participants she had selected did not meet the criteria she was looking for, and she wished that she had sufficient time to replace them.

According to Tina, the output of the project has been ongoing in terms of the interventions developed from the data gathered during the research study. She underscores that the community will continue benefiting from the study for as long as they continue to live within that community. She further says that despite her study having ended, the activities initiated by the project have continued to offer a source of data for future projects. She emphasized that

Despite the completion of my community-engaged process that gave birth to the current interventions, these very interventions have provided me with a platform for both conducting a subtle longitudinal study, and also collecting data to help other scholars improve on some of the intervention being carried within the immigrant community.

Tina’s research also benefited other community members who were not directly involved in the project. The study findings were communicated to non-governmental organizations dealing with refugees, who used them for advocacy and advising legislators during policy formulation.

Stella asserted that her project had a number of facets that spread over a three-year period. The output of the subsequent two years was contingent upon the outcome of the first year program. The first year program was accepted quite well by the community, and they even continued to develop aspects of it on their own. Stella stated that

If I can just talk about the first year program, I think the community owned it very well, and have continued to develop aspects of it. Me and the students did the initial research, and communicated the outcome to the community organizations, and some of this information was given to stake holders, like state government officials, who were very appreciative. I was also often called upon to give talks about the project.

According to Stella, these forums were always attended by the community members, who expressed ownership of the project, and an appreciation of the outcome of the first phase of the project.

### **Positionality.**

The positionality of the faculty and the community members they worked with influenced the nature of their relationship, according to most of the participants in this study. They reported that the positionality and perceptions with respect to the phenomena they were researching influenced how they designed the projects and the way they interacted with the community members. The participants reported how some of the community members differed or concurred with them on different aspects of their interaction based on their positionality.

The participant's positionality also determined the level of trust and acceptance the community bestowed on them, including their expectations. The respondents underscored that most of the community accepted many of the theories the faculty shared with them as truths, perhaps because the faculty came from academic institutions, they had answers to every thing. Additionally, the faculty member's affiliation to the universities, in the eyes of the community, implied that they had a lot of resources, according to the participants. They also reported having been viewed as individuals belonging to a different social status, characterized by clout and immense knowledge.

The participants who said they shared their philosophies and world view with the participants described how some of the community members judged them, and depending on whether they had the same beliefs as the faculty members, they chose to be receptive to the faculty member or decided not to participate all together. For example, one of the faculty members discussed her sexual orientation in the introductory part of the project, and this triggered a massive request by conservative religious community members not to be interviewed for the study.

Another example was that in one of the projects, the data collector, who was pivotal in one of the projects, was rejected by the community due to her race. Not only was she rejected by the community, but she was also subjected to some level of humiliation by some of the community members. One of the participants in the study was an immigrant who, despite having lived in the country for many years and being naturalized, kept on being asked about his accent. He reported that in most of his interviews and intervention interactions, the subjects always sought to know which part of the world he was from.

Some participants asserted that community members who were also accomplished scholars formed part of their community partners. And as the participants were introducing their projects, these community partners formed an opinion about them owing to their theoretical inclination. For example, Lucas said that one of the participants in the community he worked with blatantly refused to answer a question he had asked, because the community member thought that the question should not have been asked in the first place. He indicated how uncomfortable it was having the discussion with the participant, and decided to discontinue the interview when the session became very argumentative.

Demographics were also motioned by the participants as a key element in the researcher community interactions. The faculty reported that demographics like age, gender, language, and the level of education had an influence on how they integrated the tenet of reciprocity and mutuality in their projects including the approach they used to negotiate their relationships and interactions. One of the participants acknowledged the age difference between the participants and the researcher was a significant factor. This was after unsuccessfully trying to do interactive activities with the participants who were younger college students; she realized that they were not enthusiastic. Their mood changed soon after her youthful graduate student took over. Betty lamented on how she had a hard time working with the male community members because they kept on trying to socialize with her beyond the project parameters. She said that

Just about all the men I worked with were trying to hit on me. I always felt uncomfortable, and it affected some of the activities I was doing. I just had to take my co-researcher with me every time I went to interact with them.

She also reported that she was originally from the middle part of the country, and had an accent associated with that part of the country. Her accent always acted as a good ice breaker that was naturally a subject of conversation, which often got the participants comfortable whenever she was asking them “weighty questions”.

In Grace’s project, the output was a report with recommendations that were in the form of interventions. She said that

Considering that the study was informed by gaps in literature, and underpinned by deep scholarly theories, I worked very hard putting together a report they could understand and which I showed them at one point in the process. It is at this point that I realized their difficulty in comprehending the nuances in it.

Upon realization of the difficulty faced by the community, Grace summarized the report, and redacted the heavily theorized parts including acronyms, replacing them with simple diagrams and flow charts.

Irene and Kate faced resistance in recruiting the community members and consolidating their collaboration. According to them, the community was very suspicious because they were outsiders. Irene said that

Because I was a Caucasian working with a predominantly immigrant community, most of whom were undocumented immigrants, they were leery about having deep conversations with me, or even being part of the project. I could see how held back they were when interacting with me compared to how they would freely interact and discuss with my colleagues who were from other races.

Kate’s case was interesting, because even after gaining access, recruiting and interviewing the subjects, she continued to encounter resistance. She transcribed the data

and subjected it to triangulation; it was during this process that she noticed a lot of discrepancies in the demographical information and timelines. According to her

It was during the data triangulations that I noticed that some of the community members had blatantly lied about a couple of things. Some of them justified this, and gave their reasons to me and the other investigator during the member check process. We totally understood where they were coming from, but wondered the authenticity of some of the things we could not cross check on. With the verity issues in mind, we even had to drop two or three questions and retained the ones we were able to verify.

Kate and her team learned that the community viewed them as outsiders, and feared that there might be repercussions if the “information got out”. Additionally, Nancy also expressed how she was only fed with basic information, because the participants held back information that touched on any aspect of their family life and income, despite them accepting to be part of the process. For example, Nancy expressed that

Every time you come from the University and you are going to work with the community the expectation is that you have a lot of money, the community assumes that you have more to offer financially than you actually have and you know some of them get disappointed if they don't see any financial gains from the interactions.

Betty also had a similar experience starting off her project, and said that

Some of these organizations are small NGO's that are very much like private companies, they expect that you will be doing most of the heavy lifting for them financially and in terms of time committed to the projects or initiatives.

To alleviate this problem, Kate asserted that her project required that the researcher makes a forthright description of what the researcher's role will be, what is expected of the community partner, and the limits of each stakeholder. This, according to Kate, would lower the community's or participants' expectations and know what to expect from the partnership.

Race and cultural positionality was also a challenge, according to some of the participants. They attest that it was hard for the faculty members from one race to access and gain the confidence of community members of a different race. For example, one of the participants was a White faculty member working with a predominantly Black community, and the community members were skeptical about interacting with her. This affected their participation in the project. It took the intervention of a fellow Black faculty member to convince the community to take part in the project. Additionally, one of the participants had difficulty in accessing and working with the Hispanic population because she was not Hispanic and there was a huge language barrier. She had to recruit a Hispanic graduate assistant to assist her in breaking the ice with the community and in transcription.

#### **Institutional culture and reward system.**

Most of the participants spoke of the tough balance between adhering to the complex format of academic writing, and the need to include the community in the processes that are involved in doing the research. For example, Betty asserted that the community complained that the proposal format was too complex for them to understand. According to the participants, the literature review that Betty had captured in the background of the study proposal had purposely answered the research question.

