# Partnership Experience in Service Learning
# Between a Private University and Community Organizations in Lebanon

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctorate in Education

By

Mayada Kanj

January 2022

## Abstract

**Mayada Kanj**

***Partnership Experience in Service Learning Between a Private University and Community Organizations in Lebanon***

Service-learning (SL) is an experiential pedagogy that higher education institutions (HEIs) are increasingly adopting to impact surrounding communities as well as promote civic awareness and hands-on learning for students. SL seeks to create partnerships with a community partner where service is taking place. In a public health context, it is critical to ensure that SL partnerships between the university and community partner are maintained and positively impact the communities where they take place. Power inequities between the university, which has more power, and the community partners present challenges to the creation of authentic reciprocal partnerships. In the absence of reciprocity, mutual benefit may be compromised (Camacho, 2004; Miller & Hafner, 2008). In 2012, the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) adopted a SL pedagogy to reach out to underserved communities and groups in order to enhance the learning experiences of public health students as well as improve social conditions impacting the health of the population in those communities. Community sites are located in underserved areas that struggle with poverty which is impacting health outcomes and well-being of the population living there. Poor housing conditions, lack of health care services and proper schooling are but some examples of daily struggles the community must deal with.

The positive impact of SL on student learning outcomes is well documented, but there has been less exploration of benefits to the community partner and the nature of the partnership created (Bahng, 2015; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Kaschak & Letwinsky, 2015; Morton & Bergbauer, 2015; Schmidt & Robby, 2002). This research adopted a qualitative methodology to explore the partnership experience of community organizations engaged in SL with the FHS at AUB. Purposive sampling was used to identify community organizations based on set criteria and subsequently semi- structured interviews were conducted with key informants in the selected organizations and with faculty who teach SL courses in FHS.

This research brings to the forefront the issue of power in SL experiences and the need to redistribute power in order to develop authentic relationships in SL partnerships in a developing

country. The conceptual framework used is informed by conceptions from Dewey (1986), Freire (1996) and values of democratic engagement (Saltmarsh, Hartley and Clayton, 2009). Using these theories the following aspects are used to define the conceptual framework: an emphasis on building authentic, reciprocal partnerships, addressing power differentials, and creating partnerships that can bring about social change. These three aspects constitute the components of the Critical Service-Learning Model proposed by Mitchell (2008).

The results suggest that the SL relationship between the faculty and the community organizations created threads for a possible network where benefits are skewed towards the academic partner. Yet despite these inequitable conditions, community organizations chose to remain in the relationship and provided justifications for doing so. These justifications are embedded in a power dynamic between academia and community organizations where the soft power of the university has impacted interactions of the faculty with the local communities thus hindering the creation of a reciprocal partnership.

These results can inform the practice of SL in the faculty and other universities attempting to incorporate this pedagogy in a developing context. It is hoped that the findings of this research might have an impact on how universities approach communities they want to partner with in order to mitigate negative influences of existing power inequities and foster a truly reciprocal relationship.

*Keywords*: service-learning, community- partnerships, engagement, Middle- East, power.

## Table of Contents

**List of Figures and Tables:**

**Figure 1: Traditions vs. Critical Service Learning ………………………………………..**

**Table 3.1: Community Organizations, type, affiliation, duration of collaboration………..**

**Table 3.2: Example of how data in two clusters was coded ………………………………….**

**Table 3.3: Example of how codes were pulled together under one theme …………………**

**List of Abbreviations**..........................................................................................................9

**1. INTRODUCTION ………………………………………………………………...10**

**Rationale and Significance ……………………………………………………………15**

**Research Purpose and Questions ……………………………………………………17**

**Road Map for Thesis ………………………………………………………………17**

**2. LITRATURE REVIEW……………………………………………………………..19**

**Civic Engagement: Theoretical Underpinnings of Service Learning………………19**

**The Beginning of Service-Learning………………………………………………..19**

**Civic Education and Democratic Engagement……………………………………22**

**Institutionalization of Service Learning in Higher Education …………………… 25**

**Community-University Partnerships………………………………………………26**

**Motives of Community Organizations……………………………………..27**

**Partnerships as Unit of Analysis………………………………………………..29**

**Partnership Experience …………………………………………………….31**

**Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit ……………………..……………………………………….35**

**Power Differentials ……………………………………………………………………42**

**Conceptual Framework…………………………………………………………..…..….48**

**3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY...…………………………..……….53**

**Researcher Positionality ………………………………………………………………53**

**Access to Sites and Participant Selection..…………..……………………………………..59**

**Sampling Strategy…………………………………………………………………..60**

**Data Collection Methods……………………………………………………………62**

**Semi-Structured Interviews……………………………………………………...64**

**Focus Group Interviews ……………………………………………………….66**

**Ethical Considerations…………………………………………………………………68**

**Data Management and Analysis …………………………………………………70**

**Thematic Analysis ……………………………………………………………..70**

**Language, Translation and Meaning ……………………………………………75**

**Credibility of the Findings ……………………………………………………………77**

**Researcher Reflexivity ………………………………………………………….77**

**Peer Checking ……………………..………………………………………………...78**

**Negative Cases ……………………………………………………………………78**

**Accounts of Data Collection Methods and Analysis …………………………………79**

**Limitations of the Study……………………………………………………………..79**

**4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: The Service-Learning Partnership……………........81**

**Roadmap for Chapters Four and Five ………………………………………………81**

**Motives of Partners to Enter the Relationship………………………………………82**

**Engagement as Output and not Process……………………………………………87**

**University Context for Service earning……………………………………………92**

**Reciprocity and Relational Exchange.……………………….………………………..93**

**Positive Attributes of the Relationship ………………..-……………………………..94**

**Negative Attributes of the Relationship...…………………………..…………………97**

**Benefits of the Partnership…………………………………………………………102**

**Unequal Exchange within the Relationship..…………………………………...104**

**Engagement Structures ……………………………………………………………106**

**Faculty Identity as a Partner………………………………………………………108**

**Not a Partnership/…………………………………………………………………..111**

**5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: The Partnership in Context.....……………………….117**

**Power Relations in the Partnership……………………………………………………....118**

**Defining power, Awareness to Power Differential …………………………………118**

**The Power of Academia………...……………………….. ………………………….....125**

**Reaction to Academia Power……………………………………………………………126**

**Powerlessness ……………………………………………………………………126**

**Compromised Priorities ………………………………………………………..127**

**Acceptance of Academia Power…………………………………………..……………128**

**6. CONCLUSION ……………………………………………………………………....135**

**Reflection on my Personal Journey……………………………………………………135**

**This Research ……………………………………………………………………...136**

**Findings in Theory and Practice…………………………………………………....138**

**Practical Applications and Implications……………………………………………....144**

**Recommendations for Future Research ………………………………………………146**

**REFERENCES..………………………………………………………………………148**

**Appendix A: Local Ethics Approval ……………………………………………………...167**

**Appendix B: UOL Ethics Approval ………………………………………………………169**

**Appendix C: Participant information Sheet: Community Organizations…………………170**

**Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Community Organizations.**……………………………173

**Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Faculty ……………………………………………..175**

**Appendix F: Focus Group Guide ……………………………………………………………177**

**Appendix G:  Conceptual Framework with Research and Interview Questions………….178**

## List of Abbreviations

AUB:  American University of Beirut:

CCES: Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service:

CPHP: Center of Public Health Practice

FHS: Faculty of Health Sciences

HE: Higher education

HEIs: Higher education institutions

NGOs: Non-governmental organizations

SL: Service- learning

SLTF: Service -learning task force

TA: Thematic Analysis

VASyR: Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Context of the American University of Beirut

As one of the global forces impacting HE, technological advances have impacted the way research and teaching is taking place; and facilitated the adoption of learner centered and interactive pedagogies. Globalization led to changes to how civic education is being applied. Community engagement cannot be seen any longer as an added on activity but should be a core component of the functions of HEIs. Experiential learning became essential to sensitize students to existing realities in surrounding communities (Bawa & Munck, 2012). The impact of globalization was also reflected in the mission of the American University of Beirut (AUB) which states that “graduates will be individuals committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership” (The American University of Beirut, n.d.).

Yet, nurturing an attitude of service among graduates is not novel to AUB. In their chapter “Through Thick and Thin: The American University of Beirut Engages its Communities”, Myntti, Mabsout and Zurayk (2012) describe how SL can be traced to the American Protestant missionaries who founded the university in 1860. Faculty and students of the university’s medical school founded in 1867 have played a significant role in providing care to needy populations in various neighborhoods of Beirut. Prior to World War I, such initiatives were mainly developed under the umbrella of Christian faith organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which collected funds from students, and organized events of both a social and religious nature. During WWI, the university established soup kitchens in rural areas and those became a venue for medical students to provide care for community members. Community engagement continued after the war where the university led

initiatives such as offering night classes, primary schools in the neighborhood, and a dental hygiene campaign. In the 1930s, service drifted further from religion and students began to engage in community work through extra-curricular activities. WWII further pushed the university towards relief work provided by its medical teams and the university continued to be responsive to its context. As an American institution based in the Arab world, the university's faculty and students were influenced by the growth of nationalism resulting from the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. This sentiment encouraged civic consciousness and a commitment to promote improvements in the Arab States. Students were motivated to act to improve conditions in the region where the "spirit of Arab nationalism animated not only campus politics but community service". Students increasingly engaged in community work with farmers, children, and others in the surrounding communities until the civil war which lasted from 1975 to 1990 (Myntti et al., 2012, p. 209).

This background illustrates, that since its establishment, AUB has engaged in community service to address needs triggered by wars and political unrest, as well as by a need to educate students who are aware of and responsive to existing issues and concerns whether social, health, environmental or others. Following the Israeli war in Lebanon in 2006, the University actively engaged in providing relief and emergency services to families in need. To coordinate relief efforts, the president of the university formed a Task Force for Reconstruction and Community Service composed of administrators, faculty and students. This group later extended its work beyond relief efforts to support projects aiming at improving the lives of individuals living in underserved areas in Lebanon. In 2008, the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) was created to connect the AUB community, including students and faculty, with policy makers and humanitarian agencies to facilitate access to marginalized and needy

communities. To achieve this, CCECS led various initiatives to connect the university with communities through promoting volunteerism in community projects as well as incorporating service -learning in academic teaching (American University of Beirut, n.d.). These changes were opportune for the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) as a leading school of public health in a region that has endured prolonged conflicts and displacement, presenting unique challenges to public health interventions (McKeever, 2014; Mokwena, Mokgatle-Nthabu, Madiba, Lewis & Ntuli-Ngcobo, 2007). Service-learning is an experiential pedagogy that allows students to be involved in structured service which responds to a community need and provides public health students with venues to practice their acquired knowledge within the context of collaborative partnerships between a community organization and the academic partner (Gregorio, De-Chello & Segal, 2008). By providing opportunities to engage with the community on projects that respond to actual community needs, SL offers a pedagogy relevant to public health education that aims at ensuring social justice (Chavez-Yenter, Badham, Hearld & Budhwani, 2015; Kinloch, Nemeth, & Patterson, 2015). Thus, in line with university initiatives and responsiveness to national and regional needs, FHS opted to incorporate SL pedagogy in underserved areas starting in 2012.

SL has been increasingly adopted by HEIs as an experiential pedagogy that improves student-learning outcomes as well as develops students' leadership and communications skills, civic engagement and critical thinking. This pedagogical approach allows students to experience dealing with real life issues and concrete social problem in their community thus promoting civic engagement (Bahng, 2015; Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Bringle, Hatcher & McIntosh, 2006; Eyler, 2002; Furco, Root & Furco, 2010; McDonald & Dominguez, 2015; Mitchell, 2008). HEIs were excited by the potential of SL and community engagement to transform both learning

and teaching (Hammersley, 2012). The learning for students occurs within the context of a partnership created between the university (academic partner) and the community organizations where students are placed (Cashman & Seifer, 2008). This community-university partnership is described as "collaboration between a university and community organization to achieve a jointly identified goal that might lead to social change" (Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, Mackeigan & Farrar, 2011, p. 16). Gronski and Pigg (2000) further define this collaboration as an "interactive process" between organizations owning different experiences yet working together to achieve a mutual goal (p. 783).

According to a report published by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the Syrian crisis, which is entering its 10th year, has resulted in the displacement of around 1.5 million Syrians, and strained public finances and the delivery of services. Most of the refugees fleeing Syria have relocated in already deprived areas in the north and Bekaa Valley of Lebanon which has placed extra demands (e.g., electricity, water, jobs) on already struggling communities United Nations Development Fund (n.d.). The findings of the United Nations' 2020 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) indicated that a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, severe inflation and economic downturn, on top of the devastating Beirut explosion which took place on August 4th 2020, has pushed vulnerable communities in Lebanon deeper into poverty (UN Refugee Agency, United Nations World Food Program & United Nations Children Fund, 2020).

In an effort to enhance student-learning outcomes and expand its impact on the surrounding community, AUB decided to incorporate a SL pedagogy and create structures to support its implementation. In 2012, AUB's Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), as a leading school of public health in Lebanon and the region, decided to incorporate SL as an appropriate

pedagogy not only to enhance student-learning outcomes but also to reach out to underserved communities and groups. FHS housed the initiative in the Center for Public Health Practice (CPHP) to provide logistical support to faculty incorporating an SL component in their courses. CPHP chose to focus all of the university's SL initiatives within one underserved community located in the Beirut suburbs. Reasons for this had to do with proximity to campus to facilitate commuting for students and the presence of a supportive municipality to facilitate access to partners in the community such as public schools, NGOs and other governmental entities. Added to this is the fact that this community hosts groups of refugees and struggles with limited resources and services.

**The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)**

FHS is based at AUB. Waterbury (2003) described how the American system of higher education is highly admired and represents an important feature of "American dominance" (p. 61). Bertelsen (2012) wrote about the soft power that AUB has within its context, which can be detected from its popularity among students and their parents and by its acceptance by the Lebanese state. AUB is a private transnational actor founded by the missionaries to provide American education in the Middle East region. AUB is accredited by the US, has a board of trustees in New York and an American president. AUB, which was established in 1866, has had an impact on learning and HE in the Middle East through its faculty students and staff who are enmeshed in the social context.

All collaborating community organizations cater to underserved groups living in impoverished communities making them ideal for providing rich educational experiences for public health students. The public health program in the faculty is similar to other public health programs that focus on underserved populations, community health and social justice. Such

programs are increasingly adopting experiential pedagogies, such as SL, that are well suited to achieving public health competencies (Anderson, Royster, Bailey & Reed, 2011). In such a context, the aim of the SL partnership is not limited to achieving student-learning outcomes; a social justice agenda that seeks to address structural inequities must be embraced (Bahng, 2015). SL does not aim to provide relief or charity but to create reciprocal authentic partnerships with organizations serving these communities. Reciprocal partnerships can serve as a venue to access more resources, thereby empowering these organizations. Eventually, the networks created by SL programs can be a means for building social capital in communities (Sandy & Holland, 2006).

Community organizations, as the sites where students are placed during SL experience, vary in nature. Some are linked to a ministry or government entity while others are NGOs that work independently or are affiliated with an international body. Community organizations usually provide services to local residents, such as free clinics, afterschool activities for children, and health awareness sessions for different groups. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, the number of civil society organizations in Lebanon increased between 1958 and 1964, when they were recognized by the state. In the post 1975 war era, they played a highly active role and grew to become service providers in the absence of public services. Lebanese NGOs have played a critical role in empowering civil society and contributing to progress and sustainable development (Bissat, 2002; Ministry of Social Affairs, 2004; Smith, 2001).

**Rationale and Significance**

Power inequities favoring the university are a major challenge facing community-university partnerships. The university tends to decide on the agenda for this collaboration and benefits more from the partnership (Shiller, 2017). The academic expertise present in the

university, in the case of the research context, the FHS, constitutes one form of power a community partner lacks. This imbalance can hinder the creation of a true partnership that is even and balanced (Camacho, 2004; Miller & Hafner, 2008). By adopting a SL pedagogy, FHS aims to establish partnerships with community organizations to enhance the learning experiences of public health students as well as improve social conditions impacting the health of the population in the chosen community. Yet, unless the SL is grounded in partnerships that are “authentic, equitable and democratic” (Shalabi, 2013, p.81) and these relationships are characterized by "closeness, equity and integrity" (Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq & Morrison, 2010, p. 5), the positive outcomes of SL may be compromised. The interactions between the two entities that present opportunities for mutual benefit may be compromised if essential ingredients such as equality and collaboration are lacking (Pompa, 2002). When one partner has more power and is acting in a manner to reflect that position, the relationship can be disempowering to the partner with less power.