William described how he had to explain to the participants, one of whom was a former faculty member, why he settled on the epistemology that underpinned his project. He had to painstakingly re-word his proposal, in addition to replacing the technical words that he used to describe the theories informing the study. Grace described how she battled with the notion that many of her colleagues thought that a study that uses a quantitative approach can never be community-engaged. Because of this supposition, Grace made alterations to her study by removing the main quantitative aspects, and substituting them with qualitative data collection methods.

Owing to the low level of education of some of the community members, the participants expressed the difficulty they experienced in trying to simplify the technical aspects without losing the actual intended meaning. Lucas described how hard it was to balance between simplifying the meanings of some of the terminologies so that the community members may understand. He lamented that the process was tedious and affected the completion timeline and the resources he had to use. All these restrictions are despite the requirements by the funding institutions that the project be presented and disseminated in a scholarly format.

Nancy affirmed how she had to tone down her beliefs in order to accommodate some participants in the community. She said that

At some point in the project I felt that my alter-ego had taken over, I had practically ceased to be myself. I was role playing both to get what I wanted, and to stop myself from creating a conflict, which would have most likely affected the project in one way or another.

Stella also described how her subscription to the feminist theories elicited a two-fold reaction from the participants. According to her, while most of the female community members were enthusiastic about participating in the study, the majority of men declined to be part of the project.

Victor said that because of his strong belief in empowerment, and his outspoken nature, many of the participants thought that his optimism was far fetched. The community members thought that some of Victor's questions had obvious answers, and there was no need for him to include them in the questionnaire. Conversely, his life story, which he repeatedly shared with the community, helped him nurture a positive relationship with community members, who related with the predicaments he faced in his life, and in turn shared with him their experiences. This formed very rich data that was a valuable addition to the study.

Grace described how the consent form that was meant to be signed by all the participants who were interviewed raised a lot of apprehension among the community members, most of whom had low literacy levels. According to Grace

The community members were willing to take part in the interviews, but were very skeptical about divulging some of their demographic information. The consent form which all participants had to sign consenting to do the interview, raised a lot anxiety, because of they feared that they were committing themselves. On one hand, the IRB office required that all the participants consent to the interview, on the other hand most of the participants were willing to participate in the interviews only if they did not sign the consent form.

Additionally, Irene and Kate noted that the community members they worked with could not understand why their interactions were not only structured, but also recorded.

According to Irene, the community questioned the importance of their demographics in actualizing the objectives of the study. Specifically, most of the female participants were reluctant to answer the question about their age.

Most of the participants also disclosed that they had to present the results in two versions. One that was easily understood by the population and the other in a scholarly format or as prescribed by the funding institutions. Tina asserted that she had to write three sets of reports, one for the funding agency in the format they had requested, the second one in a simplified form for the consumption of the community and finally a robust scholarly article for a peer reviewed academic journal, which was intended for her promotion and tenure portfolio.

Most of the participants cited promotion and tenure as one of the ultimate reasons that motivated them to be involved in the community engaged projects. Despite reporting that altruism played a role in the initiation of the projects, the participants underscored that they would use the projects as evidence for their promotion and tenure. Some of the respondents said that the time between when they actually started the project and when their review was coming up was very short, and Kate, for example, said that she had to rush through some things. At some point, Kate said, the project lost its collaborative spirit. She remembered

The push for promotion and tenure sometimes can preoccupy you to an extent that you may lose focus of what you are actually out to do, and instead focus on the shortest way to get the work done. You often start with the intention of fully

collaborating with the community, but as your review date gets closer, there is often a tendency of one to hurry through such projects with disregard to the initial driving objectives.

Equally, Stella attested that she had a lot of research to do within a limited time. She even had to leave out some thematic areas in her final write up, just to make the research deadline. She said that

Because I had limited time, I left out some thematic areas in my final presentation because first, I felt that the emergent themes would have required an additional extensive reading in order to find the gaps in the literature and second, the thematic areas would have required further interrogation to fill in the gray areas, which would have meant more interviews and transcriptions.

In addition to having limited time to carry out the project, Stella also affirmed that any delay in completing the project would have “caught up” with her scheduled promotion session.

#### **Access and response.**

Accessing the community was one of the biggest challenges reported by the respondents. They described how hard it was to access the community. After accessing the community, the faculty asserted that it was at times even more challenging to get the required number of participants for their research. The participants described how hard it was for the community to accept to be part of their research projects, and when they did, many of the community participants backed out, or were individually inaccessible during the actual research, thus lowering the sample size.

Victor expressed how hard it was to get the community to allow him to do the study, and he had to seek the help of community leaders through meetings and consultations. It was the community leaders who actually allowed the project to be conducted in their community. Once the community accepted to be part of the project, Victor and his team had to go into the community and select specific individuals who fit the criteria required by the study. Victor said that

After convincing the community leaders I had to recruit individual participants in the community. After meeting the community leaders and gauging their enthusiasm I thought the recruitment process would be easy but I was surprised to find out it was extremely tough to recruit specific subjects for the research.

Because of this difficulty in recruitment among other shortcomings, I fell short of my targeted sample size by seventy percent.

Despite Victor's assertion that this was a characteristic of general research, he said that it was even tougher when one wanted "to ensure reciprocity and a mutual distribution of benefits" among all the stakeholders in the community based research.

Betty expressed how long it took the project team to access the community they wanted to work with. She said that

We had to change the title of the project without losing its significance and severally tweak the problem statement to make it friendlier in-order to get a sample that can be accessed with ease and in the numbers that will make the study significant and representative.

The same sentiments were shared by Emily and Grace. Emily said that

I had to move from the community I was initially targeting, because I sensed some hostility in addition to the very low turn out after my first meeting. At one point, the community member even started talking in some coded language while the sessions were going on.

Grace reported that after noticing some change in the mood of the participants, she reviewed her study design. This was because she foresaw a possibility of not being able to access and collect information that formed the core of her research.

Some of the participants reported challenges when working with the leaders in those communities, even after having accessed the community through the community members. They said that in some communities or community based institutions, the leadership posed the greatest challenge if they did not support the project. For example, Grace said that she had a very good working relationship with a community based organization from which she recruited her participants and wanted to work with them. When she approached the organization, she struck a very good rapport with the director, who gave her unlimited access to their records, the employees and the communities which they worked with.

However, Grace lamented that her relationship with the organization changed for the worse once the director of the organization changed. She said that the new director was not interested in her project or presence, and even reevaluated her relationship with the organization, and in the process curtailed her access to some internal information. Grace said that “I don’t think you can do a project unless the leadership is very interested in it and I didn’t realize that until the new director came on board”.

**Historical experiences.**

The participants generally attributed the resistance the community gave them to conduct the projects in their community to previous interactions they had with researchers or institutions. Most of the participants reported that the community members told them that they had been researched so many times, yet they have nothing to show for it. According to the participants, the community members felt that the relationship was not beneficial to them, and that the researchers often left as soon as they got what they wanted. For example Tina said that

The community leaders were initially adamant to allow us in, they complained that within that same month they had been studied twice and were tired of being exploited without gaining anything in return. After some convincing the community accepted our request but demanded that I address issues they highlighted relating to their previous encounters with researchers.

Betty had a similar experience, and in her case, the community described the process of participating in the research as a routine exploitation of their community which had to be stopped. She said that the implied promises that were never delivered in historical projects had set a bad precedent that left the communities feeling cheated.

Betty described her encounter with the community as one that was filled with reluctance on the part of the community members to participate in the project. The community underscored that all the previous researchers came to them with noble ideas and comforting promises that were not lived up to.

This situation is similar to what Kate experienced. Kate said that the community members asked her to describe to them how they stand to gain from her research, and made her promise she would deliver on her promises because the researchers before her often did not.