Although well-meaning, the SL efforts taking place may in fact reinforce a system of dependency, where a community organization may choose to remain in a partnership with FHS for an expected benefit resulting from the service being provided by students enrolled in SL courses (Clayton et al., 2010). If the SL experience does not entail creating an authentic partnership, then the experience becomes similar to any act of charity or volunteerism. The positive impact of SL on student learning outcomes is well researched and documented, but less has been done to investigate benefit to the community partner and the nature of the partnership (Bahng, 2015; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Kaschak & Letwinsky, 2015; Morton, 2015; Schmidt & Robby, 2002).

## Research Purpose and Questions

This research explored the nature of partnerships created between the academic partner, AUB's FHS, and community organizations engaged in SL activities. Understanding the nature of the established relationship between the community organizations and FHS and how this relationship has evolved over time can impact the outcomes of the SL experiences that FHS is trying to achieve with both students and the chosen community. It thus becomes essential to explore the experience of those engaged in the partnership, what motivates a community partner to embark and sustain this partnership, how power is enacted in this relationship, and whether the relationship created is authentic and reciprocal. Each community partner will develop their own subjective meaning of the SL partnership they experience depending on their experiences in, and expectations from the partnership, as well as their own contextual conditions (Janesick, 1998). This study responds to a gap in the literature by exploring SL partnerships from the perspective of community partners in a non-western context, specifically in Lebanon.

My overarching research question is "How and to what extent is the community-university partnership created and sustained in a SL experience in a public health context in Lebanon?" The following sub-questions helped address this overarching research question:

1. What do community partners value in their relationship with the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB?
2. How do power differences impact the establishment of an authentic SL partnership?
3. How is power enacted and distributed in the partnership?

## Roadmap of the Thesis

In Chapter Two of this thesis, I reviewed literature in the field of SL, focusing specifically on the partnership experience from the perspective of the community partner. I also

reviewed literature that examined power dynamics within SL experiences, specifically how power is understood and experienced by community organizations engaged in SL.

In Chapter Three, I provide details of my research design and methodology. I start by describing my positionality in this research and how it impacted to my choice of research topic, and research method using semi-structured interviews to collect data and focus groups to validate, share and gain insights into that data. This chapter frames my professional position and role as a researcher. Details on my sampling strategy are then provided. In this chapter, I also explain my selection of community organizations to interview. Finally, I explain my data analysis process and my approach to coding.

My findings and discussion are divided into chapters four and five. In Chapter Four, I discuss the themes: motives for partners to enter this relationship; reciprocity and relational exchange. In Chapter Five, I will discuss power in the relationship with sub-themes of powerlessness, acceptance and justification of academia power.

I conclude in Chapter Six where I discuss my major findings. I examine the key themes that emerged from my data and bring together all findings and translate them into recommendations that can inform the creation of authentic partnerships between higher education institutes and community organizations in a developing context. I also provide concluding thoughts about future research.

# 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I discuss the current research on SL relationships. I start by discussing the history of SL and its theoretical underpinnings, and then discuss the literature of community-university partnerships in which SL partnerships are grounded.

## Civic Engagement: Theoretical Underpinning of Service Learning

### *The Beginnings of Service-Learning*

The initiation of SL dates to the early 1900's in the United States when engaging students in their communities was emphasized in HE (Mayot, 2010). The term "service- learning", however, was coined in the 1967 (Giles & Eyler,1994) and it was only in the early 1970s that attempts were made to form SL networks and to integrate SL into the syllabi of university courses (Mayot, 2010). SL is theoretically based in experiential learning, as conceptualized by John Dewey in his primary writing *Experience and Education* (1986), where he emphasized the value of experience in learning while acknowledging that not all experiences have the same educative value (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Hatcher & Erasmus, 2008; Shiller, 2017). Boyer (1996) emphasized the importance of higher education engaging with the community to address social and economic concerns. As such, HEIs must become a partner in the attempts to find answers and solutions to pressing problems in society (Dempsey, 2010). The work of Boyer (1996) influenced the future of SL in education because he emphasized the importance of SL to educate youth and prepare them for the 21st century. Boyer even recommended incorporating service as a pre-requisite of graduation from high school as it was deemed that civic education is one way to promote democracy (Boyte, 2009; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Johnson & Notah, 1999).

In the mid-1980s the SL pedagogy was implemented concurrently with the release of the "Principles of Good Practice in Combining Service and Learning" by the National Society for

Experiential Education as it was perceived that when service is combined with learning the value of both is enhanced (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Mayot, 2010) . In the 1990s, the National and Community Service Trust Act provided further support to SL, which was eventually recognized by a presidential recommendation in 1994 to universities throughout the US to encourage the focus on service principles (Mayot, 2010). Ultimately, in 1995 the American Association for Higher Education and Campus Compact organized the “Colloquium on National Community Service" which are currently considered an authority clearing house for SL programs (Mayot, 2010).

Elsewhere in the world, SL began to be adopted in different contexts. Mayot (2010) explored the history of SL and its implementation through a case study in one university in Thailand. The author reported that SL was recognized in the early 1990’s. Prior to this date, HE was concerned about existing social issues and student engagement was mainly to conduct a service like renovating a building to enhance exposure of students to social issues. In the early 2000, the concept of SL was incorporated into the educational program of the university. However, it was only during the International Conference on SL that was held in 2004 in Thailand and after learning from experiences of other countries that the concept of SL became clearer (Mayot, 2010).

In other countries in Asia, interest in SL began in 2002, following the first SL conference in Japan, which focused on SL as a venue for student exchange among countries in the region (McCarthy, Damrongmanee, Pushpalatha, Chithra & Yamamoto, 2005). The authors described the shared features of SL programs in Asia. They argued that there is no one model for SL as universities must create programs that are appropriate to their local context and emphasized the importance of reflecting on the terms of engagement between the different partners (students,

university and community) in order to seek reciprocity in the relationship (McCarthy et al., 2005).

In Europe, the scene looked different. Although there has been a burgeoning of organizations such as the European Service-Learning-Association formed in 2003, the European Network of SL in Higher Education in 2017 in Scotland, and in 2019 the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education; in Europe, SL is still a new field growing at a slower pace than the US (Heras-Colàs, Masgrau-Juanola & Soler-Masó, 2017). Heras-Colàs et al. (2017) documented the extent to which SL is being institutionalized in Spanish universities. Their findings indicated that universities, although aware of SL pedagogy, are encountering financial and logistical obstacles that prevent them from adopting it.

In the Arab world, the literature on service learning is rare with only one small scale qualitative study conducted in Egypt by Shalabi (2013) that attempted to address the gap in research that investigates partnerships as the unit of analysis in a non-western context. Specifically, their research examined the nature of a SL partnership between a small private university and five community members. The findings provide insight into the nature of the ongoing transactional relationship occurring between partners from the perspective of the community partner (Shalabi, 2013). Although community representatives were keen on the relationship progressing to become transformational in nature, the study did not attempt to investigate which factors must be addressed for this progress to happen. The study did not present the perspective of the academic partner and power dynamics among partners were not examined overtly.

**Civic Education and Democratic Engagement**

Much of the support that SL has received was because it was perceived as a form of civic education that can promote democratic engagement (Battistoni, Longo & Jayanandhan, 2009; Benson, Harkavy & Puckett 2000; Hurd & Bowen, 2020). A democratic engagement framework differs from that of a civic engagement. While a civic education framework emphasizes the activity and its setting and can trigger a change in the system to enhance effectiveness of what is being done, it will not necessarily lead to a change in the organizational culture and structure. Saltmarsh, Hartley and Clayton (2009) stated that without a clear definition, civic engagement risks becoming a barrier to collaboration with community partners to examine community concerns and to question power distribution and decision-making processes. The authors explained how democratic engagement is about purpose and process and must have implications for organizational change; where process is how those on campus (students, administration, and faculty) are initiating this community engagement and how this engagement is taking place, while purpose is about enhancing a democratic culture within and outside campus. Paying attention to process can make one question the positioning and application of expertise, while attention to purpose can explain how this expertise can be applied democratically (Saltmarsh et al., 2009).

HEIs usually have a preference to adopt a framework that privileges the expertise present in the university to solve problems in the external social contexts (Saltmarsh et al., 2009). In such a framework knowledge flows in one direction: from inside the academic institution to the external world. Who initiates a partnership does reflect an existing power dynamic and brings to the upfront the role of HEI in knowledge production (Glover & Silka, 2013). Formal and informal partnerships, in this form of civic engagement, are usually characterized by mutuality

where both partners benefit from the ongoing relationship. However, such a framework, where civic engagement is an end itself, does not expose students to the political dimensions of their community work, because power issues are excluded from the context of knowledge production and means of service provision (Long & Campbell, 2012; Saltmarsh et al., 2009).

Democratic engagement does not undermine expertise created or present in academia but is critical of expertise that is not inclusive of other sources and forms of knowledge. In a democratic framework, a new culture for academic institutions is needed where partnerships shift to become reciprocal in nature, more inclusive and collaborative (Dostilio, 2014; Saltmarsh et al., 2009). Such an approach can enable community members to engage and participate in discussions of relevant social issues, thus narrowing the gap between knowledge producers (HEIs) and consumers (community members) (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012). The resulting relationship will entail a power dynamic between the university and the community (Shiller, 2017). Experiencing these power patterns is political and awareness of power differentials present in the relationship should be explicitly addressed (Clifford, 2017; Mitchell, 2008; Saltmarsh et al., 2009). Saltmarsh et al. (2009) described how this shift to reciprocity reflects an epistemological shift that values not just expert knowledge, which is objective and rational, but also values the relationship building process and the co-creation of knowledge. As such, reciprocity will ease the way for community members to become members in this democratic culture.

Considering the why and how redefines community engagement and highlights issues that will necessitate change in operations of units on campus (Sandmann & Kliewar, 2012). Universities can create offices to run SL activities with little or no attention to the process of how or why the engagement is occurring (Saltmarsh et al., 2009). Benson, Harkavy and Pucket

(2000) claimed that universities must adapt their work to meet the needs of the local communities and must create partnerships that can facilitate this process. This means that universities must do things in a different way, starting with a change in their organizational culture so they become more socially aware and responsible. In fact, Saltmarsh and Johnson (2020) in their review of hundreds of applications by campuses seeking to receive the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, supported this claim when they stated that partnerships between the university and external organizations must be grounded in principles of "reciprocity; mutual respect; shared authority; and co-creation of knowledge, learning, goals, and outcomes" (p.112). The Carnegie Classification issued by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, requires that HEI provide evidence of their commitment to institutionalize community engagement (Carnegie Commission of Higher Education, n.d.)

Starting the mid 1990's the idea of an engaged campus became widely spread amongst HEI in the US (Shiller, 2017). In their introduction article for the "International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement", Hurd and Bowen (2020) described how HEIs have started adopting community engagement initiatives as one means to achieve their mission and academic goals. Along with this shift, HEIs began to focus more on management practices and to become critical of structures through which these practices occur (Hurd & Bowe, 2020). There was more emphasis on democratic practices in engagement, where engagement is inclusive and acknowledges the value of knowledge in the community (Hurd & Bowen, 2020; Jovanovich, Moretto & Edwards, 2017). Saltmarsh, Janke and Clayton (2015) further emphasized the need for HEIs to change their culture if they want to become an engaged campus and for democratic engagement to happen. This means that relationships between partners become reciprocal, built on trust and respect and where power and authority are shared.

**Institutionalizing SL in Higher Education**

The spread of SL reflected an interest of HEIs to engage with their surrounding communities. However, despite this expansion, SL was often positioned outside curricular programs. Such a position places restrictions on available funding which ends up being mostly soft money from short term grants and where faculty are hesitant to commit to SL in their courses (Butin, 2006). In their investigative study, Klentzin and Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowski (2013) explored the SL practice in five US HEIs where SL has been well established. The authors explained how although these HEIs consider SL a key component, the HE climate has changed particularly after the global economic crises of 2007-2008 which resulted in decreased endowments for universities. These challenges led to a movement towards formalizing and institutionalizing the structures through which SL is implemented and managed (Butin, 2006; Stater & Fotheringham, 2009).

Institutionalization can happen at different levels ranging from low to high integration (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). The authors articulated how at each level, there are institutional factors related to choices the organization makes regarding SL. Institutional commitment can be evidenced at the level of the university administration, faculty, students and community relationships; for example, in the mission statement of the university, leadership, and budget allocation; in course curricula, recognition and rewards for engaging in SL; and in SL course requirements for students (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). As for community relationships, institutionalization can be observed when resources of academia and organizations are joined to create a partnership that supports the interests of the community (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). Young, Shinnar, Ackerman, Carruthers and Young (2007) describe strategies to institutionalize SL in HEIs and emphasize the need for the administration of SL programs to be placed within

academic programs and not student services or student life programs. The administrative location is crucial to giving SL a legitimate stance, which will then make institutionalization possible (Young et al., 2007).

Considering the history of SL, and how the concept of service evolved in AUB (discussed in Chapter One), service for AUB can be understood as primarily a response to conditions created by surrounding political unrest and environmental challenges. This response aligned with forces encountering higher education to adopt experiential learning pedagogies and expand impact of the university to surrounding communities (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Mayot, 2010). These conditions of unrest remain to the present day. Political, financial and social challenges necessitate that the university respond to surrounding pressures and engage with its community through its academic and non-academic programs. Building partnerships through SL is one means to create and sustain such connections with neighboring communities.

**Community-University Partnerships**

Boyle and Silver (2005) describe how the concept of partnership is rooted in the empowerment rhetoric that universities adopted. The authors explained how the 1990s witnessed enhanced support for community-university partnerships due to a change in the political climate regarding social policy, changes happening within universities, and new roles defined for community mobilizing approaches. Previously, universities in the US engaged in a different social role, mainly one of knowledge production and dissemination; however, this model of being the elitist entity was challenged when universities adopted a social role to alleviate conditions in underserved communities (Boyle & Silver, 2005). In this model, community-university partnerships are a partnership between an elite institution and a less privileged entity where empowerment of the latter is the stated goal. As such, these partnerships

aim to be inclusive and to promote equal participation. For example, the community organization engages with the academic partner in deciding on the mission and goal of the partnership and the scope of the collaboration to ensure that their needs are met. This level of involvement in addressing social issues in a community and the attempt to solve problems jointly with the community was a shift from the elitist role previously assumed by the university. Boyle and Silver (2005) explored the historical context for HEIs to engage in partnership and tried to analyze the community empowerment rhetoric that HEI adopted. They concluded that although partnerships provided a venue to include community organizations in identifying and implementing solutions to existing problem, they in fact allowed HEI to maintain their privileged status as the entity with expertise and authority. For example, such partnerships provided platforms for the academic partner to conduct research and provide field experiences for students to enhance learning outcome.

***Motives for Community Organizations to Engage in Service-Learning***

Most of the SL research has been in the US, where ample evidence exists to demonstrate that students engaged in SL exhibit increased engagement as adult citizens, enhanced skills in critical thinking, ability to link theory to practice and communication competence (Bahng, 2015; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Kaschak & Letwinsky, 2015; Morton, 2015; Schmidt & Robby, 2002). Research that explored the community partner perspective focused on the benefits and challenges or barriers to the community organizations' participation (Cronley, Madden & Davies, 2015; Darby, Ward-Johnson, Newman, Haglund, & Cobb, 2013). For community organizations motives can range from building capacity to accomplish specific tasks as usually they are understaffed and need resources (Edwards, Mooney & Health 2001) and access to university resources such as knowledge and expertise (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Edwards et al.,

2001). Personal benefits, such as building personal connections and mentorship with faculty members, building organizational capacity as well as seeing working with students as part of their mission can all be motives for community organization to enter a SL relationship (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007).

Other research has documented a value of the partnership to organizations that extend beyond interactions that take place in an SL project, where organizations can chose to remain in the partnership because it can help them achieve their mission and bring about other undeclared benefits. For example, Gazley, Littlepage and Bennett (2012) examined the nonprofit organizations' capacity to host students and reported that for many organizations, the visibility of the organization and stronger partnerships with the academic entity were motives to take on students in SL.

Basinger and Bartholomew (2006) referred to the Giving Theories, originally developed for philanthropy, to help explain the motivation of the organization to participate in SL. Such theories assume that "cultural norms, as well as emotions and perceived self-interest" come together to prompt philanthropic giving (p.16). The varied influences, both altruistic and egocentric, interplay together and can coexist (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006). For example, when community organizations accept to host students, they must be willing to give time, effort, and expertise in return for a service, whilst the students are providing a service for a community organization in return for expertise from the community sites. As such, the relationship is reciprocal but the motives for the organizations can be "egoistic" or "altruistic". In other words, community organizations may have egoistic or self-centered motivations having to do with the satisfaction they expect by being involved and benefiting the students. It can also be previous experience and self-interest-based motivations, whereby organizations can expect assistance in

specific tasks. In most cases, however, there was little value for the community organization from the direct work of the students; community organizations were mostly motivated by altruistic factors having to do with the previous experiences and engagements with the academic partner (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006).