In the spirit of ownership of the products of the research process, a number of community members complained to the faculty that they were not acknowledged in the publications that were a result of their participation. This was particularly common in situations where the participants were educated. Kate reported that one of the community members who also acted as the community leader, and gave a lot of input in the project design complained that he had previously given input which went unacknowledged.

According to Kate

He complained that the researcher he was working with a few months earlier got a lot of direct input from him, but did not acknowledge his efforts or mention his input in a publication that was doing rounds within the community. This to him was unfair and he promised that my project will be his last attempt at working with people from the university.

According to Kate, the community involved in her project had historically been researched numerous times, and according to them, nothing tangible came out of the interaction with the other researchers. This made the community very apprehensive about Kate's project, and they repeatedly demanded to know what benefits they would derive from her research. According to Kate

This was a very tricky terrain to maneuver, because on one hand, we did not want to sound like we will not deliver anything but on the other hand, we were afraid of making promises. As a strategy, we let them tell us their expectations first.

According to Kate, this approach worked, and they were able to include some of the concerns raised by the community as thematic areas to be explored.

Nancy and Victor also reported that the community they worked with insisted that that it was only the universities that were beneficiaries of the research they were undertaking. Nancy said that one of the community members told her that for the ten years that she has lived in that community, she had been researched eight times and none of those researchers, except one, has come back to check on her.

Victor reported that the participants in the community they were working with were apprehensive that they would share some of the answers they got with law enforcement agencies, or the Internal Revenue Service, a situation that happened to them a few years earlier. This fear also affected the verity of the information the community was willing to share with the data collectors.

The participants also said that getting community members to feel like equal partners was not easy, and every time they attempted to imply that both they and the community were partners, the conversations ignited historical situations where the same was said, but not practiced. The researchers reported attempting a number of strategies to try and build a sense of community, but it was still hard for the community members to break out of the assumption that the university sees itself as separate entity, and that the faculty members just come into their community to study them and walk away without rewarding the community for its efforts.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the interviews with the faculty members involved in community based projects. The chapter summarized the research findings under the three overarching questions of the study: (1) How does the faculty understand and define the process of reciprocity and mutuality? (2) How does the faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in the engaged projects? And (3) how does the faculty negotiate the project engagement process?

In answering the question about defining reciprocity and mutuality, the following themes were identified as determinants of the definition: the nature of the study, the procedural and professional knowledge of the respondent and the processes or expected outcomes of the project.

For the second emergent overarching question about when the respondent integrated reciprocity and mutuality into their projects; the chapter highlighted that the integration was done or not done at the following facets of the project; during the conception of the research idea, the formulating the research questions, the designing the study, the data collection and while disseminating the findings or prescribing interventions.

In describing their relationship and how they navigated the project processes the participants reported that they had a relationship characterized by of insistent negotiations, friendly persuasions and a non-contested submission into the demands of the other partner, which were categorized into a power relations theme.

Finally, the chapter outlined the challenges that affected the community based projects. These factors included (a) the funding available, (b) project time frame, (c) the

position of power and demographics of the researcher and participants, (d) institutional culture and reward system, (e) access to the participants and the response rate, and (f) historical experiences of the participants.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to understand the community engagement phenomenon through the perspectives of faculty members involved in community engaged projects. The study was guided by the following research questions: (1) How do faculty understand and define the process of reciprocity and mutuality? (2) How do faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in the engaged projects? and (3) How do faculty negotiate the project engagement process?

The design of the study was qualitative and involved the use of in-depth interviews. Thirteen faculty members who met the predetermined criteria were purposefully selected and recruited for the study. Out of the thirteen faculty members who were interviewed, eleven sets of data were analyzed and formed part of the findings. The composition of the participants included three male and eight female faculty members whose ages ranged from the 40s to the 60s. The faculty members were made up of Whites and African-Americans who were affiliated to seven different tier-one research universities. The research institutions represented diverse geographical areas in the USA. The community-engaged projects explored by the participants were also diverse in nature. The projects had relatively unique objectives compared to each other and were characterized by different phases, processes and expected outcomes.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions reached and connect them to the literature in order to manifest the value of the study. The chapter is divided

into three parts. The first part provides detailed conclusions and connects them to relevant literature. The second part addresses the implications of the study to theory and practice for the field of adult education. The last part recommends future research areas.

## **Conclusions**

Five conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study. The first conclusion concerned how the nature of the projects and the researcher's experiences shaped how they defined reciprocity and mutuality as tenets of community engaged scholarship. The second conclusion dealt with how mutuality and reciprocity was incorporated at different phases of the community engaged projects process using different approaches. The third conclusion dealt with how the attributes and limitation of the university-community partners influenced reciprocity and mutuality. The fourth conclusion emphasized the importance of relationship building and negotiations in actualizing community engaged projects. The fifth conclusion proposed that expected outcome prevails over process and purpose in framing engaged scholarship.

**Conclusion 1: Community engaged scholarship was socially constructed in terms of prior knowledge of the faculty and the context within which the project takes place.**

The study concluded that researchers defined mutuality and reciprocity differently depending on the nature of the projects and their previous experiences. The findings supported the idea that researchers were influenced by these two aspects of meaning construction when carrying out community engaged projects.

The finding gave an in-depth understanding (Creswell, 1998) of how the definition of reciprocity and mutuality was constructed by the participants. They defined

reciprocity and mutuality differently depending on the nature of the projects and their experiences. And their definitions were molded by the different dimensions of engagement; the purpose of scholarship, the process of engagement, and the outcomes of the processes as suggested by Stanton (2008). Specifically, how the study or project was framed and the demands or gains it placed on the researcher and the community participants. The context, within which the projects were undertaken, also influenced how they perceived reciprocity and mutuality. Context in this case encompassed the researchers influence, the research site and the way the research was conceptualized.

The former was in concurrence with the qualitative research assumption that meaning has grown out of the interaction of people with their world, and that it fluctuated and changed (Merriam, 2002). Considering that the participants generally defined mutuality and reciprocity from their construction of the community engaged projects they participated in (Crotty, 1998 & Van de Ven, 2007) and their pre-understanding of the concept stemmed from their pre-existing interaction with the idea (Heidegger, 1962). This supported the proposition that community engaged scholarship was a social construct, and that the prior knowledge of the faculty, as well as the context of the project had influenced that construction.

The participants gave a unique perspective (Patton, 1985) of mutuality and reciprocity in the context of their projects and understanding, even though all the projects explored were categorized as community engaged. This finding mirrored Bloomfield's (2005) observation, that despite having similar characteristics and an underlying intention of addressing critical societal issues and contributing to the well being of the public, different faculty members described engagement differently. This further underscores

Stanton's (2008), assertion that community engaged research was driven by a predetermined civic intention geared toward ensuring that the key players benefit from the process.

Additionally, despite the respondents having used reciprocity and mutuality interchangeably, or even having used one to describe the other (Barker, 2004), all the definitions of mutuality and reciprocity given by the participants were molded around the nature of the study, expected outcomes as espoused by Stanton (2008) and prior knowledge of the phenomena as proposed by Heidegger (1962). Scholarly adjectives were also used to define mutuality and reciprocity, with some even directly quoting definitions put forth by scholars in the community engaged scholarship field. For example, one of the participants defined mutuality and reciprocity as a recount of her experience doing her project, where she gave back to the participants in equal measure to their efforts.

Others defined the tenets using knowledge gained through social interaction, and extensive reading both about the community engaged research phenomena (Heidegger, 1962) and one respondent even stated their definition as asserted by Boyer (1990). Another example was that William did a robust literature review before embarking on the project and as such defined mutuality and reciprocity according to the literature. The findings support Heidegger's concept about the knowledge phenomena when Betty defined mutuality and reciprocity the way she was taught by her professor in class. She affirmed that the course she took shaped her world view, and influenced how she defined community based scholarship.

The nature of the community-engaged scholarship coupled by prior knowledge about the engagement process shaped how the faculty defined reciprocity and mutuality. Preunderstanding as a construct suggested by Heidegger (1962) had a profound impact in how the faculty members defined mutuality and reciprocity. This is not only because some of the participants defined the tenets from knowledge acquired from literature suggested by scholars in the field but because the projects they undertook were grant funded and designated as community engaged against a criteria that proposed a mutually beneficial partnership. Interestingly, in all the projects described by the participants, there were expectations from both the researcher and the community.

Community-engaged scholarship as suggested by Stanton (2008) is underpinned by the nature of research and straddled three dimensions – the purpose, process and product of the research—, all of which were highlighted as factors that influenced how the faculty defined reciprocity and mutuality.

**Conclusion 2: Mutuality and reciprocity is incorporated at different phases of the projects process.**

The faculty recognized that despite the underlying intention of the community engaged project being to address critical societal issues, mutuality and reciprocity was incorporated at different phases of the project process as proposed in Stanton's (2008) model of engaged scholarship. These phases were the points of interaction between the researcher and the community, and formed the stage at which mutuality and reciprocity were integrated in the projects.

Consistent with Stanton's (2008) model that identified three dimensions of engagement, the findings show that the principals of mutuality and reciprocity were

incorporated at different phases of the projects process using different approaches defined by the context under which they were carried out.

Stanton's (2008) process dimension detailed how engaged research was carried out. The model also described the continuum between the highest and the lowest levels of mutuality experienced between the community and the university. And this occurred at different phases of the engagement process, according to the findings. These phases included formulation of the research idea, creating the research design, data collection and analysis, and the application of the findings. The perceived level of mutuality incorporated various applications across the different phases in the different projects undertaken by the faculty, depending on the level of negotiations, and the nature of relationship established between the researcher and the community.

The findings show that the community was involved in the conception of the research idea. For example, the community was involved in the reviewing of literature related to the subject area, or the faculty sat down with the community and came up with the research idea. The participants were unable to explain how reciprocity and mutuality were integrated into the process of research question formulation, and instead talked about when they incorporated the tenets. Some of the participants said that they came up with the overarching questions independently, and argued that these were driven and molded by the restrictions of funding and time constraints.

The participants appreciated that the research question formulation was a technical process of converting the research problem into a researchable form. Despite not engaging the community in the formative stages of the question formulation, some of the participants invited the community to endorse the questions they formulated.

Owing to the complexity of the study design process, most of the participants indicated that in cases where the community was involved, their roles were superficial and aimed at satiating the element of inclusion. For example, the community fully participated in the actual design of the research; while in other cases the researcher independently designed the study then co-opted the community for buy-in.

The projects undertaken by the faculty were characterized by a collection process in which the community was fully involved in the data collection. This underscored Altman's (1995) assertion that data collection was a component of engagement, because of the relationship involved between the researcher and the participant, even though the faculty used different data collection methods across the different projects.

The data collection process, which in most of the cases was done through interviews, marked the point at which there was an individualized interaction between the community representative and the researcher. It was at this point that the faculty demonstrated both mutuality and reciprocity, and also experienced the same from the individual community members. This interaction also offered direct feedback that aided the faculty to better prepare themselves for the subsequent interaction.

In the case of data analysis, the study concluded that the faculty members and their research teams not only had a challenge in coordinating their schedules with the community members in order to meet and plan on data analysis, but most of the community members also lacked the knowledge and skill required in the analysis process. Despite this lack of the specific knowledge of data analysis, the community members brought to the partnership their own unique abilities, like the making of analytical conclusions based on real life experiences (Dulmus & Cristalli, 2012).

**Conclusion 3: Integration of reciprocity and mutuality is characterized by contradictions and are context-dependent.**

Integration of mutuality and reciprocity was influenced by how the community and the faculty related against the backdrop of each partners' needs. Interestingly, despite all of the three dimensions suggested by Stanton (2008) being a basis for defining mutuality and reciprocity, the outcome dimension was what the community talked about most. Additionally, some faculty members attested that they integrated mutuality and reciprocity in their projects because of compliance—the inclusion was a requirement given by the funding institution, the desire to apply the philosophy of community based research (Stanton, 2008) and altruism.

The study showed that negotiation characterized the process of integrating mutuality and reciprocity in the projects. The act of negotiation which involved bringing the community to the table was in itself a form of power dominance, even though the negotiations were intended to mitigate power disparity (Kritek, 2002).

The attributes of the community participants generally influenced the extent to which the community members were involved in the project processes, and the stage at which they were engaged. Some of these attributes positively impacted the realization of mutuality and reciprocity, while others offered a challenge. These strengths and limitations also manifested themselves at different phases of the projects undertaken by the faculty and presented a varied impact. Some of the challenges and opportunities were anticipated by the faculty, and factored into the project planning process, while others were unforeseen and had to be mitigated when they occurred. This was consistent with Israel, Schulz, Parker and Becker's (1998) assertion that challenges existed in university–

community partnerships. The demographics of the partner were identified as factors that influenced the integration of mutuality and reciprocity in the projects for example the level of education of the community partner.

The levels of education of the community members determined the extent to which the faculty member engaged them on the projects' technical processes, such as question formulation. Conversely, community members who were educated offered value adding insight into the various processes and components of the project. For example, in one of the projects, the community member added value to the project's theoretical framework by suggesting an alternative model, which ended up being used in the study design. The study concluded that the faculty members had the intention of incorporating mutuality and reciprocity in every aspect of their projects, but some of the phases needed a lot of knowledge and expertise on the part of the community representative or individual participants.

Additionally, owing to the low level of education of some of the community members, there was the challenge of trying to simplify the technical aspects of the project proposal or report without losing the actual intended meaning. This not only created a communication challenge but also increased the need for additional resource in terms of time and even money that needed to be used. This is consistent with Dulmus and Cristalli's (2012) assertion that in order to attain an ideal mutually beneficial university–community partnership challenges and barriers related university-community relationship such disparity in the level of education between the partners should be addressed.

In the findings, the project funding emerged as a pivotal factor in actualizing the tenets of community-engaged project because the research is often designed within the

funding threshold in mind. Some of the project terms of reference dictated the areas where the faculty had to demonstrate mutuality. One example is where the community was to participate in a stake holders meeting to discuss their views on the product of the project. In that case, the faculty focused her attention on the output phase of the project.

Lack of sufficient funding was also a challenge to the faculty members because it limited the extent to which they could fully ensure that the process and output of their research reflected the tenets of reciprocity and mutuality. The lack of funding reduced the incentive for faculty to conduct engaged scholarship (Nicotera, Cutforth, Fretz and Summers-Thompson, 2011). This is because they had to settle for what could help them achieve their personal or institutional objectives, which in many cases was at the detriment of optimizing on mutuality and reciprocity.

In addition to funding, time as a resource also offered a challenge towards the achievement of a mutually beneficial community-researcher engagement. This is because most of the grants awarded to the participants had time frames in the terms of reference within which the faculty members had to operate. The pace with which the project was executed largely affected the relationship between the researcher and the community, and the outcome of the projects unfavorably or otherwise. This means that having a longer interaction with the participants was both good and bad. For example a longer period of interaction on one hand gave a researcher a chance to get the confidence of the other partner and build trust, while in another case the elongated interaction cultivated familiarity which turned out to be detrimental to the relationship and affected the project process.