Barrera (2015) referred to resource dependence theory, to explain that when an organization is dependent on the resources of another, then power imbalance is created and the relationship becomes unstable, as organizations will have to act in ways to regain stability. Because of its emphasis on power imbalance, the resource dependence theory does not clearly explain the motivation of community organizations to enter a partnership. As such, the author proposed the concept of civic interdependency, a modification to the resource dependency theory, which is better able to capture the "collaborative nature of the partnership". This is important, as a collaborative relationship is one that can lead to social justice and social transformation (p. 89).

***Partnership as Unit of Analysis***

SL cannot happen without a community-campus partnership. Partnerships are one venue to study the effectiveness of the SL experience and as such should be explored both as a process and as an outcome. Cronley, Madden and Davis (2015) considered the publication "Where is the Community in Service-learning Research" by Cruz and Giles (2000), a turning point in the literature of SL when academic research began to focus more on the community perspective and to suggest using partnerships as a unit of analysis. Cruz and Giles (2000) in their seminal article highlighted the serious gap in SL research that focuses on the community side of SL, the need to understand reasons for this gap, and the significance of exploring reciprocity in SL research and models. Prior to this date, in a review of SL literature published between 1993-1999, Eyler,

Giles and Gray (1999) identified only eight studies that addressed community outcomes in SL. Since then, other studies have attempted to examine community partnerships and focus on the partnership as a unit of analysis to address the gap in research exploring the community perspective in SL relationships (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Dorado & Giles, 2004; Miron & Moely, 2006; Shalabi. 2013; Worrall, 2007).

Several researchers attempted to explain the gap in evidence regarding benefit to the community. Bortolin (2011) and Basinger and Bartholomew (2006) further interpreted the paucity of literature as evidence of a privilege of the academic partner over the community. The university and the community partners are positioned differently; the university is in most cases the entity that initiates the relationship and takes lead while the community partner is on the receiving end; as such, the academic partner is the entity that enjoys more power and influence over the community (Long & Campbell, 2012). Another reason for the gap in research exploring benefits to the community could be that charity models dominated most of the civic engagement initiatives, as it was believed that they could respond to social problems (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Long & Campbell, 2012). Historically, SL has been mostly influenced by the model presented by Dewey (1986), which is closer to charity approaches that aim to change factors within the individual control. Dewey believed in gradual reform and was more interested in moderating the impact of inequalities rather than in their elimination (Stoeker et al., 2010). Such a perspective agrees with the SL model where the more privileged students provide a service to the less privileged community.

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (2011) defined partnership as a mutual collaboration among parties sharing common interests, privileges, and power. Partnerships differ from relationships. Whereas a relationship is the general term applied to any type of interaction,

a partnership is a particular type of relationship that is characterized by integrity as well as closeness and equity (Bringle, Clayton & Price, 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq & Morrison, 2010). Bringle et al. (2009) described how a relationship can become a partnership when it exhibits closeness, equity and integrity. Closeness results from frequent interactions during diverse activities and the extent of influence one side has over behavior of the other party. Equity, on the other hand, exists if the inputs are perceived to be proportionate to the outcomes. Integrity is about values that impact how work is done. Grounded in this definition, scholars developed different models to better understand the partnership experience.

In the context of this research, a partnership is the relationship created in a SL experience between the faculty (academic partner) and the community organization (public, private or international organization) which hosts students registered in courses that incorporate a SL pedagogy. It entails the ongoing interactions between the faculty member and the focal point at the organization, the exchange of benefits, as well as the power dynamic within which the interactions take place.

***Partnership Experience***

The commitment of those engaged in the partnership becomes the motive for them to confront challenges encountered along the way. In other words, the nature of the collaborative experience determines the expectations and commitment level of the engaged entities (Miller & Hafner, 2008; Worrall, 2007). The quality and integrity of a partnership are governed by the three lenses of reciprocity, collaboration and diversity as presented by Mintz and Hesser (1996) in their discussion of principles of good practice in SL partnerships. Worrall (2007) also proposed these as core principles that partnerships must be grounded in. Worrall (2007)

conducted in-depth interviews with 40 community- organizations engaged in a SL collaboration with one SL center at one US University. The author wanted to explore how the community partner perceived their relationship with the academic center as well as the benefits and challenges encountered. The author referred to Mintz and Hesser (1996) lenses to explain that community organizations defined their relationship with the center as supporting diversity and reciprocal when it came to educational experiences that occur. The author believed since there was no sharing of power nor agreed upon mission and goals for the collaboration, the relationship was not collaborative but more of a cooperation.

Other models for community university partnerships emphasized terms of engagement and how this engagement changes over time. Bringle and Hatcher (2002) critically examined the three phases of a relationship: initiation, development and maintenance, dissolution, and ongoing dynamics of this relationship to provide recommendations for SL practitioners on what is needed to create community university partnership. The authors used relationships as analogs for a partnership. To *initiate* a relationship, for example, necessitates being able communicate effectively to self-disclose, to be clear on the goals and expectations from this relationship. When it comes to *relation development and maintenance,* the authors explained how relationships vary in scope and intensity of interactions. The dynamics of the ongoing interaction will influence the "perceptions of equity, satisfaction and commitment" (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 508). For example, when the outcome of the relationship or the rewards exceed the minimal that is expected from the relationship then the partner will be satisfied from the relationship.

The intensity and diversity of interactions as well as well as shared decision-making can bring partners closer. The authors noted that relationships do not have to be equal in all aspects to be satisfactory. Satisfaction in the relationship depends on whether the partnership is

perceived "equitable and fair" (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 509). If the relationship is inequitable, that is one side benefiting more than the other does; the party who benefited less will attempt to lower their investment in the relationship in an attempt to regain equity or might opt to terminate the relationship. When it comes to *dissolution* of a partnership, Bringle and Hatcher (2002) explained that a campus-community partnership that lasts or endures a long time does not necessarily reflect a healthy or a close relationship but could in fact reflect a dependency of one side over the other. Therefore, the partnership remains because it is maintaining power difference and not allowing one side from building capacities to be independent.

Dorado and Giles (2004) also emphasized terms of engagement within a partnership. The authors explained how SL partnerships could follow three different levels of engagement: tentative, defining newly formed and short-term, inexperienced partners; aligned in engagement where partners are actively engaged in negotiations to meet their respective goals; and the third level of committed partnership. In the latter, both partners perceive a value in the partnership itself, a commitment that extends beyond student presence. Community partners can favor the third level more than HEIs, as they can perceive more benefit in the SL relationship to achieve the mission of the organization beyond the student project (Dorado & Giles, 2004). The terms of engagement in partnership development, as discussed by Dorado and Giles (2004), resemble the model proposed by Enos and Morton (2003) where partnerships move from transactional to transformative, evolving over time from the transactional, defined as project- based to the transformational where deeper engagement among partners takes place and where change can happen.

Bringle, Clayton and Price (2009) proposed the SOFAR Model (Students, Organizations in the community, Faculty, Administrators on the campus, Residents in the community), which

provides a structural framework for relationships that separates campus into administration, faculty and students and community into organizational staff and residents. In this model, partnership is perceived as a relation between individuals and the quality of these relations; that is the extent to which these relations entail closeness, equity and integrity, in addition to the extent to which these relations are transformational (Bringle et al., 2009). The authors expanded on Enos and Morton's (2003) paradigm for how a relationship can exist and added that a relationship can fall on the continuum from exploitive to transactional to transformational (ETT), where a relation might be exploitive in some aspect and transformational in another. Examining the relationship using the ETT perspective can promote change when one of the partners can actively engage in actions to move the relationship in one direction of the continuum (Bringle et al., 2009). Bringle and Clayton (2013) expanded this perspective and pushed for also examining the nature and quality of relationships and their impact over time. They developed TRES (Transformational, Relationship, Evaluation Scale), a tool to assist professionals find a workable formula to commit to a partnership, which was deemed necessary for democratic engagement. TRES is composed of nine domains that highlight the dynamics of the ongoing partnership. The revised version examines the partnership dynamics by addressing domains related to outcomes, goals, decision making, resources, conflict, identity formation, power significance and satisfaction. The revised version of the TRES was guided by the publication of the Democratic White Papers (Saltmarsh et al., 2009) and which also can be credited with much of the interest in studying partnerships through the lens of democratic engagement. This paradigm of democratic engagement was also discussed by other researchers, who chose community partners as unit of analysis; and who wanted to examine the ongoing interactions, reciprocity, and power dynamics

governing these interactions (Kniffin, Camo-Biogradlija, Price, Kohl, Dickovick, Williams & Bringle, 2020).

Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, MacKeigan and Farrar (2011) explored the process of creating and maintaining long-term community-university partnerships by engaging all partners (students, faculty and community partner) in a reflective process. They highlighted the importance of assessing collaboration readiness in three categories related to contextual factors of the institution, personal characteristics of team members such as communication and leadership skills, and interpersonal factors such as previous collaboration experiences (Curwood et al., 2011). The reflective process revealed challenges related to the commitment of faculty to teaching SL courses, availability of resources, and ensuring a shared vision and values; as well as challenges related to equitable power sharing among partners and the discussion on power sharing and decision-making taking place from the onset (Curwood et al., 2011).

Partnerships can present challenges such as cultural differences and expectations of the partners. These differences would require that partners negotiate their roles and expectations and discuss these differences to come to an agreement on rules of engagement. The success of any partnership is very much related to how the different partners negotiate expectations and obligations (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012). Such negotiations are usually conducted within a social context and power dynamic, which must be considered early in the partnership as it can impact reciprocity which in turn is a function of the relationship's quality and power (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012).

**Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit**

Community organizations have benefited from connecting with a prestigious university, through staff development initiatives in addition to students hosted by the site acting as role

models or motivators for staff members (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007). Even though satisfaction studies indicate that a community organization may be satisfied with an SL initiative, there is increasing evidence that the benefit is tilted towards the students and not the community (Stoecker, Beckman & Min, 2010).

Reciprocity differs from mutuality. Saltmarsh et al. (2009) differentiate between mutuality, which is when all parties benefit from a relationship and reciprocity when partners share responsibility and accountability for creating knowledge. Mutuality allows collaboration to move from a place where the knowledge and expertise of a university are used *for* the community to collaboration *with* the community.

Henry and Breyfogle (2006) attempted to problematize the view of reciprocity in SL and argued in support of considering an enriched model of reciprocity as compared to a traditional one. The authors noted how the earlier definition of reciprocity in SL as "exchange between giving and receiving between the *server* and the group or person being *served*" (p. 28); did not capture the political dimension of democratic engagements that was introduced by Dewey (1986). In a traditional form of reciprocity, each partner has their own goals that they expect the SL relationship to address. The university or academic partner is the entity, which has more power as they have more influence on how activities are conducted. It follows that the academic partner perceive their identity as a "server" in a relationship that has fixed tasks and limited scope for collaboration. An enriched view on reciprocity, on the other hand, is one where partners are committed and there is no power hierarchy; partners feel responsible in identifying problems and implementing solutions. Adopting this perspective avoids the static classification of each entity in the relationship. So while a traditional model of reciprocity maintains the status

quo between the server and the served, an enriched reciprocity allows for deeper engagement and understanding of the power relationship, which can facilitate change.

Researchers provided ample attention to the role of reciprocity in SL relationships; where mutual benefit was recognized as a significant quality of SL practice (Hammersley, 2012; Porter & Monard, 2001; Simons & Clearly, 2006). The critics of SL doubted whether mutuality could occur in SL, questioning whether collaboration and engagement can replace previous modes of hierarchical collaboration (Butin, 2003; Oldfield, 2008; Tryon & Stoeker, 2008). Others even questioned whether mutuality does in fact conceal power differential in the relationship (Camacho, 2004; Oldfield, 2008). For example, Hammersley (2012) spoke of the "myth of mutual benefit" (p.176) that SL aims to achieve. The author adopted a development lens that allows for the analysis of power relations within a community-university partnership. Such a lens highlights ideologies embedded in SL. Community SL could entail a hierarchy between servers and those who are served, which might overshadow the collaborative spirit that SL advocates (Hammersley, 2012). Long and Campbell (2012) expanded the understanding of mutual benefit beyond each partner gaining some benefit from the relationship. Instead, they argue, mutual benefit must be a shared value that aims to place engagement within constructs of justice and fairness (Long & Campbell, 2012). Such a model would attempt to dismantle conditions that result in disadvantage and would instead seek to achieve transformational partnerships.

Research focusing on the perspectives of community partners, even though such literature is sparse, provides evidence that factors such as “valuing and nurturing the partnership" (Sandy & Holland, 2006, p. 32) and “reciprocal long-term engagement” (d'Arlach, Sánchez, & Feuer, 2009, p. 13) are a priority in the relationship. A supportive climate for knowledge exchange and

mutually beneficial outcomes is created by a collaborative process that is reciprocal and interactive (Ngai, Cheung, Ngai & Chan, 2010; Nichols, Gaetz & Phipps, 2015). In their study to determine community perspectives, Worrall (2007) as discussed earlier, attempted to explore their perspective on the SL collaboration further confirmed that one of the factors, which influenced the quality of a partnership, is reciprocity of the relationship, often linked to specific individuals at the university counterpart.

Janke and Clayton (2012) define reciprocity as "recognizing, respecting and valuing of the knowledge perspective and resources that each partner contributes to the collaboration" (p. 3). To describe and monitor the engagement process in a partnership, Janke (2013) proposed a "cone of reciprocity" where partnerships are narrow to begin with, eventually become thicker and more collaborative; in other words, the level and degree of engagement will determine the type of reciprocity. Dostilio, Harrison, Brackmann, Kliewer, Edwards & Clayton (2012) described reciprocity as a function of a relationship's quality and power, and argued that it can occur at both individual and collective levels. They (Dostilio et al., 2012) proposed three orientations for reciprocity: exchange, influence and generative. The *exchange* orientation is one which highlights how motivations can lead to different means to maintain a relationship, more importantly how this reciprocity, which although can lead to equitable interchanges, can "be maintained in inequitable conditions" (p. 22). While the i*nfluence* orientation is one where the collaboration process or outcome is influenced by those engaged in the partnership and their contributions. The *generative* orientation, on the other hand, is one where those engaged produce something together that would not have been possible without this collaboration. When mapping of relational and contextual power occurs and decision-making is shared "reciprocity shifts to become generative and transformative" (Davies, Kliewer & Nicolaides, 2017, p. 37).

Reynolds (2015) conducted a case study in Nicaragua, which has experienced protracted civil wars and was struggling economically, to explore SL partnership of a rural municipality and a college of engineering. This was part of a larger study that attempted to explore the perspective of community stakeholders about global SL partnerships. The author used a framework for social justice proposed by Fraser (2009) which is based on equal participation of all partners in the relationship. The framework is political in the sense that it includes the “politics of redistribution, recognition and representations” (p. 81). Although the community respondents reported positive tangible outputs, such as better access to clean water and electricity, they also described another category of less tangible outputs such as trust and sense of pride. Community representatives gained trust from the human contact they had and a sense of pride following visits by students to their village. The physical presence of students made them feel acknowledged and “taken into account” (Reynolds, 2015, p. 84). To maintain the concept of justice, the author further emphasized the need not to focus on tangible benefit as an outcome but as means to ensure equal participation, which is important to maintain trust in the SL partnership.

Hoyt (2010) reflected on a long-standing community university partnership called “MIT@ Lawrence” (p. 75). The author shared data gathered from engaging in this partnership for over seven years and presented a theory of engagement where partnerships progress through stages from pseudo-engagement, to tentative, stable, authentic and finally to sustained partnership. For each stage, s/he presented institutional factors that facilitate change as well as implications for democratic engagement. At each stage, motives and situational factors will impact reciprocity and level of engagement (Hoyt, 2010).

Dostilio (2014) also gathered evidence from a partnership exhibiting a high level of democratic engagement in order to understand how a democratic engagement process is enacted

in a partnership. The author conducted a case study to explore how ongoing interactions in a partnership and conditions within which these interactions occur, as well as personal attributes of those engaged, interact together to impact the adoption of a democratic process. S/he confirmed that significant factors had to do with ensuring dialogue and reflection on the interactions taking places, as well as leadership that promotes structures that create space and transparency for democratic orientation.