The prescriptive nature of grant funded projects in terms of time also offered a challenge. This is because in order to receive the grants most of the faculty members had to submit a work plan with the proposals. These work plans stipulated points at which certain deliverables will be communicated to the funding institutions. Because of unavoidable challenges like time taken to recruit participants, the time planned to complete the project was not always sufficient. This created a rush in some of the processes, which in turn affected the extent of the reciprocity and level of mutuality including the actual output of the projects.

The positionality of the faculty and the community members they worked with offered both an opportunity and a challenge to the project process. This was because the perceived positionality indicators like demographics influenced the nature of the relationship between the faculty and the community members. The relationship in turn affected the level of mutuality and reciprocity experienced in the projects.

The relationship between the faculty and the community in terms of perceived positionality influenced how they negotiated the community based projects. This was because of the biases and assumptions their interactions introduced (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). These unavoidable subjectivities created by the positionality of the community and university representatives in the project, influenced how reciprocity and mutuality was experienced (Patton, 1985). For example, the insider or outsider status of the faculty members described by Merriam et al., (2001) influenced the access, quality of data, and level of corporation that they got from the community.

For example the participant's affiliation to the universities in the eyes of the community implied that they had a lot of resources, which the community members hoped to get a share. Another example was the backlash as a result of a faculty member discussing her sexual orientation with the community. The positionality of the community members was also a challenge. For example, community members who were also accomplished scholars formed opinions about the theoretical inclination of the projects being undertaken in their community, and this affected the project process in terms of time and recruitment of participants.

Demographics like age, gender, language and the level of education had an influence on how the faculty members integrated the tenet of reciprocity and mutuality in their projects, including the approach they used to negotiate their relationships and interactions. For example, the age differences between the participants and the researcher or being an outsider relative to the community affected their interaction and the trust that existed between them respectively.

Race and cultural orientation of the faculty was both a challenge and a facilitator of the interaction between the researcher and the community. The findings show that it was difficult for a faculty member from one race to access and gain the trust of community members from a different race. For example a White faculty member working with a predominantly Black community had difficulty being accepted and trusted by the community members, and this was only solved by the intervention of a Black colleague who painstakingly convinced the community to take part in the project.

The study highlighted the collision of culture and goals that can put the researcher and the community at odds. The finding underscored the tough balance that exists between adhering to the complex format of academic writing and the need to include the community in the project processes. This also supported the discourse that a faculty member may not always be mutual and reciprocal in every aspect of a community based project without compromising the culture of the institution they represent. For example, the proposal format was sometimes very academic and complex for the community member who wanted to participate to comprehend. Such proposals have to be rewritten in a less technical format, against a backdrop of limited time. In some cases, the faculty member had to present the output in two versions, one that was easily understood by the community, and the other in a scholarly format, or as prescribed by the funding institutions.

Surprisingly, the faculty cited promotion and tenure as one of the reasons that motivated them to be involved in the community based projects. The finding shows that despite altruism and departmental culture playing a role in the initiation of the projects, the process also had a purpose of fulfilling the faculty member's promotion and tenure requirements. This in turn dictated both the pace of the project execution and the methodology that was used, including the final dissemination format. For example, one of the respondents asserted that the time between when their project commenced and when their tenure review was coming was very short, and as such she had to rush through the project processes to beat the deadline and in so doing, she might have compromised the intended collaborative spirit of the project, or even made the community feel excluded.

Accessing the community was one of the biggest challenges reported by the respondents. The findings highlighted the difficulty involved in accessing the community. After gaining access to the community, it was even more challenging to get the required number of participants for the interviews, which in many cases necessitated the lowering of the sample size. The opinion and actual leaders in the community played a monumental role in facilitating access to the community and in some cases where the faculty member did not gain their trust it affected the project in terms of timelines and viability. This is because when accessing the community took longer than the anticipated duration the timelines in the project plan were affected.

The greatest resistance to participation in the projects by the community members was attributed to the fact that they had previously participated in research studies that did not benefit them. Because the community felt that the previous interactions and relationships were not beneficial to them they often declined to participate, were obstinate regarding the schedules, refused to cooperate with the researcher after accepting participate or even sought an explicit proposition on how they will gain from the project.

Promises that were never delivered in historical projects had set bad precedent for research projects that left the communities feeling cheated. This feeling of betrayal posed a challenge to subsequent researchers who wanted the community to participate in their projects. The study therefore concluded that there should be a fervent effort by the university, the faculty, the students and university employees to reverse the negative perception of some community members about the university through relationship building and awareness campaigns.

**Conclusion 4: The interaction between the faculty and the participants was characterized by the conflicting interests and power differentials.**

The findings showed that the relational interaction between the participants and the community in their projects shaped how they experienced reciprocity and mutuality. These experiences were specifically attributed to the diversity of the people involved in the project, the context of their interactions, and the divergent views including the apparent conflict, as a result of all the above factors.

The interaction between the faculty and the participants was characterized by the conflicting interests and power differentials (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Kritek, 2002), which necessitated negotiations. The negotiations were imperative to both resolve the conflict and even describe the positionality of the existing power structures (Kritek, 2002). For example, the faculty members had the funds to carry out the project, while the community had the knowledge and information on the subject area that the projects needed to explore.

The finding also affirmed that the faculty members brought the community to the planning table, and convinced them to do activities that they would not have normally done through negotiations (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). Researchers undertaking community engaged scholarship had to cede power while negotiating for certain aspects of the projects. This was despite the researcher having more power capacity when compared to the community (Luke, 1974). This was because in such relationships, the faculty member usually had a lot more to lose if there was an impasse; therefore, the community partner had a relative power advantage (Kritek, 2002).

Faculty members' submission to the communities' demands was compounded by factors like the time frame defined by the funding institutions, lack of sufficient funding to restart the process with a different population, pressure to complete the project for publication or presentation, and ultimately the use of the results by the faculty member as evidence for promotion and tenure.

Salancik and Pfeffer (1974) suggested that the principal sources of partner's power over the others included structural position, the personal attributes, subject matter expertise and access to information. The findings showed that the above are some of the things that needed to be ceded in the projects undertaken by the faculty members. These features, according to the findings, were associated with the faculty relative to the community they worked with, and were equalized through ceding of the powers (Peters, 2005).

The process of ceding the apparent power created a give and take relationship as espoused by Foucault (1978) where an increase in power has to be compensated by someone else ceding part of their power (Sheldon & Parker 1997). Well executed negotiations could facilitate the incorporation of reciprocity and mutuality in the community engaged projects, thus positively influencing the continuum between high and low mutuality levels at the different phases of the engagement process suggested in Stanton's (2008) model.

**Conclusion 5: Expected outcome prevails over process and purpose in framing engaged scholarship.**

The products of the projects described by the faculty varied. Common across all the respondents was the fact that in every project there were expectations both from the

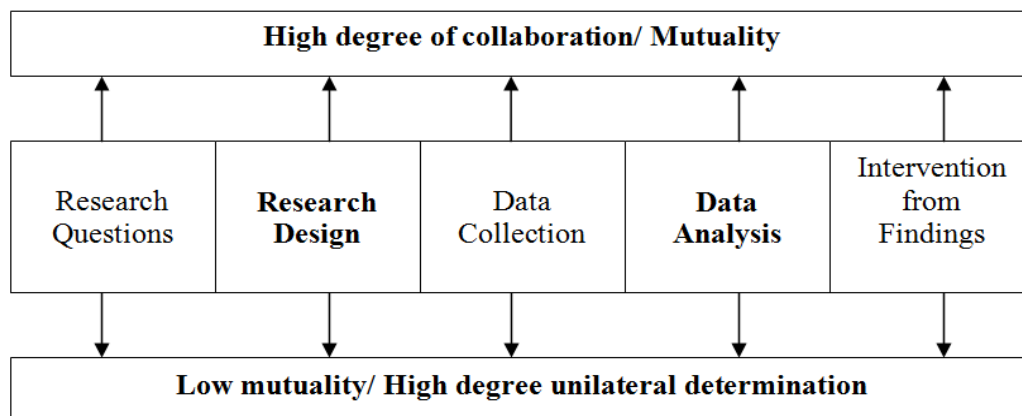
researcher and the community. When writing the proposal for the projects, all the participants stipulated these expectations or outcomes, most of which they reported attaining. The participants underscored that from the beginning, and all through the process, they were committed to fulfilling the expected goals, which they used to define mutuality. The faculty also highlighted that the outcome was what the community talked about and focused on.

### **Implications for Theory and Practice**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the community-engagement phenomenon through the perspectives of faculty members involved in community-engaged projects. Specifically, how they define reciprocity and mutuality as tenets of community engaged scholarship, how they integrate these tenets into their engaged projects and experiences on how they navigate the power differences between them and the community they work with.

#### **Implication for theory.**

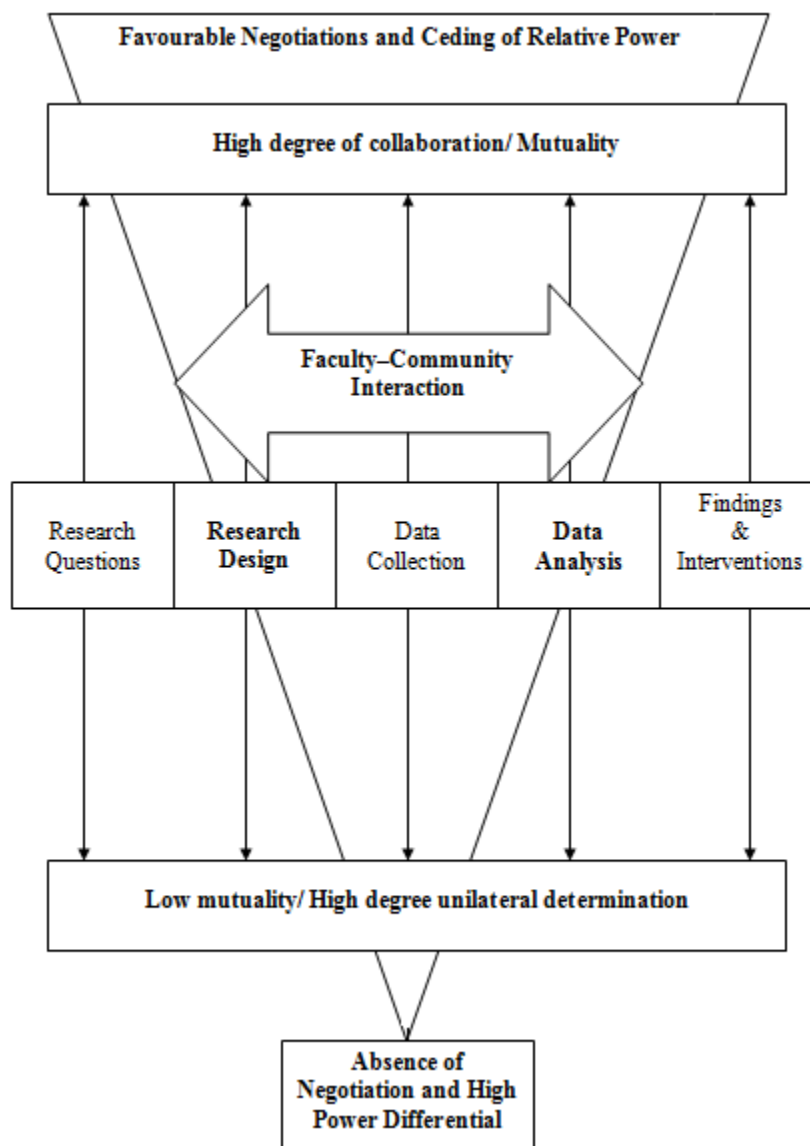
There is one implication to theory arising from the study. The study advanced the theoretical underpinning of Stanton's model. This study also advanced the theoretical underpinning of Stanton's (2008) three dimension model (Figure 4) by exploring the power relations component of university-community engagement. Specifically, the study helped in establishing the role of relative power and relationships in enhancing reciprocity and mutuality.

Figure 4. *Stanton's (2008) Degree of Mutuality*

Specifically, the proposed model explored how favorable negotiations in community based projects enhanced the mutual benefit derived from the partnership. The willingness by the relatively powerful partner to cede power during the negotiations increases the degree of mutuality.

In figure 5 Stanton's (2008) model has been modified by adding a triangle shape that describes how favorable negotiations and ceding of relative power affects the degree of Degree of Mutuality. This is intended to represent the way in which high degrees of collaboration and mutuality are associated with favorable negotiations and power sharing. The triangle also depicts how low degrees of negotiation and ceding of relative power are associated with low mutuality and unilateral determination of project process and outcomes. The width of the triangle also depicts the degree of favorable negotiations and ceding of relative power.

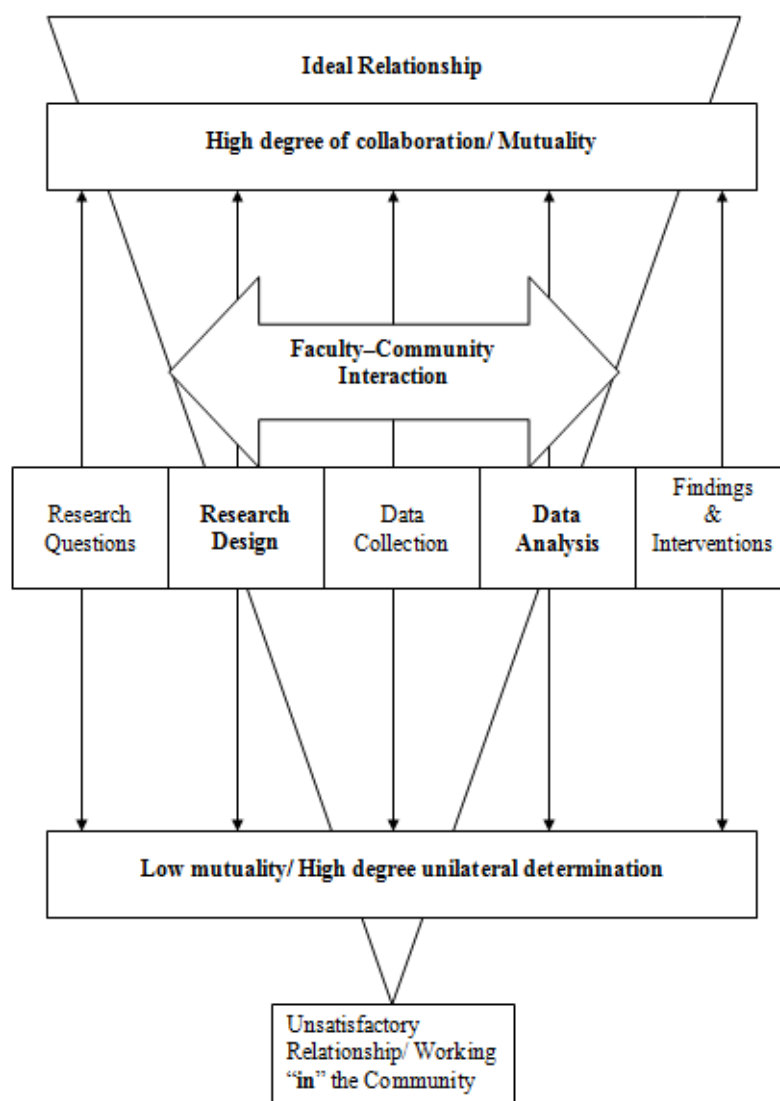
Figure 5. *Influence of Negotiation on the Degree of Mutuality*