***Partnerships Embedded in Power***

The university presents a highly structured context that can present the community organization with barriers as to where and how they can enter this structure to initiate a process of collaboration. In their study, Sandmann and Kleiwer (2012) attempted to analyze how power can impact engagement negotiations in a community – university partnership. The authors presented a hypothetical example that describes engagement in a partnership from the perspective of the community. The scenario was based on their observations of a major community- university partnership at the University of Georgia. Their findings indicated that the organizational structures, academic calendar, and knowledge creation role of the university can result in power differentials in the partnership (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012).

Community organizations are usually in a situation of uncertainty about how to act and what to expect in the process of initiating contact with the academic partner. Further, the different time calendars can be difficult to negotiate and community organizations can perceive these interruptions as a threat to the partnership. A differential in need can result from the difference in calendars between academia and a community organization, which can cause tensions within the relationship (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012).

SL partnerships are usually initiated by the university (Shiller, 2017). Based on a team ethnographic research, Schefner and Cobb (2002) note that when a partnership is initiated by the needs or concerns of a powerful entity (a university and government entity in this case), the resulting collaboration will experience a power differential from the start. The authors concluded that when partners have different motives and intentions to collaborate, these diverging agendas can lead to a conflict situation as well as may limit open communication about each organization's agenda (Schefner & Cobb, 2002). The expert position of the academics can become a barrier to openness about agendas and give legitimate power to one group, thus reinforcing existing social inequalities (Schefner & Cobb, 2002). In their case study, Schefner and Cobb (2002) state that in collaborative relationships, the issue of who has control is important as lack of control can limit involvement in the relationship. Thus, when different actors with different agenda's and different power status come together, the resulting partnership can, despite good intentions, lead to differential outcomes. Unless attention is given to the existing hierarchy, those with more power will dominate others in the collaborative relationship (Schefner & Cobb, 2002).

Power relations should not be examined within a context of charity and philanthropy partnerships as such models do not empower but rather "legitimize" existing power structures (Camacho, 2004, p.33). In other words, transactions occurring in a charity model can reinforce a sense of powerlessness in the community receiving the service, which maintains existing structures that are behind these inequities. If knowledge flow is unidirectional from the university to the community then this can risk creating stereotypes of communities as "helpless" (Hammrsley, 2012, p. 174). Partnerships with a power imbalance can lead to asymmetrical relationships between those offering the service and those receiving it. Davis et al. (2017)

discuss how this power imbalance can affect the partnership. Dynamic relationships occurring within SL provide an opportunity to examine different power positions that members of a community occupy. Both, the community organizations and university partners, must be aware of inequities existing in a partnership; and be willing to mutually share this power to alleviate the negative influences of existing inequities (Camacho, 2004; Dempsey, 2010; Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012).

**Power Differentials**

The discussion of power within the literature of SL partnerships has been limited to concerns about revealing inequality in relations that are intended to be equitable (Camacho, 2004; Dempsey, 2010; Davis et al., 2017; Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012). To the extent that a partnership is a social activity, as described by Sandy and Holland (2006), the effectiveness of a community-university partnership is impacted by power relations existing within the context of that partnership. Power is present within the socio-political contexts in which we exist, thus elements of power exist in systems that connect people (Davis et al., 2017).

Foucault (1982) explains that power exists everywhere in social interactions. He describes how human subjects often exist in complex power relations and are always in a state of struggle, not necessarily against an institution or a group but against a form of power. This form of power can render an individual, a subject to another person by knowledge dependence for example (Foucault, 1982). He differentiates between "power relations, relations of communications and objective capacities" (Foucault, 1982, p. 786). Objective capacity will entail a relationship of communication and is linked to power relationship, for example where required tasks are linked to tradition or training. Relationships of communication that can modify information amongst partners can also produce effects of power. These three kinds of

relationships described by Foucault (1982) are not stable and in any given context they can occur in different forms. For example, in a university context, the physical space, internal policies and regulations that govern activities, the personnel and students together present a form of "capacity-communication power". In such a context, teaching is governed by a regulated system of communications as well as by power structure, which governs hierarchy, reward and punishment within the institution (Foucault, 1982, p.787).

Stanlick and Sell (2016) discussed the challenges encountering partnerships to be able to ensure a power dynamic that is balanced and inclusive. If partnerships adopt an approach to "create" rather than "enhance" what others are working on, this will lead to an unbalanced relationship where one partner is assuming a role of a "helper to a recipient community. Education and engagement are both political acts that lead to empowerment, which is one way to regain power balance in a partnership (Stanlick & Sell, 2016, p.80). Forms of power within the empowerment process were discussed by Rowlands (1997) and later used by other researchers in their attempt to understand power dynamics within SL partnerships (Davis et al., 2017; Osman & Attwood, 2007). By exploring empowerment, Rowlands (1997) attempts to explain how the power that underlies empowerment is operationalized in certain contexts. S/he argues that empowerment is not only about access to resources but also about control over these resources and opportunities, and with control comes power. Different forms of power exist within the empowerment process: "power over," which is the controlling power; "power to," which is a form of productive power that creates new opportunities or activities without domination; "power with," when partners jointly address problems; and "power from within," which is about personal agency (Rowlands, 1997). Davis et al., (2017) contend that these dimensions can help define constructs of power enacted in a community-university partnership.

Himmelman (2001) wrote about collaborative betterment and collaborative empowerment. The author articulated how not examining power structures limits the impact of a partnership, because community organizations end up taking a bigger service role while decisions and power remain with the university. Dialogue to map power issues among partners can pave the way for engagement to be democratic. This will then allow transformation from collaborative betterment to empowerment.

In his discussion of power and powerlessness, Tew (2006) provides a framework that can be used by social workers to map and address power and powerlessness issues in social work. Tew (2006) describes how “power over” and “together” can co-exist and lead to either productive or negative outputs. People can be involved in more than one type of power relations at the same time. For example, the interpersonal relations can offer opportunities for collaboration while simultaneously maintaining a system of inequality in the way it is structured (Tew, 2006). The author used structural approaches in an attempt to understand how power is operationalized in social relations. Privileged groups have access to resources and can exercise power over other groups. As such, power is not an entity to be owned or possessed but rather a situation where a dominant entity is benefiting in different ways and where those on the receiving end will have inhibited capacity to express their demands and apply their capabilities (Tew, 2006). Those who are privileged may not be aware of any conscious attempt to “oppress others,” while those who are "subordinated” may not be aware of the "realities of oppression," other than feeling anxious or frustrated about the status quo (Tew, 2006, p.36).

These struggles were also discussed earlier by Paulo Freire (1996) whose work, like that of Dewey (1986), has been used as a theoretical underpinning in SL. Deans (1999) compares Dewey and Freire, who were both critical of education that is static, disconnected and elitist and

built their philosophies on concepts such as experience, problem-solving, consciousness raising, social action and transformation. Freire emphasizes the value of education that is not disconnected from reality but instead tries to address problems existing in a certain context. Through dialogue and reflection, he argues, people can understand their context and be ready to change. As such, the reflection that is important to raise consciousness has to be based on the way people live and exist (Freire, 1996). In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996), Freire describes education as a transformative, grass roots political movement, and emphasizes dialogue and deep engagement as a means for transformation. To Freire (1996), consciousness is more than critical awareness; it necessitates a willingness to engage in dialogue in order to understand power and power relations in a particular context, the aim being to change culture and structures of oppression; a process that he labelled as conseientization. Through conscientization, groups can become aware of systems that have influenced their lives and realize that their conditions are not necessarily a result of their own volition but of inequitable policies and structures (Freire, 1996; Miller, Brown & Hopson, 2011).

Freire also believed in decreasing the distance between the university and the outside world. He saw the world as composed of those who are oppressed and their oppressors, who need to engage in a dialogue in order to coexist. The oppressors are those who have power, whether economic or political (Freire, 1996). Applying Freire's ideas to SL, HE organizations and university students are the powerful entity the oppressors, and community groups outside the university are the oppressed who have less power. Researchers have referred to Freire's theory to analyze power and reciprocity in community-university partnerships (Davis et al., 2017; Deans, 1999; Kliewer, Sandmann, Kim & Omerikwa, 2010).

Freire linked power to knowledge production and reproduction, and although he did not use the term reciprocity as such, it was inferred from the discourse on power that exists within his pedagogy, where to achieve reciprocity, community-university partnership must not be oppressive (Freire, 1996). If development is based on authority where individuals are prevented from participating, then outcomes will not be "mutually accepted on terms of equality" (Freire, 1996; Kliewer et al., 2010, p. 257). To form a reciprocal partnership, the university must overcome characteristics of scholarship such as envy, fear of losing status and knowledge superiority (Freire, 1996; Kliewer et al., 2010).

Diverse cultures can experience partnerships differently. Mitchell and Rautenbach (2005) examined a partnership experience in South Africa, questioning whether universities can engage in a true partnership and whether communities have the capacity to partner with universities. He /She argues that if development is to be achieved through SL partnerships, then universities must commit to the development process in terms of resource allocation and core university functions. How power interacts in the development process is important. The experience in South Africa indicates that with time the university can become more cognizant of the partnership formed (Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005). In the planning and implementation phases, the situation in which a partner has more resources and responsibility in running activities will lead to a power imbalance. Although the capacity of the community partner to say ‘no’ to academia can indicate empowerment, the South Africa community partners in his/her study perceive their relationship with academia as a relationship of a younger to an older brother; and as such it is a relationship that cannot be turned down, as there is always hope to benefit in the future. The university becomes the main entity in charge of partnership while the community partner assumes a more passive role (Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005). In another study in Hong

Kong, Ngai et al. (2010) conducted focus group interviews with 22 teachers engaged in a SL partnership. Results indicated that respondents who all agreed to the value of SL partnership also emphasized the significance of an equitable relationship between both partners when it comes to access to resources and task allocation as well as characterized by respect trust and transparency.

Power relations are embedded in all educational, political and economic systems and practices, and these power relations come together when SL takes place. To reach a symmetrical relation between community and university, power relations must be examined. SL partnerships can conceal power relations that as a pedagogy it seeks to refute. Osman and Attwood (2007) highlight that when organizations agree to work within the goals of the university curricula and program, they are owning the agenda of the university and are colluding in masking the covert agenda of the academic partner. Thus, although community organizations may not feel forced into taking actions, they are in reality led to act in certain ways through "manipulated participation" (Osman & Attwood, 2007, p. 18). Conceiving of power as a thing, that some have and some do not, can be misleading as it allows for a misunderstanding of power dynamics and where and how power is being expressed as it does not focus on the interactions among partners (Osman & Attwood, 2007). Partnerships entail a power differential that raises the question of participation, an important pathway for empowerment that can also lead to a state of powerlessness by making those who are weak weaker (Hammersley, 2012). In a developing context, there is a need to provide space for the unheard voices of community partners as power differentials between community and academic partners can inhibit participation of the less powerful community.

**Conceptual Framework**

The theoretical underpinning for this research is guided by the conception of education as a democratic process, meaning education is participatory and democratic. The Democratic White Papers by Saltmarsh et al. (2009) were informed by Dewey's (1986) perspective on HE. This democratic culture is one that is inclusive, collaborative, and reciprocal. Without democratic culture, engagement becomes an end in itself, while democratic engagement has implications on modifying HE so that its leadership and administration are guided by democratic values (Saltmarsh et al., 2009). Democratic values have implications for curricula, pedagogical approaches, research and policy. Educational opportunities, which encompass democratic values, are the means to learn and form values of democracy.

I will also refer to Freire to explain power structures and awareness of power dynamics in the ongoing SL relationship. Awareness of power structures is one key quality of critical awareness, which requires a willingness to engage in a dialogue to better understand the extant power relations (Freire, 1996). Deans (1999) compared the educational approaches of Dewey and Freire. The author explained that unlike Dewey, who believed education motivates students and prepares them to engage in the community, for Freire education is always political and formal education serves the interests of powerful entities. As such, formal education alone will not lead to transformation as it only reinstates and reproduces the principles and ideas of the powerful (Deans, 1999). The nature of HEIs cannot be the front line for "revolution" thus, it is crucial to consider the educational system and the practice of education, which is where SL resides (Deans, 1999, p. 21).

I will refer to Foucault (1982) to explain how power is being applied and through what structures and what type of reactions it is being exhibited by the community organizations. When

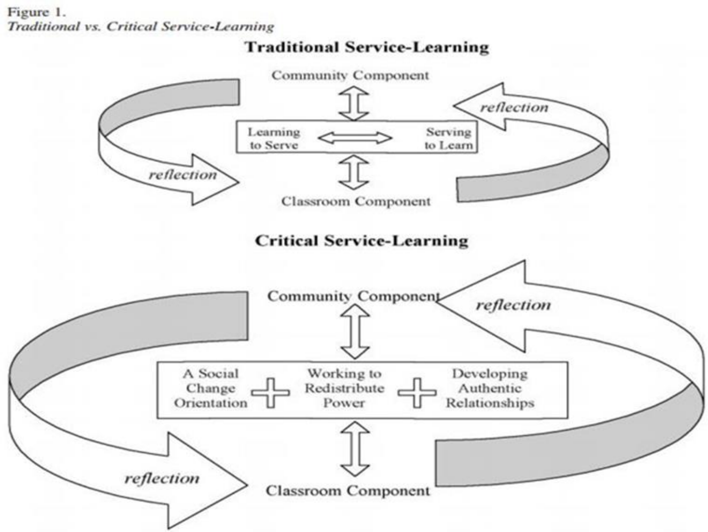
describing how power is exercised Foucault (1982) explained that people usually are unaware of how power is impacting interactions, so they end up being able to describe and not to question what is happening, without relating these events to how power is being enacted. He attempted to explain the different forms of power and differentiated between power as capacity or aptitude to modify or change and power that exists in relationships where the totality of actions occurring in the relationship are impacted by the actions of each partner. For Foucault (1982), power exists only when put into action and when it is exercised, it is not considered an act of violence but is the total set of actions that are exercised. Power, for Foucault, is also not determined by consent, although a relationship of power can be a result of previous consent. The element of freedom is also important to note, as power is exercised only when the individual is free to choose other options available for them; for example, slavery is not considered a power relationship. Foucault suggested that one must analyze institutions from the perspective of power relations because organizations like universities can present a "privileged point of observation" (Foucault, 1982, p. 791). Usually, organizations put mechanisms and systems in place to sustain the organization and its functions, so focusing on the organization alone would be like attempting to explain power to power, which can only contribute to further privileging an already privileged organization (Foucault, 1982).

Power relations are grounded in social contexts and do not exist above or beyond these (Foucault, 1982). The community- university partnership I am investigating is grounded in the social context of where these community organizations exist and work as well as the history and context of the American University where the Faculty is located. To explore the partnership experiences in service- learning I will use a conceptual framework that is informed by conceptions from Dewey (1986), Freire (1996) and values of democratic engagement (Saltmarsh

et al., 2009). Using these theories, the following will be used to define this CF: an emphasis on building authentic partnerships that are reciprocal, addressing the power differential, and creating partnerships that can create social change. These items constitute the components of the Critical Service Learning Model (Mitchell, 2008), as shown below.

**Figure 1**

*Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning*




*Source: Mitchell (2008).* Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning: Engaging the Literature to Differentiate Two Models.

Mitchell (2008) proposed a model of critical SL that addresses the redistribution of power among partners, creating authentic relationships and embracing a "social change perspective" (p. 50). Adopting a critical SL framework indicates an acceptance of the political nature of community work. In practice, this means identifying and negotiating social issues and structural factors that are leading to unequal power sharing. This necessitates continuous dialogue and reflection by all partners in order to bring forward the different perspectives of those engaged to analyze issues and concerns and push forward a plan for action. This approach embraces a framework where mutual benefit is a "shared value" that has the potential to unsettle existing

norms, thus placing engagement in a justice framework (Long & Campbell, 2012, p. 100; Rawls, 1985).

Authentic relationships necessitate paying attention to the root causes of social concerns as well as analysis and redistribution of existing power in a relationship. This is facilitated by effective communication and dialogue between entities, as well as continuity in the relationship that will help build trust among partners (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Mitchell, 2008; Worrall, 2007). Reflection and dialogue raise the critical consciousness of all participants. Students, community members and academic personnel become aware of existing social problems as well as the power imbalance resulting from personal and structural factors in a certain context that is contributing to these problems. By being critical of existing structures, revealing systems of inequalities and advocating for change, SL can have a revolutionary potential. In this way, SL can create opportunities for universities to institutionalize activism for social change (Marullo and Edwards, 2000).