The study highlighted the importance of relationship building in conducting community based projects. Access was noted as one of the factors that affected the actualization of the projects undertaken by the faculty because of the focal role played by the community participants who were to be accessed. Building relationships was seen as the first frontier of engaging the community, and an ideal relationship enhanced the integration of reciprocity and mutuality in community based projects. In figure 6 the

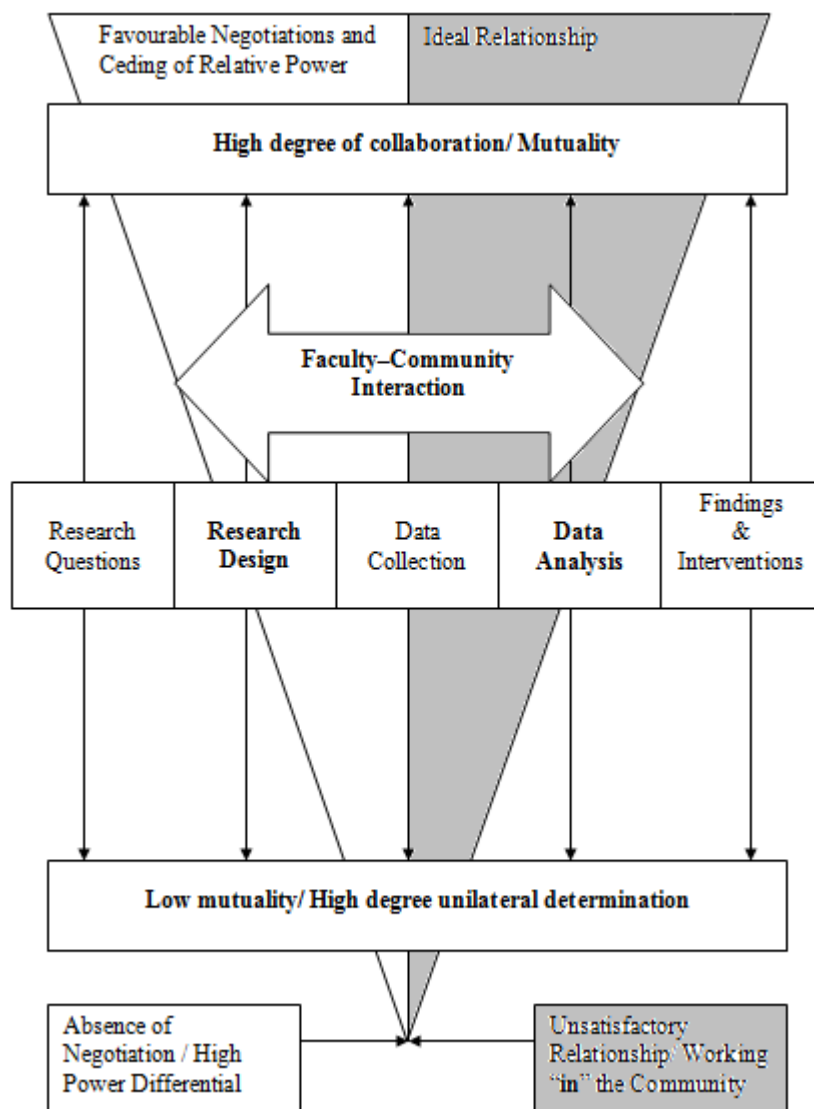
Stanton's (2008) model has been modified by adding a triangle shape that espouses the role of relationships in actualizing community based projects. The triangle is intended to represent the way in which high degrees of collaboration and mutuality are associated with an ideal relationship while low degrees of mutuality are associated with an unsatisfactory relationship between the faculty and the community. The figure 6 depicts that if the faculty member endeavors to establish an ideal relationship with the community, this may increase the degree of mutuality.

Figure 6. *Influence of relationship on the Degree of Mutuality*



The interaction between the faculty and the community or community representative influenced the degree of mutuality and reciprocity experienced in community based projects. In order to improve the collaboration infrastructure between the universities and the community, there has been a need to optimize on the relationship between the two, and there was a need to engage in negotiations to alleviate disparity (Figure 7).

Figure 7. *Influence of Negotiation and relationship on the Degree of Mutuality*



This may be done by ensuring that the voice of the partner with less relative power was at the table through favorable negotiations and readiness to cede relative power (Figure 7). The community and university representatives can only come to the table if they have a relationship with each other. Therefore, building an ideal relationship and having an interaction that encouraged negotiations may have influenced an optimal integration of reciprocity and mutuality in community based projects.

The study suggested a modification to the component Stanton's model that highlighted the relationship between the degree of collaboration and the engaged research processes. The study proposed the inclusion of the negotiations in the realm of power differentials. Figure (7) shows that favorable negotiations characterized by ceding of relative power, coupled by an ideal relationship are likely to yield a higher level of mutuality in the community based projects.

The study suggested that the level of collaboration between the community and the university or faculty and community representatives, specifically the degree of collaboration between the partners was influenced by how the needs of each partner are negotiated, including the kind of relationship that they establish. If well negotiated, the research or projects were more likely to yield a higher level of mutuality will be higher.

#### **Implications for practice.**

The study has a number of practical implications: (a) enrich faculty training and development content, (b) understand the challenges of integrating mutuality and reciprocity, (c) understand the definition of community-engaged scholarship across disciplines and, (d) strengthen institutions commitment to the community through research work.

**Enrich faculty training and development content.**

The study increased the conceptual understanding of community engaged scholarship as viewed through the faculty's lens. The practical implication of viewing community engaged scholarship through this lens was that the study helped scholars and practitioners to better discern the complexity of the relationship that existed between the institutions and the community partners in community engaged projects.

The study put into perspective the key role played by the faculty integrating mutuality and reciprocity in the projects, while actualizing the goals of such partnerships. This understanding will also equip junior faculty and novice researchers with knowledge to better prepare themselves to mitigate challenges like trust and positionality, which characterize community based projects and threatens the integration of mutuality and reciprocity.

***Understand the challenges of integrating mutuality and reciprocity.***

This study highlighted the causes of the disparity in the level of integrating mutuality and reciprocity in community engaged projects. The study explained the continuum between high and low mutuality in the Stanton's (2008) model by identifying the strengths that foster and the challenges that diminished the extent of integration of mutuality and reciprocity. The study also helped in developing the existing models of community engaged scholarship by adding the power relations dimension, which could assist faculty to better navigate the researcher community partnerships.

***Understand the definition of community engaged scholarship across disciplines.***

The study drew its participants from multiple disciplines, and thus the findings provide a diverse understanding of how community engaged scholarship understood and

defined across disciplines. These definitions will help faculty to conceptualize mutuality and reciprocity in a way that it can be applicable across different disciplines. This will enhance the future ability of researchers to conduct more empirical research on engaged scholarship across disciplines. It also gives perspective to the different ways in which community engaged scholarship is perceived against the backdrop of the two core tenets of reciprocity and mutuality.

***Strengthen institutions' commitment to the community through research work.***

This study helped to highlight what can be done to optimize the benefits of university-community partnerships through both harnessing the strategies faculty use to incorporate mutuality into their projects and identifying ways to nurture the tenets of engaged scholarship into the research ethos of the faculty. The research also highlighted the narratives of faculty members that may help others better navigate the dynamics of community based projects as representatives of the university.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Five recommendations for future research were made based on the findings of the study. First, this study adopts CFAT (2008) definition of community-engagement which limited the process to the collaboration between institutions of higher education and the communities. There is therefore a need to explore how other actors in community based projects, like non-profit organization or government departments, define and integrate the tenets of community engaged scholarship.