When the nature of the service being conducted is a response to a problem that is identified and not to examine and modify the root causes of these problems, students will not question the nature of the organization nor the manner in which activities are being conducted. Authentic and reciprocal partnership assumes that communities are perceived as entities with assets and that they possess the knowledge and expertise to engage in discussion with the academic partner to identify solutions to social problems. Viewing the community in this way allows knowledge flow to occur in both directions, thus ensuring reciprocity in the relationship. Reciprocal relationships empower communities to gain more confidence and be more vocal in expressing concerns (d'Arlach, 2009; Ngai, S., Cheung, Ngai, N., & Chan, 2010; Nichols, Gaetz

& Phipps, 2015). Reciprocity is key as in most cases community members have less power and have no space to discuss their needs and concerns.

Freire (1996) described how feeling less powerful, of lesser status or excluded could result from the dialogue that is often awkward and uncomfortable. The power difference signifies the importance of adopting an SL model based on concepts of justice and empowerment and not charity to explain a community-university partnership. A critical SL orientation considers issues of injustice and inequality in existing systems, as opposed to a traditional SL orientation that emphasizes only the service component. With its focus on mutual benefit, creating social change and redistribution of power, the model proposed by Mitchell (2008) for critical SL embraces values that FHS is trying to uphold in adopting a SL pedagogy. This makes critical SL an appropriate framework to guide this research in trying to understand SL experiences and the authenticity of partnerships created between FHS and its community partners. This will help address a gap in the literature of partnership experiences in SL in Lebanon, a developing context in the Middle East.

Appendix G provides the components of the conceptual framework, the research questions and the questions used during the in-depth interview.

# 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research explored the nature of partnerships created between FHS (academic partner) and community organizations engaged in SL activities and the extent to which these partnerships are reciprocal and authentic. In this chapter, I will start by discussing my research positionality and how I selected and gained access to community organizations. I will then discuss my choice of qualitative methods and how that choice was impacted by my research positionality, followed by a discussion of ethics and ethical dilemmas I encountered related to insider research, the interview context, and my position within the university. I then move to explain how I managed and analyzed my data including a section on translation, language and meaning. This is followed by a discussion of strategies I adopted to enhance credibility of my research findings focusing on reflexivity, peer checking, taking note of negative cases, and offering a clear account of data collection methods and analysis. I conclude the chapter by discussing the limitations of this research.

## Researcher Positionality

My choice to investigate community-university partnerships arose from my background in Public Health and Health Promotion and Community Health and my identity as a public health practitioner. Both of these disciplines seek to promote social justice by empowering communities to change conditions impacting their health by starting from where the people are and by engaging with communities in order to listen to and understand their stories. In fact, social justice is a core value for public health (Gostin & Powers, 2006).

I became sensitized to issues of justice and power from an early age, having grown up in a country devastated by internal and external conflict. I was able to experience and observe the impact of conflict on the livelihoods of families, particularly among those from disadvantaged

socio-economic backgrounds who were displaced and lived in poverty. I also saw first-hand how, despite these hardships, people survive and become resilient. Public health was a natural step for my university education during which I remained active in community initiatives. These experiences made me aware of the existence of social injustice, as well as how power and privilege exist in social context. When I had the opportunity to join the SL Task force (SLTF) I felt this was a chance for me to professionally try to address and respond to issues of social inequality and injustice in our communities.

SL is key to teaching public health practice. I have been teaching a SL course for the past five years and am a member of the SLTF created in the Faculty of Health Science (FHS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) to coordinate the SL initiative. The SL model adopted by the faculty sought to build authentic partnerships with community organizations with the aim of improving existing social conditions in communities where service takes place. Ensuring that these partnerships are authentic and reciprocal is aligned with my training and my professional beliefs. My experience thus far teaching SL courses made me question the authenticity of the partnerships and how that might be compromising potential benefits to the community. I felt that the benefits resulting from the SL partnership were tilted towards the university (a powerful entity) and that the implementation of SL undervalued the existing expertise of the communities we engage with. I became interested in the idea that if I could better understand the perspective of the community partner and their experience of power issues, this would allow me to provide recommendations for improving the faculty's implementation of SL with community organizations hosting the students.

My personal belief in SL as a pedagogy to empower communities and my beliefs about what constitutes a reciprocal partnership have impacted my choice of research area. I chose to work on SL partnerships because I had doubts about the ability of the faculty, an academic entity,

to create an authentic partnership and because I strongly felt that this would require an awareness of the ongoing power interplay, which did not exist. The conceptual framework I chose emphasized redistribution of power, bringing into the open a discussion of power differentials and offering the community partners the space for their voices to be heard.

Gewirts and Cribb (2006) wrote about ethical reflexivity and emphasized the importance of paying attention to values and how they impact social research. It is expected that researchers be influenced by their personal values and beliefs and my values and beliefs impacted my choice of research topic and questions, as well as my research method. However, the authors cautioned that researchers should not allow their values to impact the data they are collecting and analyzing and should avoid presenting evaluative assumptions when framing their research questions.

I strongly believe that the researcher cannot be totally disconnected from the research being conducted but is part of the world being explored. My epistemological stance is based in constructivism. Another researcher with different assumptions or experiences might have approached the process differently. A constructivist paradigm, unlike a positivist one, favors local knowledge that is created socially through interacting with others in addition to our personal experiences and mental process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this research, I want to learn from the respondents about their personal experiences in the SL partnership and their interpretations of the nature of the ongoing interactions. I expect this knowledge to change my interpretation of what constitutes an authentic partnership in this context. Assuming a constructivist stance is very much the result of my professional background in public health and health promotion. Simpson and Freeman (2004) described the shift in health promotion research and interventions toward more participatory approaches that empower individuals by engaging them in a dialogue throughout different intervention phases where they thus become active producers of meaning.

Adopting approaches, which require starting from where community members are, learning about their experiences and engaging in a reflective dialogue, require community participants to acquire skills to question health promotion programs. Concurrently, health promotion professionals must be able to present arguments that justify the impact of their actions. Labonte and Robertson (1996) suggest that partnerships created with communities can affect public health outcomes. For example, groups of students taking the course "Theories and Practice of Health Promotion" were hosted by four community organizations in an underserved area. The students completed a needs assessment with community members (in the work area of each organization) and accordingly developed and implemented health awareness sessions with the community groups. These awareness sessions were expected to have a positive impact on health practices, which can in turn positively impact public health outcomes.

Mercer (2007) explained how the concept of insiderness not only refers to obvious and distinct differences between the researched and the researcher but could also refer to situations where researchers began to study what is familiar to them in terms of gender, race, culture or other dimensions. More specifically, the distinction between insider and outsider came about when some who belong to certain groups or social class had privileged access to some forms of knowledge. Other researchers such as Anderson and Jones (2004), Bulmer (1982) and Carter (2004) viewed insider and outsider research not as opposites but falling on a continuum. Therefore, while some features or dimensions such as ethnicity are fixed, other features can be evolving and changing depending on time and place, such as the power relationship between the researcher and the researched and the topic being discussed. There are advantages and disadvantages to both positions. While an outsider researcher is neutral and distanced from the topic being researched, the insider researcher has more understanding of the experiences being researched, access to the

researched sites and rapport with those being interviewed (Mercer, 2007). Mercer also cited Merton (1972), who rejected the insider-outsider dichotomy as he believed humans cannot be categorized so easily, arguing that sharing some features or dimensions with those being researched does not in itself result in richer data. Although familiarity can reduce anxiety in initial encounters and increase understanding of the context, researchers should be cautious not to allow this familiarity to cause them to take things for granted, for example, not inquiring about some shared experiences or events.

In this study, I can be identified as an insider where my position in the University allowed me knowledge of the process being adopted in creating partnerships with community organizations. I am a researcher employed by the faculty, which is a partner in this SL relationship being explored. I work in a research-intensive environment, which placed me at an advantage when it came to having access to colleagues with expertise in research as well as an interest in SL pedagogy. This positively impacted the research I was conducting. I engaged in discussions with colleagues during data collection and this provided me with insight on contextual factors that allowed me to better understand and reflect on my data. I was also able to share results during the analysis phase to validate translation and development of themes. Assuming the roles of researcher and faculty member teaching SL courses as well as participating in the SL task force could have resulted in blurred boundaries between these two roles. Given that the decision to teach a SL course is voluntary and that there is no policy in the faculty regarding what pedagogy a faculty member chooses meant that faculty respondents were comfortable expressing openly their views about their experience in SL and the partnership created with the community.

Being a faculty member facilitated my access to community partners to obtain contact information and details related to selection criteria. The fact that I worked at a powerful HEI and

was conducting the interviews placed me in a position of power Vis a vis the community respondents. This unequal power dynamic could have created discomfort for some respondents who know me personally, thus presenting a limitation for this research. Prior to each interview, I clearly stated that I was carrying out the research as an independent researcher and was not delegated by FHS to carry out this work. This, however, did not prevent some respondents during the interview to address me as “you in the university”, obliging me to stop and reiterate that I was not representing the faculty in this research although the findings will contribute to recommendations addressing how the faculty might develop authentic relationships with community organizations they partner with.

The interview context can be a venue for power issues because of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer possesses the technical expertise, is the one asking questions to satisfy specific research needs, and is the one to analyze and interpret the data. Engaging in an active interview can make these power relations transparent, as the researcher participates in a dialogue not to reach an agreement but to uncover or reveal assumptions held by the respondent (Brinkmann & Kaval, 2005). Anyan (2013) argued that both the interviewer and interviewee possess power, but this power is unequal and asymmetrical. To “uncover the maneuvering of power" during an interview, the interviewer must practice reflexivity to become aware of how knowledge is being created (Anyan, 2013, p. 6). During the interviews, I was cautious not to reveal my personal assumptions about the SL experiences or any personal experiences, feelings, and thoughts regarding the SL partnership. I asked the questions with an open mind and tried continuously to listen to answers even when I guessed what the answer was going to be. I tried to continuously engage in rigorous introspection to reveal and examine my own assumptions, as well as ensure I remain reflexive at different phases

of the research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Humphry, 2013). Mercer (2007) reported on several ethical dilemmas resulting from insider research, which are related to informant bias, degree of reciprocity during the interview, how the researcher explains the research being conducted, and how data will be validated. These ethical dilemmas will be discussed later in this chapter under "Ethical Considerations".

**Access to the Sites and Participant Selection**

Since introducing SL in FHS in 2012, the number of partnering community organizations has increased to 30. This number differs each semester depending on the SL courses being offered and the readiness of the community organizations to host students at that specific time. The type and affiliation of community organizations can also vary. For example, out of ten local NGOs, two are connected to international counterparts, three are government-affiliated hospitals, and four are centers associated with ministries or municipalities. The duration of the partnership also varies among organizations; some have collaborated only once, while others have been engaged every single semester. A list of community organizations, which includes names of contact person(s), contact details and duration of collaboration, was already available from staff at the CPHP.

Usually, faculty teaching different courses can propose organizations where they feel the projects being implemented are relevant to their students. Alternatively, a faculty member can discuss the needs of their courses with the CPHP team who can assist in identifying relevant organizations. CPHP is in charge of initiating contacts with these organizations to seek their approval to host students enrolled in SL courses, as well as providing logistical support for both faculty and students. Following this initial contact, the faculty member will visit the organization to discuss the specific needs of the respective courses. During this initial meeting in order to ensure mutual benefit, the faculty member usually explains the SL nature of the course and emphasizes

the importance of identifying projects that are both a priority of the organization and address the learning outcomes of the course. During the course and while students are engaged in work at the organization, the faculty member teaching the SL course oversees following up with the community site on technical matters related to the course learning outcomes. Once the course is over, a staff member of the CPHP visits the site preceptor and conducts an interview to inquire about their experience with the students throughout the course.

**Sampling Strategy**

I adopted a maximum variation purposeful sampling strategy to conduct this research. This approach entails setting in advance some criteria to be considered in selecting the sample (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using maximum variation sampling in the choice of community organizations required developing pre-set criteria to inform these choices. These criteria represent significant dimensions that could have an impact on the partnership experience being researched (Creswell, 2018; Suri, 2011). For this research, the following were the criteria I set:

- Duration of partnership: the organizations I interviewed varied in the length and frequency of the collaboration with the faculty. Some had collaborated one semester and others seven to eight semesters and some were still receiving students and others had stopped. The duration of collaboration varied due to reasons related to satisfaction with the partnership, availability of projects to host the students, and courses being offered in any one semester. The CPHP interviews the partner organizations at the end of each semester and keeps track of the duration of involvement of each.
- Affiliation: the organizations I selected were also diverse in their affiliation; including local and private, local and public (governmental) or affiliated to international organizations. Affiliation of

the organization may have led to different expectations and power perceptions from the partnership experiences with the academic partner.

I adopted a purposeful sampling strategy to select participants who are most informed about the research questions being investigated. The most informed in this research was the contact person in the partner organization who communicates/interacts with the university and is often in a position of authority to decide whether the partnership will be maintained. This person is the head of a department or unit where the students are based during the SL experience. In some organizations, the decision to remain in a partnership is made following the feedback or input from an internal technical supervisor assigned to work closely with the students and supervise their activities. In one such case the head of the unit invited the direct supervisor to be present during the interview and provide feedback as needed, (they did not want to conduct a separate interview). I ensured diversity in selecting the sample of community organizations, for example by selecting different types of organizations (local, international, public, private) as well as a range of duration of collaboration with the faculty. I also tried to capture diverse views and opposing opinions during the analysis phase where details in one organization seemed to contradict or oppose other emerging explanations of concepts under study were noted.

Based on the two criteria, I chose 16 organizations from the list and then met with the director of the CPHP to validate my choices. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) offered evidence-based recommendations for the appropriate number of participants to achieve saturation. The authors argued that if the aim of the research is to explore or describe perceptions or experiences of a relatively homogenous group a sample of 12 can be sufficient. I ended up interviewing all the 16 community organizations. The CPHP director provided comments regarding appropriateness of my choices vis-à-vis the criteria in addition to specific feedback about whom

to contact at the different organizations and contact information. I contacted the organizations directly by phone to explain the research purpose and asked for an appointment for the interview; these contacts were my interviewees. None of the organizations asked for an official request and all were quite willing to have the interview. Interviews were conducted over a period of two and half months (May 13 - July 23, 2019). Table 3.1 describes the 16 community organizations.

Table 3.1

*Community organizations, type and affiliation & duration of collaboration*

| Organization | Type / affiliation | Duration of collaboration |
|---|---|---|
| Site (1) | Private local hospital | 2 semesters |
| Site (2) | International | 9 semesters |
| Site 3 | International | 6 semesters |
| Site 4: | International | 2 semesters |
| Site 5: | Public / municipality | 4 semesters |
| Site (6): | Public military hospital | 3 semesters |
| Site (7) | Hospital / public | 5 semesters |
| Site (8) | Public | 3 semesters |
| Site (9) | Local NGO | 4 semesters |
| Site (10) | Local NGO | 3 semesters; did not take students in last 2 years |
| Site (11) | Public / government | 8 semesters |
| Site (12) | Local NGO | 7 semesters |
| Site (13) | Local NGO | 7 semesters |
| Site (14) | Local NGO / primary health care center | 2 semesters |
| Site (15) | Public municipality | 1 semester |
| Site 16 | Public / hospital | 3 semesters |

**Data Collection Methods**

In this qualitative research, the method I adopted was impacted by the object of inquiry which was the experience of partnerships in SL (Mays & Hope, 2000). The constructivist paradigm lends itself to the use of qualitative methodology in this research (Krauss, 2005; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). O'Brien (2005) explained that a qualitative methodology is appropriate to studying

SL as it values existing knowledge and realities. More importantly, it recognizes the involvement of the researcher who is often someone engaged in SL work. In this research, I was able to come in direct contact with the experiences of each community partner engaged in an SL relationship with my faculty. Adopting a qualitative approach allowed me to engage with the community partners in ways that I could better understand what motivated partners to engage and remain in a relationship, how partners perceived power differences, and how those differences impacted their motivation and experience within this partnership. Specifically, I was able to explore the perspectives and unique meanings of the partnership as experienced by community partners in their natural setting (Kraus, 2005; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although it is well established that the research question dictates the research methodology, Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) explain that the increase in adopting qualitative methods, particularly interviews, followed the cultural shift from industrial society which favors "objectifying means of control and power" to a consumer society that appreciates interaction and dialogue ( Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005, p. 162).

Through my research questions, I wanted to explore the partnership experience from the perspectives of both the community organization and the faculty who teach SL courses. For this reason, interviewing was an appropriate data collection method to adopt. Interviews are an effective method when there is an expectation that respondents will enjoy reporting on experiences or reflecting on them. Because an interview is a dialogue, there is space to clarify any ambiguities in meaning. Interviews are a preferred means to collect data when the research objectives are exploratory in nature and there is a need to probe responses (Gray, 2014). Different types of interviews can lead to different interactions that impact the information obtained. As my aim was to learn about individual experiences in different organizations, as well as attitudes and feelings towards the partnership with the faculty, I chose the semi-structured interview format.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

I conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with community organizations and six with faculty members who teach SL undergraduate and graduate courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences. A semi-structured interview was an appropriate choice for this exploratory research as opposed to an unstructured interview. In the latter the researcher comes to the interview with no set questions about the experiences to be examined, however in the semi-structured interview, the researcher engages in a dialogue with the interviewees and generates questions in response to the narrative of the respondent (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Semi-structured interviews are also appropriate when the researcher is familiar with the topic and can determine the domain of the topic and its main components (Mcintosh & Morse, 2015). The reviewer develops an interview protocol and topics to be asked that are relevant to the study being conducted and at the same time sets boundaries to the topics to be investigated. These topics are based on the literature but also stem from the researcher's own experience and observations in the field (Mcintosh & Morse, 2015). The interview protocol (Appendix D) covered three main themes:

1. Experience with SL, including perceived benefits and motives, and what community partners value in their relationship with the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB;
2. The nature of relationship created, for example whether the relationship is reciprocal (type of reciprocity); and
3. Power differentials, specifically perception of power privileges and awareness of power differentials.

Under each theme, several questions were related to the set research questions. The semi-structured format of the interview allowed me to engage in a discussion with the respondents to better understand the partnership experience that the organization was having with the faculty

within an SL experience. The interview was the context where the interviewee became an active participant and the meaning of the partnership was discussed through ongoing dialogue between the respondent and me (Tannaggard, 2007). After the second interview, I realized there was a need to incorporate some modifications to the questions. For example, I added an English and French translation of the word "power" as some respondents were finding it challenging to understand what the term meant in Arabic. The translated term was not used unless the respondent encountered difficulties in comprehending the question and attempted to define the concept in a different language. I also had a probe on whether the organization had received any benefit from the relationship with the faculty beyond the student contribution. The order in which the questions were asked varied as sometimes respondents addressed more than one issue in their responses. The interview lasted around one hour.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the six faculty who teach SL courses and represent the academic partner in the relationship. I used the same interview protocol (Appendix E) as for the community partners to capture the academic partners' perspectives on the partnership with some adjustments to reflect the instructor perspective. All interviews were recorded allowing me to focus on the conversation-taking place and ensure that all data obtained were saved. I did not take any notes during the interview, but I did write down my impressions after completing the interview. This helped me to document the mood of the interview and the emotional climate, which was useful in my interpretation of the data. The interview was conducted in English as this is the university's language of instruction and faculty members would be more likely to feel at ease using it. However, the transcription showed that although most of the interview was in English, faculty would resort at times to Arabic, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The semi-structured format of the interview provided space for open dialogue that helped create a trusting environment. I gave time to each participant to respond to any question without exerting any pressure for answers and was careful not to interrupt participants. I followed up with additional questions for participants when I noted a discrepancy in answers. Any time I noticed hesitancy or concern, I repeated the purpose and aim of the research, which comforted the respondents and allowed them to answer the question.

The semi-structured interview makes use of predetermined open-ended questions followed with probes. The interviewer is expected to probe into each initial response to fully capture a respondent's viewpoint and perspective (Gray, 2014; McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Although probes were prepared ahead of the interview, I was flexible and added others as needed during the dialogue. Although the questions were asked in the same way, the fact that they are semi-structured in nature allowed me, as interviewer, some flexibility; as not only is the exact wording of questions important, but also ensuring equivalence in meaning to all participants (Denzin,1989, as cited in McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 5).

**Focus Group Interviews**

Focus group interviews are a qualitative research method that is being increasingly used in social science research. In this method, the moderator has preset guidelines to trigger a discussion among participants on the subject being researched. Focus group interviews can provide insight into individual motivations and attitudes and the group context can create a relaxed atmosphere and encourage open expression of views (Khan, Anker, Patel, Barge, Sadhwani & Kohle, 1991). This method is usually adopted when participants share similar experiences with the hope that interaction among them will generate new knowledge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Focus groups can be used as a primary data collection tool, however, in this research they were used to validate and

gain additional insights into the themes obtained from the individual semi-structured interviews. Respondents were informed of the upcoming focus groups meeting at the time of the initial interview, and all were very keen on participating in the group discussion. Although it is preferable that participants in a focus group are not acquainted with each other; when the discussion topic is not a sensitive one, for example sexuality would have been considered a sensitive topic in this culture, the rule of anonymity can be relaxed as the type of informant has minor impact on the discussion (Khan et al., 1991). After I constructed the themes from the interviews, I contacted respondents by phone and invited them to participate in the focus group meeting. The plan was to conduct two focus groups with eight participants in each, reflecting the selection criteria already set for this research. Although four participants confirmed participation in each of the two meetings scheduled for February 28 and March 5 2020, only two participants were present in each. This failure to appear could be explained by situational factors in the country at that time. Although there was no lockdown yet, Covid-19 cases were on the rise in Lebanon and most community organizations operated health centers were on alert and had other important priorities to address.

The focus groups took place on the faculty's premises. All community organizations interviewed have a relationship with the faculty, which they visit for varied reasons such as stakeholders meetings or attending student presentations of SL projects. Thus, conducting the focus group interviews in the faculty space did not trigger any objections from participants. These interviews were conducted in Arabic and were audiotaped. Prior to the meeting, I reminded participants about the purpose of the meeting and asked for permission to record the discussion, which took around one and a half hours. I started each meeting with a summary of the themes I obtained from the interviews, followed by questions to help me gain insight on these themes. I

only shared general themes without revealing any confidential information or identifiers from any individual interview.

The purpose of the focus group was for me to validate the preliminary themes and capture different perspectives in an open discussion, as listening to the views of others can trigger expression of ideas, attitudes, and feelings (Gray, 2014). The synergistic effect of the group dynamics provide insights into the discussion that would not have otherwise been possible (Kevern & Webb, 2001). A focus group discussion can allow respondents who may have been hesitant during the interview to open up and engage in the discussion (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This, however, was not the case as participants were very vocal and expressive in their feedback. The focus groups were effective in gathering information as all these participants have engaged in an SL experience with the university and were interested in ensuring a reciprocal and authentic partnership (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Although the number of participants was fewer than expected all were keenly interested and actively engaged in the discussion.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethics are not universal but a product of “cultural discourse" (Brinkman & Kvale, 2005, p. 159), meaning that it is not enough to establish procedural rules and approaches to ethics because it is as important to agree on conditions on how and when to apply these rules. Accordingly, qualitative research should aim to describe and understand events within "their value laden context" (Brinkman & Kavale, 2005, p. 60). Ethical considerations are about protecting participants against harm and respecting the integrity of the cultural context of participants. The researcher must abide by ethical standards that ensure sensitivity about and respect for the context of the participants. To exclude the values of the participants would be to disregard the interests and concerns of the “powerless” whose construction of their experiences

and reality warrants similar attention as those who are more powerful in this case the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 214).

Mercer (2007) explained how ethical concerns can arise due to insider research, which is related to informant bias, degree of reciprocity during the interview, how the researcher explains the research being conducted, and how data will be validated. Knowing that I work at the university, what organizations revealed during the interview was influenced by how they perceived me as a researcher and how they perceived the organization where I work. I used semi-structured interviews to allow some flexibility in the sequence of questions when respondents digressed. I tried to limit my contribution to the discussion and sometimes just waited for the respondent to elaborate and expand on an idea they appeared to be hesitant about.

I could not commence this research until I received ethics approval first locally and then from the University of Liverpool ethics committee. The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix C) was shared with all participants prior to the interview. It included details about the research purpose and process. Participants had to sign a Consent Form to indicate their approval to participate in individual and focus group interviews. The two documents were available in both English and Arabic so that respondents could choose whichever they were more comfortable with. All signed the Arabic version. The same process forms were used for participation in the focus group discussion. To ensure respect for participants' privacy, interviews took place at the community organization, in the private office of the respondent at a time that was convenient for them. I respected the confidentiality of respondents and the recorded interviews were not shared with anyone. Since I conducted face-to-face interviews, I protected anonymity of respondents by assigning numbers to their names and the names of the organization where they worked. During the focus group interviews, I revealed only key themes and general findings in such a way that

the identity of the organization/interviewee was not identifiable. I also tried to ensure that no respondent felt intimidated by the presence of another participant from a different organization. To deal with this, I informed participants prior to the meeting which organizations were participating in that focus group interview. This ended up not being a concern, as the few respondents who attended each meeting happened to be colleagues in the field in community work in the same area.

**Data Management and Analysis**

Interviews with respondents from community organizations and faculty were recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were anonymized by assigning numbers to each community organization (site) I interviewed; for example site (S.1, S.2…). Once the interview data were transcribed, it was then coded and categorized, first manually and later using Dedoose software, which can read Arabic data more accurately than other software. My intention was to complete all the analysis work manually. This situation is typical in the department where I am based where many faculty have expertise in translation and performing thematic analysis manually. However midway through the analysis I realized that using a software can ensure more systematic and thorough analysis of data. This was also the advice of my primary supervisor at that time.

**Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is the process of reading and reviewing the data in search for patterns or themes that can be used to describe a phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Gray, 2014). For analysis, I adopted thematic analysis (TA) which is considered one approach to analyze qualitative data. TA can be used with different theoretical frameworks; including the constructionist paradigm, I adopted (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA is a

flexible research tool that can result in “rich, detailed and complex data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). TA can address questions linked to the experiences of community organizations engaged in a SL partnership as well as shed light on factors that impact these partnership experiences (Braun & Clark, 2006). TA has been used to investigate the lived experiences of groups in society such as sex workers (Mellor & Lovell, 2012 ) and migrants (Cain & Reid, 2021), as well as to explore factors that impact, underlie or contextualize particular experiences and processes. TA is well suited for this research as I am trying to learn about how community organizations experience the SL partnership to bring to the open power issues, engagement pattern, and level of participation.

There are different approaches or schools for TA, which vary in "procedures, underlying philosophy and the conceptualization of themes and coding" (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2019, p. 845). One approach is reflexive TA where the researcher plays an active role in working with the data to capture the meaning. Thus, codes are not pre-set, which could delimit the extent of engagement and reflexivity of the researcher (Braun et al., 2019). This approach highlights the active involvement of the researcher in knowledge production; emphasizing the fact that meaning is contextual, there are multiple realities, and the subjectivity of the researcher is a resource" (Braun et al., 2019, p. 848). The researcher is telling a story and is actively engaged in interpreting the data through their own cultural, social position as well as their theoretical position. This active involvement can be taken as a political stance to "give voice" to marginalized groups and as such has a social justice motivation (Braun et al., 2019, p. 849), which is very much in line with my position in a public health discipline.

In TA research, a theme represents an abstract entity reflecting a pattern of shared meaning which is built around a core idea (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen

& Snelgrove, 2016). As such, a theme captures the "spread of meaning" (Braun et al., 2019) as well as uniting the data. A theme can be conceptualized through domain summary, which is a summary of what participants said about a particular issue or a question. This may include multiple and contradictory content or patterns in shared meaning that may reflect implicit and deeper meanings. However, a domain summary can risk being a way to summarize or reduce data when the purpose of analysis is to highlight diversity in responses across participants. For this reason, Braun et al. (2019) recommend avoiding theme names, which are one-word.

To ensure my data analysis remained systematic, I followed the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis proposed by Braun et al. (2019):

1. *Becoming familiar with data*: I read the transcriptions repeatedly and referred to audio tapes of actual interviews for clarification. While listening to the recordings I added notes next to content that helped clarify the meaning of respondents, particularly nonverbal cues.

2. *Generating codes:* I reviewed and read repeatedly the transcriptions with an open mind. After reading and engaging with the data, I entered data from each interview into a large flip chart paper. I took responses from each interview and inserted them on the sheet, thus creating clusters of responses under broad headings that were generated from the responses. These did not necessarily align with the interview questions (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Once all data was entered, I started engaging with the data in more structured manner. Coding involved noting an important content and encoding it without interpreting it at this stage. Inductive coding allowed me to identify themes from the data (Braun et al., 2019; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I used open coding and created concise labels/codes of significant characteristics in the data that were relevant to the research questions. At a later stage and as part of the process of organizing data around meaning- making patterns, I had to collate some

data. For example, I collated “expectations and motives” with “value of engaging with FHS” as the meaning codes in the two clusters were complementary and could fit under one cluster of “expectations and motives” (Braun et al., 2019).

3. *Constructing Themes*: a good theme tells a coherent story about the research being conducted (Braun et al., 2019). When I approached this research I had in mind the model of Critical SL (Mitchell, 2008), which highlights as its essential elements the redistribution of power, authentic relationships, and a social change orientation. This framework was developed in reaction to the traditional SL model that did not acknowledge these elements but focused instead on the service component. I reviewed codes within the different clusters and compared them in terms of similarities and differences trying to connect codes that would eventually be used to construct themes. With the components of a Critical SL model in the background, I found myself moving codes back and forth, as they could fit under more than one potential theme. When constructing themes, Vaismoradi et al. (2016) caution that although frequency or repetition of a code can increase its likelihood to be considered a theme, codes should also capture a link to the research questions. I reviewed codes within each cluster and then pulled together codes that are relevant to one core idea or concept to eventually create a theme.

Table 3.2

*Title: Example of how data in two clusters was coded*

| Cluster | Codes |
|---|---|
| Satisfaction / motivation expectations | Satisfaction in interpersonal aspect of relationship;<br>Expectations: visibility, recognition, power gained from connection with academia<br>No benefit due to Short duration /limited presence of students, interrupted work (no continuity)<br>Admin process barrier: Unable to benefit from FHS resources/inaccessible resources<br>Limited Level of engagement of students and faculty |
| Perception of power / | Power is having more expertise resources, size, influence<br>power is being able to get what you want<br>Power is being able to say no, not feeling exploited<br>power is mutual respect good communication<br>Power is about level of collaboration, engagement<br>Academia is power |

4. *Reviewing Themes*: In the first round, I constructed four themes, three of which were related to power. However, after examining each theme individually and in relation to the themes, in addition to discussions with another colleague in the department, I re-categorized the themes.

Table: 3.3
Title: *Example of how codes in different clusters were pulled together under one theme.*

| **Cluster** | **Examples of codes under this cluster** | **Potential Theme** |
|---|---|---|
| Value of engagement with FHS | Perceiving the Relationship itself as a benefit | Power of academia |
| Awareness of Power issues | perceived maintaining the relationship more important than discussing power issues | |
| Reciprocity/ relational exchange | Presence of students perceived more important than their output | |

Based on the literature, my conceptual framework, and the critical SL model, I constructed the following themes and subthemes:

Theme 1: motives to enter a relationship

Theme 2: reciprocity and relational exchange within the partnership

Theme 3: power with two subthemes:

Sub-theme 1: power of academia.

Sub-theme 2: powerlessness, Acceptance of Academia Power

Exploring these themes and subthemes allowed me to answer my research questions. My first research question was about understanding what motivates community partners to engage in a SL relationship, what they value in their relationship with the faculty, and why they choose to remain in this relationship. Theme one allowed me to answer this question. Theme two, on the other hand, allowed me to answer my second research questions about the SL relationship created and whether this relationship is reciprocal. Examining theme three allowed me to address my third research question on the power dynamics in the existing relationship between academia and the community organizations. I was able to understand how each side perceived power and how this power is enacted in the partnership. These themes were validated and discussed with the community organizations during the focus group meetings.

**Language, Translation and Meaning**

I conducted all interviews with community organizations in colloquial Arabic. However, given that respondents from these organizations were professionals meant in most cases they were fluent in at least two languages. Respondents used English and French terms randomly throughout the interview. Anytime respondents were unable to express an answer or a concept in Arabic, they would switch to English (mostly) and French (less often). The transcription of

interviews demonstrated the extent of English or French words used by respondents during the interviews. This is not unusual in the context of Lebanon, which is a multilingual society where everyone is expected to speak English or French, or both, in addition to Arabic. This is the result of the French rule and the educational institutions that were started by French missionaries. Under the French rule (1920-1943) both Arabic and French where the official languages. English began to appear following independence in 1943 and the impact of globalization on Lebanese society (Bahous, Bacha & Nabhani, 2011).

Translation affects the reliability and validity of collecting and interpreting data (Birbili, 2000), particularly when it is about translating concepts that have no equivalence in the English language. Finding language equivalence is not about literal translation, however, as expressions used embed feelings and assumptions that may be challenging to detect. I chose to delay translation to English until I started coding and writing up in order to avoid losing meaning in layers of translation. Data collected from community organizations was mostly in Arabic, while interviews with faculty were mostly in English. I did not translate the transcription of the interview, only categories and key concepts, which was sufficient and did not compromise the quality of results (Chen & Boore, 2010). To ensure accuracy in translation I resorted to back translation. For example, after I translated the concepts into English, I would give them to a colleague to back translate into Arabic. Then I would compare their Arabic translation to the original Arabic text. This could be repeated until an accurate translation is reached.