Second, the relationship between the university and the community is highly complex, with each partner bringing both input and a perspective into the actualization of the projects. This study focused on and explores one side of the two way interaction and there is therefore a need to understand the community partner's perspectives, their experiences in community engaged projects and how they define mutuality and reciprocity.

Third, considering that faculty work is framed within the context of the institution's mission (Sandmann, Foster-Fishman, Lloyd, Rauhe & Rosaen, 2000), there is need to explore whether the experiences of the faculty members are determined by the prescriptive nature of what the university demands or what the grant providers dictate. An area of future research would be to explore whether the experience of community engaged scholarship would be different if the faculty member was acting independently or outside the institutions mission; a research that focused on the impact of institutional culture and norms on the conduct of the project and the faculty.

Fourth, the study used a qualitative approach to understand the faculty's perspectives through interviews. The findings show that there are a number of challenges that affected the extent to which mutuality and reciprocity were integrated in to the project. An area of future research would be to use a quantitative approach to establish the correlation between the challenges faced by the faculty and the extent to which mutuality and reciprocity was integrated into the projects in order to be able to predict future occurrences.

Finally, the participants for the study were recruited in the United States and specifically from tier one research universities. In terms of institutional mission, geographic differences, level of resources and cultural differences, would the findings be the same if the study had been conducted in different country or continent? In cognizance of the above variables it would be worthwhile to conduct a comparative study in different tiers of universities and different countries in different continents.

The perspectives of the faculty underscore the how the process of integrating reciprocity and mutuality is intricate. It is apparent from the foregoing that reciprocity and mutuality is socially constructed, and that there was no definite prescription on how to optimize them. The intention of universities engaging in community based projects was noble, but the big question remains as to whether such institutions are prepared to cede their power to the community in order to optimize the degree of reciprocity and mutuality in their collaborations with the community.

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**APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANT SOLICITATION LETTER**

January, 2010  
750 Gaines School Rd  
Athens, GA 30605  
1-706-850-7481  
Omerikwa@uga.edu

Dear Prospective Research Participant:

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Lifelong Education Administration and Policy department at the University of Georgia. I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation study under the direction of Dr. Talmadge C. Guy, Associate Professor in the Lifelong Education Administration and Policy department. This doctoral study is designed to explore your perspectives on community engaged scholarship.

The participant must be a faculty member in a land-grant institution who: (a) is a recipient of a grant intended for working with the community engagement; (b) has completed the project(s) and received the full grant disbursement; and (c) has fully documented the project process and outcomes.

Your participation will involve a one hour interview consisting of approximately ten to twelve questions. I will record our conversation and will have the interview transcribed within one week of our exchange. I will send you a copy of the transcribed interview for you to review for accuracy. In the study I will use a pseudonym to disguise your identity and to preserve your anonymity. When reporting the findings in the research publication, your confidentiality will be maintained, as there will be no identifying information disclosed.

I have enclosed an informed consent form as required by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board. It will give you a more thorough description of the research.

If you any questions please feel free to contact me at my home number which is 1-706-850-7481 or my cell phone number 1-323-229-9139. You may also contact Dr. Talmadge C. Guy at 1-706-542-4015 or send an email [tguy@uga.edu](mailto:tguy@uga.edu)

Thank you for your consideration, your participation is very important to this study.

Sincerely,  
Anthony Omerikwa  
Doctoral Student  
Lifelong Education Administration and Policy  
Adult Education Department  
University of Georgia

**APPENDIX B - LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

May, 2010  
750 Gaines School Rd  
Athens, GA 30605

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this doctoral study which is designed to explore your perspectives on community engaged scholarship. The ultimate goal is to learn how you may have or have not learned to negotiate the power and politics involved in the process of incorporating the tenets of engaged scholarship in the project you were involved with. This research is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Talmadge C. Guy, Associate Professor in the Lifelong Education Administration and Policy department. As explained in the consent form, the interview will take approximately one to one hour over the phone or in person at a time convenient for you.

The interview will consist of approximately ten to twelve questions. I will record our conversation and will have the interview transcribed within one week of our exchange. I will send you a copy of the transcribed interview for you to review for accuracy. In the study I will use a pseudonym to disguise your identity and to preserve your anonymity. When reporting the findings in the research publication, your confidentiality will be maintained, as there will be no identifying information disclosed.

I have enclosed an informed consent form as required by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board. It will give you a more thorough description of the research. If you are still in agreement with participating in this research, please sign the consent form and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

I will call you within one week of the interview to follow-up with any questions or to ask for clarification of information obtained during the interview. If you have any grave concerns regarding the interview, please feel free to contact the chair of my committee, Dr. Talmadge C. Guy at 1-706-542-4015. Otherwise, if you need to reach me, please do not hesitate to call me at my home number which is 1-706-850-7481 or my cell phone number 1-323-229-9139.

Sincerely,  
Anthony Omerikwa  
Doctoral Student  
Lifelong Education Administration and Policy  
Adult Education Department  
University of Georgia

### **APPENDIX C - GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How do faculty understand and define the process of reciprocity and mutuality?
2. How do faculty integrate reciprocity and mutuality in engaged projects?
3. How do faculty negotiate the project engagement process?

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. Talk about your project. What worked well?
2. How do you define reciprocity and mutuality?
3. Describe the role the played by the participants/community in your project.
4. How did you ensure that the community was content and benefited from the project?
5. What kind of relationship characterized your interactions with the community/  
community representatives?
6. How did you integrate reciprocity and mutuality in your project?
7. When did you integrate reciprocity and mutuality in your project?
8. How did you the politics play out? ( manipulate)
9. Describe the challenges that you faced in the projects?
10. What are some of your regrets?
11. What advice can you give a novice researcher about working with the community?
12. Is there anything else you would like to share?

## APPENDIX D - CONSENT FORM

I agree to take part in a research study titled “Community Engaged Scholarship: A Faculty’s Construction of Reciprocity and Mutuality”, which is being conducted by Anthony Omerikwa, Lifelong Education Administration and Policy, The University of Georgia, 1-706-850-7481 under the direction of Dr. Talmadge C. Guy, Lifelong Education Administration and Policy at The University of Georgia, 1-706-542-4015. My participation is voluntary; I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The purpose of this study is to explore my experiences in the grant funded project community in which I worked with the community.
2. Through my participation in this study I will be contributing to the knowledge in this area, and I may gain some personal insight to navigate the complex world of community engagement.
3. The Procedures are as follows:
  - a. Participation in this study will require one personal interview with the researcher lasting approximately one hour. A brief follow-up personal or telephone interview may be necessary if the researcher needs to clarify information. The interview will be tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher.
  - b. The participant will be asked to review an information packet prior to the interview which includes a Brief Description of the Study and a list of questions that will be asked during the interview.
  - c. Participants will be asked to review her interview transcript for accuracy and share any concerns, additions and omissions with the researcher.
4. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen in this study.
5. No risks are expected.
6. I understand that my identity will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. The tape recording of my interview will be destroyed at the completion of the study’s data collection, analysis, and write-up.
7. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the interview and can be reached by telephone 1-706-850-7481. I may also contact Dr. Talmadge C. Guy under whose direction this study is being conducted on by telephone 1-706-542-4015

*My signature below indicates that the researchers have answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.*

Anthony Omerikwa \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Phone: 1-706-850-7481

Email: omerikwa@uga.edu

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu).*