The language used by the participants may have impacted the way they perceive their reality (Temple & Young, 2004). For example, the choice of terms used to describe concepts is also influenced by cultural factors and the translation has to accommodate this. Context cannot be ignored while translating, because the respondents' contexts impact their interpretation of

events occurring within the SL partnership. Translation is important as the view of the translation process depends on the epistemological position of the researcher and their ideas about knowledge production (Temple & Young, 2004). Understanding of a text takes place in reference to the reader's own understanding and after this is filtered through their personal experiences. Having one person translate all of the data can increase reliability and ensure consistency in translation (Temple & Young, 2004; Twin, 1997). In this research, I conducted both the interviews and the translation.

## Credibility of Findings

To enhance the credibility of my findings, I adopted the following strategies proposed by Mays and Pope (2000): reflexivity, peer checking, negative cases, and clear account of data collection methods and analysis.

### *Researcher Reflexivity*

Reflexivity refers to an awareness that the researcher is not a passive observer but plays a role in knowledge construction, as the researcher's observations and interpretations are usually selective and partial (Gray, 2014). As a researcher, I therefore had to be aware of my personal biases (discussed under Positionality) and therefore needed to maintain researcher reflexivity throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes (Humphrey, 2013; Mercer, 2007). To do this, I kept a daily journal to report on logistics (challenges in scheduling some interviews) as well as write personal notes about my impressions following an interview. I tried to interpret meanings respondents gave to different questions and events and tried to ensure that my reporting and analysis captured the different and sometimes opposing perspectives or definitions of these various experiences. I had to limit and control my personal biases towards SL

and community empowerment in order to ensure that my interpretation and analysis of data remained objective.

### ***Peer Checking***

To enhance accuracy and rigor in the translation phase, I discussed translations with a colleague in my department who is active in qualitative research, fluent in both languages and the SL literature, and furthermore has engaged in translation activities while conducting qualitative research (Chen & Boore, 2010). I also shared and discussed the primary themes with another department faculty who is engaged in SL teaching (Gray, 2014; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). Throughout the data collection phase, I was engaging in critical dialogue with another colleague (researcher) in my department to discuss findings and interpretations. These discussions were helpful when respondents were reporting information that was unexpected or that did not make sense to me.

### ***Negative Cases***

Another way to ensure the credibility of findings was by paying attention to data in the findings that seemed to oppose emerging explanations of concepts being investigated. Noting contradictions in the data within the same interview or across interviews enhanced the rigor of analysis and led to the production of new knowledge, and also ensured authenticity by ensuring all voices were heard (Gray 2014; Tanggaard, 2007). For example, contradictory responses occurred in several interviews when respondents replied to my questions about power and benefits to the site and their choice to remain in the SL relationship. These contradictions were all noted in the coding. I wanted to hear voice of the community partner on this matter, so while examining the data I was very cautious to listen for statements that expressed dissatisfaction in

some aspect of the relationship or statements that reflected its power dynamic, and at times, I even probed for these statements.

## Account of Data Collection Methods and Analysis

The fact that I adopted a systematic data analysis process, specifically the six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), ensured thorough documentation of how the process took place. I endeavored to create an audit trail documenting the research process as proposed by Creswell and Miller (2000): I wrote notes of emergent ideas while reading and reflecting on the transcripts and while recalling impressions of the encounter at specific intervals during the interview. I often would write notes such as “the respondent was very angry” or “the respondent seemed hesitant”. Also, while reading and re reading the transcripts I wrote notes in the margin about ideas that came to my mind; for example, a quote which could indicate the respondent’s perception of the university. I also kept a detailed research log of all activities including the steps I adopted during my data analysis.

## Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the sample type. I selected my sample purposefully based on a judgement that these community partners can provide rich and relevant information about the partnership experience. Although I conducted interviews with respondents from all community organizations that the faculty has been collaborating with, the fact remained that I interviewed community partners who had collaborated with one faculty in one university. Community partners who have collaborated with other faculties in the university or even other universities could have perceived or experienced the partnership differently. I learned during the interviews that most organizations were hosting students from different universities and at times

organizations compared the relationship with FHS students and faculty to others from different universities.

Another possible limitation may have been the context of the interview, which might have highlighted a power asymmetry, between the interviewer (myself) who was asking questions (academic partner) and the interviewee who is providing answers from the community perspective (Creswell, 2018; Kvale, 2006). This power asymmetry had the potential to lead to participant bias whereby respondents could have felt they wanted to present a positive image of the partnership with the university. On some occasions, participants would say "you at AUB" and although I immediately corrected this, explained, and clarified the context and purpose of the interview, I cannot be sure that the fact that I work at the university did not impact their responses.

In this chapter, I discussed my research positionality and my choice of qualitative research methodology that I adopted to explore the partnership experience. I discussed ethics and ethical dilemmas I encountered related to insider research, the interview context, and my position as faculty member within the university. I explained how I how I managed and analyzed my data and included a section on translation (Arabic / English). This was followed by a discussion of strategies I adopted to enhance credibility of my research findings and concluded the chapter by discussing the limitations of this research. In the next chapter I will present part one of my research findings and discussion.

# 4. Findings and Discussion: SL Partnership

This research aimed to better understand the nature of the relationship between the community organizations and FHS, what motivates a community partner to embark upon and sustain such a partnership, whether the relationship created is reciprocal, and how power is enacted in this relationship. My findings indicate that the SL model adopted by FHS does not meet the criteria of democratic civic engagement. SL is being used by FHS as a pedagogical tool to enhance student learning outcomes and civic engagement. This research suggests that minimal attention is being given to the process of engagement, specifically to how university faculty are building the partnership with the community organizations, why the community organizations are engaging with the faculty and what benefits they are gaining, and how power is being enacted among partners. Because the why and how of engagement were not appropriately addressed, structural and organizational changes were very limited. The SL relationship between the faculty and community organizations created threads for a possible network where benefits are skewed towards the academic partner. Yet despite these inequitable conditions, the community organizations chose to remain in the relationship and provided justifications for doing so. These justifications are embedded in a power dynamic between academia and community organizations where the soft power of AUB has impacted interactions of the faculty with the local communities, thus hindering the creation of a reciprocal partnership.

## Roadmap for Chapters Four and Five

Since 2012, all the 16 organizations that participated in this research have been in a SL partnership with FHS, and although their experiences varied depending on contextual factors at the time of collaboration, crosscutting themes emerged regarding the relationship they experienced. In Chapter Four and Five I will present and discuss the data which has been analyzed using the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two. The conceptual framework

I adopted is grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of Dewey (1986), Freire (1996), and the values of democratic engagement of Saltmarsh et al. (2009). This framework has allowed me to develop an understanding of the partnership experience, of faculty incorporating SL in FHS and community organizations, by exploring the components of the Critical Service-Learning Model (Mitchell, 2008): power differential, engagement creating authentic partnerships, and partnerships that can create social change. The findings of this research indicate how these components are connected and are crucial to create authentic partnerships that are democratically engaged.

In this chapter, I discuss two themes that I developed from the data I collected:

Theme1: Motives to enter this relationship (p.80)

Theme 2: Reciprocity and Relational exchange (p. 91)

In Chapter Five, I will discuss:

Theme 3: power relations in the partnership (p. 116)

Sub theme 1: power of academia (p.123)

Sub theme 2: powerlessness, acceptance of academia power (p. 124)

I will also discuss reflections shared by representatives from four organizations (one ministry and three NGOs) who participated in focus group discussions I conducted. In the discussion, I will draw on interviews with the six faculty members who teach SL courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut.

**Motives to Enter the Relationship**

The success of a SL relationship is contingent upon the nature of the relationship established between the community site and academia, where mutual understanding of needs, effective communication, and a positive interaction climate among partners can ensure a quality

relationship (Darby, Ward-Johnson, Newman, Haglund & Cobb, 2013). Fostering these quality relationships depends on the motivations of the community sites and the academic partner (Darby et al., 2013). Community organizations and HEIs represent different cultures and contexts, thus it would be expected that their motives for engaging in SL relationships would differ. The differences in motives impacted the extent to which each side was willing to invest its resources in the relationship and the interpretation each gave regarding the ongoing interactions. The findings clearly indicate that the SL model adopted by faculty is one that does not align with definition of democratic engagement (Saltmarsh et al., 2009), as the focus was on engagement as an outcome with little or no attention to the process being adopted. When SL is the outcome, the motives and expectations of partners become restricted to tangible benefits that each side can gain, the occurring interactions are not participatory or inclusive and reciprocity cannot be achieved. Next, I will discuss the motives of faculty and community organizations to enter this partnership.

Interviews with faculty indicated that the main motive for teaching SL courses in FHS is to enhance student learning- outcomes by ensuring the availability of a site (community organization) that can provide relevant hands-on experiences for students. The community organizations with whom the faculty partners offer opportunities for students to engage in field experiences, which are crucial to the teaching of public health competencies. As one faculty respondent (F.2) explained, “It wouldn’t be public health; it would be very theoretical [without field experiences].” Faculty were motivated to incorporate SL in their courses because of the positive feedback they received from students in their course evaluations. These evaluations are administered by the university’s office of Institutional Research and Assessment and the results are shared with the Department Chair and the faculty member concerned. SL courses tend to

receive higher scores as students appreciate the hands-on experiences. One professor highlighted the value of the public health skills students acquired from SL experiences and how the student feedback received convinced him that SL is the best approach for teaching public health:

> Feedback I receive while students are working on a project is a different kind of feedback. This convinced me that this [SL] is needed. It is building skills students are looking for and it's building skills that are right for public health professionals. (F.2)

All faculty respondents emphasized student-learning outcomes as a motive to adopt SL, as well as the fact that one criteria the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) that accredited our graduate public health program has set is to adopt experiential pedagogies for graduate public health students. As one faculty respondent commented:

> The objective was to enhance students' learning and civic engagement. This is how I became interested and engaged in teaching a SL course; and also as coordinator of the whole service-learning experience in FHS. (F. 1)

In civic education, paying attention to process can lead to questioning the positioning and application of expertise while attention to purpose can explain how this expertise can be applied democratically (Saltmarsh et al., 2009). Teaching democracy should occur through educational experiences which allow students to engage with their community and experiment with democracy. Community concerns and issues can present opportunities that students need to engage with in order for learning to occur. Accordingly, HEIs must be ready to provide students with such experiential SL opportunities where they can apply and test their acquired ideas and knowledge.

Universities generally have a preference to adopt a framework that privileges the expertise present in the university in order to solve problems in the external social contexts (Saltmarsh et al., 2009; Shiller, 2017). Thus, it was not surprising that the community organization respondents articulated three categories of motives for engagement with FHS, all of

which reaffirmed the privileged position of the academic partner and reflected a unidirectional knowledge flow: access to human capital and resources in the faculty and beyond in the university, collaboration on research, and the reputation of the university.

Access to human capital was expressed by 11 of the 16 participants who mentioned having access to students and supervisors' knowledge and skills as their main motivation for being involved in SL initiatives. One respondent from an international organization explained how the presence of students allowed the organization to conduct what they always needed, "We did not have time to assess patient satisfaction but [with students] we are able to implement what we needed but did not have enough staff for" adding that students, "Bring technical expertise knowledge and human resources." (S. 2)

Research collaboration with FHS present a significant area of interest for the community organizations that usually lack capacity in research skills. Collaborating on research projects was noted by five respondents as a second motive: two belonging to organizations that are branches of an international organization and three to local NGOs that work on sensitive issues like drug abuse and sexual health in Lebanon, which are also research topics that FHS faculty are engaged in. One example came from a respondent (S. 9) from a local NGO working on sexual health who found great support in collaborating with faculty who conduct research in this area, "I know when I need something, as an organization and I go to the faculty, they would support us, we can work together, I trust them." Clearly, this respondent (S.9) was able to develop a personal connection with individual researchers in the faculty and this became their venue for research support. Similarly, a director of a primary health care center (S. 3) affiliated with an international organization expressed the need for research skills, "We need researchers. We need academia. We need students who can observe who can dig deeper, take the data and give us

feedback." This primary health care center was one of the few centers where the director was highly motivated to conduct research with the data they obtain. This is also one of the few respondents (S. 3) who participated in the focus group discussion. This could be because the respondent obtained a certificate in an executive program from FHS and since then has maintained close working collaboration with faculty there. Another respondent from an international organization wanted to maintain the connection particularly for research collaboration and future activities that might entail funding for research, "To always have this relationship; even funds for the future." (S.4)

The reputation of the University is the third category of motives. AUB, which was established in 1866, has had significant impact on higher education in the Lebanon and the Middle East (Waterbury, 2003) and there was an expectation among the organizational respondents that they would benefit from this reputation. Although the credibility of and trust in the university was cited by all organizational respondents, the expectation to benefit from this reputation was indirectly expressed by ten of the 16 organization representatives. They felt that collaborating with a credible university like AUB would entail professional interactions with experts in the field. For example, one respondent from one international organization (S. 4) openly expressed an interest in maintaining relations with academic institutions particularly ones like AUB, "We care very much to have a relationship with academic institutions and specifically AUB." This trust in AUB also resonated with a representative from another international organization (S. 2), who affirmed this adding, "We don't need to give a testimony in support of AUB but for sure we do not receive students from all universities, only from a few and for sure AUB is one of those." Another representative from a local NGO also commented on the reputation of AUB and professional interactions with supervisors of students:

> AUB has its reputation. Students are not left at the site with no supervision; so the follow-up by faculty members can enhance the relationship and will make me feel it was worth it to invest time and resources to receive students. (S. 10)

Using the lens of the democratically engaged framework (Saltmarsh et al., 2009), respondents saw a potential benefit in building a relationship with the university and this was their main motive for engaging in the relationship. Motives expressed by both partners reinforced the positioning of expertise and power in academia and as such, the partners can run the risk of excluding from the relationship the knowledge and expertise present in the community. Collaborating on research following hosting of students was presented in the data as one means of establishing personal connections within an otherwise closed structure. The community organization respondents hoped to benefit from the faculty beyond the service provided by students. In fact, several expressed little value for the work done by students (especially by undergraduate students) but were mainly interested in maintaining the relationship with academia and specifically with AUB. Relationships with faculty could lead to future collaboration on research or activities that might entail access to resources the organization needs. As a respondent from an international organization stated:

> Irrespective of single experiences, overall, for [this organization] there is important benefit otherwise, we would not have entered [started] this relationship. It is to our advantage to work with AUB at all levels and same thing for AUB because students will benefit from this experience [at the organization]; later on when [this organization] needs AUB, the relationship between focal points will already be there. (S. 4)

**Engagement as Output and Not Process**

All collaborating community organizations cater to underserved groups living in impoverished communities, which is why they are ideal for providing rich educational experiences for public health students. Nevertheless, when the motives of faculty are restricted

to achieving student learning outcomes this will impact the level and process of engagement, pushing it more towards a charity model away from the democratic engagement that Saltmarsh et al. (2009) discussed. Means to achieve an outcome cannot be separated from the outcome itself. When faculty are motivated solely by the achievement of learning outcomes in their courses, they may be less concerned about the process they follow to reach this outcome. In his writings, Dewey wanted learners to be actively engaged and reflective in addressing world problems and SL courses have the potential to provide opportunities for this. This civic participation underlies Dewey's conception of democracy when he stated, "Democracy is the very idea of community itself" (Benson, Harkavy & Puckett, 2007; Deans, 1999, p. 17).

Democratic engagement does not undermine the expertise present in academia but is critical of expertise that is not inclusive of other sources and forms of knowledge (Saltmarsh, et al., 2009). In this research, the type of engagement taking place was reduced to providing experiences for the students to enhance their learning. Engagement became limited in that it emphasized the dominant culture of FHS as an academic partner possessing the technical expertise; and as such is in a position to provide solutions to the community needs and problems. The partnership created fits more a civic engagement framework (Saltmarsh et al., 2009) characterized by mutuality where both partners were gaining benefits of some sort.

The public health program in the FHS is like other public health programs, which focus on underserved populations, community health, and social justice. Such programs are increasingly adopting experiential pedagogies such as SL that are well suited to achieving public health competencies (Anderson, Royster, Bailey & Reed, 2011). In such a context, the aim of the SL partnership is not limited to achieving student-learning outcomes; a social justice agenda must also be embraced that seeks to address structural inequities (Bahng, 2015). However, to

achieve the social justice agenda democratic engagement that is participatory and inclusive must take place and there is a need to consider tangible learning outcomes as means to ensure equal participation (Reynolds, 2015). This was not the case for the partnerships in this research.

It was concerning that none of the faculty respondents expressed a motivation to incorporate SL in order to empower the community and have an impact on community development and social justice. This can be interpreted as the faculty respondents incorporating SL in their courses being either unaware of the public health agenda and the level of engagement required to create change or them not feeling obliged to interact with the community partner in ways that enhance an authentic partnership that can respond to concerns in the community. Faculty were still acting from their elitist position as academicians in a highly reputable academic institution, thus maintaining their elitist identity as experts in knowledge production. As will be discussed later in this chapter, organizational structures and policies can be a barrier for building collaborative relationships.

For respondents from community organizations, these findings related to their access to human capital, resources and technical expertise are supported by SL literature on what motivates community organizations to engage in SL partnerships (Basinger & Bartholomew 2006; Cronley et al., 2015; Leiderman, Furco, Zapf & Goss, 2003). It is not uncommon for community partners to value the relationship with the university beyond the SL project itself (Benson & Harkavy, 2000; Dorado & Giles, 2004; Sandy & Holland, 2006). What was interesting in this research, however, is that no organization referred to enhancing student learning and civic engagement as their motive for engaging in SL. This differs from some literature on SL partnerships (Darby et al., 2013; Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Worrell, 2007).

One explanation for this could be related to the specific context in which the research took place. Surviving years of instability in Lebanon and the resulting dire financial situation, community organizations need any type of resources that can enhance their engagement with the communities they serve. In this context of need, it is not surprising that community organizations are motivated to access additional labor and expertise, as well as by the prospect of potential future benefits from the relationship such as funding for projects. Community organizations are located in underserved areas which struggle with poverty that impacts the health outcomes and well-being of the local populations. Poor housing conditions and a lack of health care services and proper schooling are but some examples of daily struggles the community must deal with (UNRWA, WFP & UNICEF, 2020). If these conditions are to be addressed, then authentic partnerships that are participatory and inclusive must be created with organizations serving these communities. Authentic partnerships can serve as a venue to access more resources, thus empowering these organizations. Ideally, the networks created by SL programs can be means for building social capital in these communities (Sandy & Holland, 2006).

The motive to benefit from the reputation and name of the university was not openly expressed, by respondents from community organizations, in response to the question about motives; however, I was able to interpret this motive from the data. One reason for this could be that this motive is not related to student output or presence at the site but is more "egoistic" in nature in that they can present benefits to the organization itself (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006). Such motives are related to the powerful status of the university and therefore stating them openly would be admitting that they are the less powerful partner in the relationship. As the privileged partner in this relationship, the university is the entity with the expertise and power

over the community. It is not surprising, therefore, that the community on the receiving end of this relationship with the faculty will have an inhibited capacity to express their demands and apply their capabilities.

Basinger & Bartholomew (2006) used the Theories of Giving to describe two types of factors that underlie motivation for SL partnerships: altruistic and egoistic. Altruistic motivations reflect a desire to give and are influenced by existing norms or personal satisfaction from knowing that what one gives can support other causes; egoistic motivations involve the desire triggered by a hope for a future benefit. The two dimensions can coexist (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006). For example, in a SL partnership motives to participate may include both self-interest, such as receiving labor and expertise, as well as motives to help students learn and improve civic engagement. The fact that organizations indirectly articulated the reputation of the university and the faculty as a motivation is in agreement with Basinger and & Bartholomew (2006). When community organizations are dissatisfied with the product of the student output, their reason to remain engaged will be due to a value they place on opportunities created by the SL experience. In such an event, the opportunity is the relationship or connection with a reputable and powerful University.

Both Dewey and Freire warned of an educational system that is disconnected and elitist. Their philosophy emphasizes adopting approaches that are inclusive and that allow active participation and sharing of experiences to raise awareness of social inequities. Being on the receiving end could mean that community partners lack the capacity or do not feel comfortable to express demands openly and that the distance separating them from the academic partner is still wide. Freire (1996) predicted that a context that does not allow open trusting dialogue would reinforce a state of powerlessness, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. When civic

education solely emphasizes activities and settings, it can lead to changes in the system that can enhance effectiveness of the activity being implemented, but that will not lead to change in the organizational culture and structure (Saltmarsh et al., 2015; Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012). Freire stated that a willingness to engage in dialogue with groups that are less powerful can increase critical consciousness about structures that reinforce existing conditions of oppression (Freire, 1996). However, this awareness alone will not change the reality of things, but should be accompanied by changes to the structures and culture that tend to maintain the existing conditions in place. This call for change is one dimension where Freire differed from Dewey (Dean, 1999). While Freire was more revolutionary in his demand for change in structures, Dewey wanted to create reform by democratizing the existing education structures so they would become more inclusive and democratic.

The accounts by the community organizations and faculty participating in this research illustrate their different motives for engagement. This difference impacted the nature of the ongoing interactions and whether a partnership was being created.

**The University Context for SL**

In 2012, the FHS incorporated SL in order to enhance student-learning outcomes and to reach out to underserved communities and groups. Adopting a SL pedagogy was not mandatory in the faculty but was left to the decision of the course instructor. The practice has been for the faculty member to identify and initiate contacts with organizations where students can implement projects to achieve course learning- outcomes. Alternatively, the faculty member can seek support from the Center for Public Health Practice within the faculty to assist in identifying a site that fulfills the course requirements. Once an organization is identified as a potential site for students, it is up to the faculty member to communicate directly with the organization to discuss

feasible projects for students and means of collaboration and to follow up throughout the semester. Prior to students' placement, the faculty member is supposed to meet with the organization to explain course requirements and how the SL pedagogy seeks to create a partnership with the organization. The faculty member then discusses with representatives from the organization the available projects in order to ensure that the needs of the course as well as those of the organization are met. A discussion also takes place regarding the role of the organization in assessing student performance while implementing the agreed upon project. The projects in which students engage vary, including conducting needs assessment and health awareness sessions, developing standards of performance for health centers, preparing training manuals and conducting training workshops. By working to ensure the chosen projects address both the needs of FHS and the organization as well as monitoring and assessing students' learning outcomes, faculty expect to pave the way for establishing a partnership with the organizations.

**Reciprocity and Relational Exchange**

The second theme is related to the relationships created. Authentic relationships that are participatory and reciprocal are key to collaboration to create social change (Hammersley, 2012; Long & Campbell, 2012). Reciprocal relationships with partners must emphasize a *working with* approach rather than *working for* (Saltmarsh et al., 2009). The conceptual framework I adopted in this research allowed me to understand the quality and nature of the partnership between community respondents and the faculty. I categorized the responses within the positive and negative attributes of the relationship, engagement structures, and how those structures prevented the creation of an authentic partnership that is inclusive and collaborative.

## Positive Attributes of the Relationship

### *Personal Connections*

It was interesting that all the positive attributes were related to personal connections or interactions that occurred between the two partners, emphasizing the significance of quality personal relationships in creating a partnership (Cronley et al., 2015). Community respondents valued these relationships and connections with individual faculty; and that impacted their perception of the quality of the relationship as well as helped reduce the distance between the two partners. Six of the 16 community organization representatives expressed that the relationship is a partnership and gave reasons related to the positive dimensions they could identify in the existing relationship with the faculty member with whom they collaborate. Reasons such as good coordination with the faculty member, good follow- up by faculty on students (students were not perceived as a burden), mutual respect, trust and commitment were reported by community organization as positive factors in the ongoing SL relationship. The exchange that took place between individual faculty and community organizations respondents impacted their respective feelings about the relationship where all expressed satisfaction with the interpersonal aspect of the relationship (people are friendly, polite, respectful), especially in the absence of what they perceived to be a serious working relationship. Community respondents were keen on maintaining these personal connections, as it was one way for connecting and maintaining the relationship with the University.

### *Follow-up and Coordination with Faculty*

All respondents from the community organizations agreed that there was good follow-up on the students when on site and that their supervisors in the faculty were always accessible. “We know who is in charge, we always coordinate and things are clear from the beginning” a

representative from an international organization stated (S. 2). Another respondent (S.1) from a private local hospital compared the follow-up on students from AUB to that of other universities, "We hosted students from other universities and then stopped because students were left alone and they did not know what to do." Instances when faculty are absent can create a burden for the organization, as was clear from the same respondent who continued, "We can help but we need someone to help us."

***Negotiation and Communication***

Negotiation and communication in order to reach agreement was another positive attribute that the respondents from community organizations indicated in the relationship with faculty members. The respondent (S. 10) from one local NGO commented on how they were not forced or pressured to select any particular kind of project for the student's sake when the organization did not have a preferred type of activity available. In other words, when the organization was unable to provide a field experience that the instructor wanted, both partners would negotiate until reaching the best possible scenario for the student engagement. Another respondent (S. 6) from a local public hospital commented on the fact that the project or topic is chosen by both partners, "What is nice is that the topic (issue) is chosen jointly, not forced on me." The fact that no partner forces the other to adopt topics or projects was significant for all respondents and was mentioned in different instances during the interviews and will be discussed further in the next chapter on power.

***Trust and Respect***

All organization respondents affirmed their trust in the faculty who are in charge of students and in FHS itself as a credible entity. One respondent from a local NGO (S. 10) reported, "There is respect in the way faculty communicate. There is give and take. They take

into consideration what we say. There is trust." The same respondent also commented on how the relationship is built with specific faculty members to whom they now feel closer because of this relationship, "Even on the personal level [faculty member] has a nice spirit. This is encouraging for us and if they invite me to a meeting I like to attend." Several respondents from the community organizations mentioned that various collaborative opportunities with faculty enabled them to establish personal connections with these individuals. Such networks are significant in a high context collectivist culture that values harmony and personal connections (Dirani, 2006; Jabbra, 1989). Eventually these networks represent resources for the individual and the organization where they work.

***Expectations Set Early on, but….***

The fact that expectations from the community site are set early on in the relationship was something all organization respondents found helpful. The Center for Public Health Practice usually establishes the first contact with the organization and shares the course syllabus after agreement with the faculty member in charge. This initial contact sets expectations for the site early in the relationship as well as the limitations on what the organization can expect from the relationship, as a respondent from a local NGO noted:

> From the beginning we know what is expected. When xxxx sends us the course syllabus and informs us of what is requested, they also ask us what we need. I think here is when you establish expectations and rules. And we both respect rules. (S. 9)

This resonated with another respondent from a private local hospital (S. 1) who affirmed that, "[FHS]'s overall goals are sent to us. FHS asks us what we want to work on at this point. We respond and say we like to focus on [xyz]; we have choices that meet needs of FHS and us. This is how our expectations come together."

**Negative Attributes: Low Engagement and Interruptions**

Satisfaction with individual faculty, for the reasons mentioned above, did not mask the fact that respondents from community organizations were dissatisfied in other dimensions of the ongoing relationship. Low engagement of faculty and students, and the sporadic relationship which existed only when students were present, were two negative attributes that respondents from organizations expressed. For democratic education to happen Dewey (1986) suggested that teachers and administrators are key agents of change to facilitate this process. Using the lens of democratic engagement (Saltmarsh et al., 2009), it was evident that how the relationship was created and maintained was not inclusive or participatory as it emphasized the outcome of the SL experience but not the process of engaging the community organizations in building the partnership.

***Low Engagement***

Respondents from community organizations wanted faculty to be more physically present at the community organization site. Even though faculty did follow up by phone and emails, these means were not perceived as of the same value to the community organizations as being physically present. When faculty are physically present on site of the community organization it gives the site credibility, a sense of worth and acknowledgement of the work the community organization does for students. The respondent from an international NGO (S. 2) clearly expressed disappointment when they stated, "The presence of someone from the faculty gives the story its worth. Being on site is different. Taking feedback and input from those in charge of students at the organization makes a big difference."

When faculty are present on site interaction is enhanced; faculty can listen to direct feedback from field supervisors regarding student work and this direct engagement is one way

for the organization to ensure that the student product is of quality and relevant to the organization's needs. The significance of physical presence was noted by Reynolds (2015) in their study in Nicaragua; where community representatives reported trust and pride they gained from the human contact they had. In- person encounters can also provide space for community organizations to engage with the academic partner in a discussion of their ongoing relationship and exchange of technical expertise. The fact that this did not happen led respondents from organizations to question the seriousness of the work being done and the degree of commitment of the academic partner to this relationship:

> They [students from other universities] come to the site and get to know us. They spend time. They remain in touch after they leave. One really feels the difference. You feel there is a partnership; there is touch [closeness in the relationship]. (S. 7)

Continued absence of faculty led to frustration and disappointment as one respondent from a public hospital (S. 16) commented, "Someone was supposed to come with them [with students]; it was never happening; not even once; students always came alone." This placed the respondent in an awkward position with the departments where students were going to be placed, particularly because community respondents place high value on personal connections with academic faculty. Worrall (2007) cautions that when community organizations enter a SL partnership with a university they are taking risks; such as time spent to supervise students and funds re-allocated to perform other tasks. These risks are amplified when the reputation of the organization is at stake if the promises or commitments by the academic partner are not kept. The respondent from a public military hospital (S.6) explained that supervisors of students were not always clear about which tasks students would be involved in and were looking forward to meetings with faculty to clarify expectations, "Both [students and organization] will benefit; things become easier; our staff will not feel challenged about not knowing what is expected."

Even when the quality of student work was satisfactory, this did not prevent feelings of frustration from the level of interaction; as the respondent from a hospital affiliated with a ministry of health (S. 7) reported, “They [students] do an impeccable job on the tasks we ask them to do” and then moved on to express frustration with the level of interaction with the faculty, “There is no human relationship, but the email one.” One reason for this frustration could also be the fact that since organizations host students from different universities, they were able to compare their experience with FHS to that of other academic partners. Students and faculty from other universities seemed to spend more time at the community organization site and were actively engaged with staff there. As a result, respondents at the organization felt closer to the faculty and students from those universities and were able to build stronger ties with them. Given that AUB is highly credible and powerful in its own context, the limited presence of its faculty was depriving the community organization of opportunities for potential gains in power and credibility. This aspect of power will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

***Interruptions in the Relationship***

Interruptions in the relationship can impact the level of engagement and accordingly the extent to which an organization benefits from the collaboration. Academic institutions work within periods that may set limitations on the SL collaboration. Usually, universities have their own timeline dictating when courses can be offered and, accordingly, when students can work at the community organization site. The difference in timing between academia and community organizations and differing expectations of deliverables within those timelines impacts the extent to which the needs of the respective institutions are being addressed despite the initial commitments of both parties.

Nine of the 16 community organizations mentioned the interrupted relationship as one significant reason for being dissatisfied with the relationship. Although organizations understood this limitation, it did not prevent them from feeling frustrated as often they lacked staff and or skills to complete the unfinished student work. As the representative of one international NGO mentioned, “I care about having a long-term relationship. To have some continuity. This is the most important thing for us. For sure, we are benefiting, but we need something that is long term.” (S. 13)

Faculty respondents were aware that community organizations were frustrated by these interruptions, “I don’t think we are providing continuity. That is an issue in the partnership that I don’t see as working well, we don’t have a process” one faculty respondent noted (F. 2). Faculty respondents were further aware that the negative impact of this interruption would be more significant for smaller and usually less privileged NGOs, as larger ones will be more able to accommodate several projects at any given time. The limited engagement was perceived as an abuse of power by the academic partner. For example, the respondent from a military public hospital (S. 6) complained that due to the limited engagement the scientific benefit from the output of FHS students is much less than the benefit from others in different universities.

The respondents from community organizations were hopeful that with time the relationship with FHS might become reciprocal. One respondent from a local NGO (S. 13) expressed a willingness to accept the status quo of the partnership while maintaining attempts to try to benefit more, “Will keep nagging, maybe one day it will work for us.” This perspective was also shared by one faculty respondent (F. 3) who also referred to continuity in the relationship and noted, “I think the longer we work with them [community organizations] the more equal the relationships become.” The respondents from community organizations

expressed that with time, they could become closer to FHS and in a better position to request changes without risking the existing relationship. Lebanon is a collectivist culture that values relationship building and social harmony. The length of the relationship, frequency of interactions, and the commitment of its participants will impact how open and transparent discussions can become and how close the partners are towards one another (Khakhar & Rammal, 2013).

Authentic relationships are contingent on maintaining continuity in the relationship and meaningful ongoing interactions (Mitchell, 2008). Diverse and frequent interactions which occur over a prolonged period can bring parties engaged in the relationship closer together (Bringle et al., 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002) and in this research context can increase trust in the motives behind AUB's involvement in the SL partnership. On the other hand, interruptions in the relationship can prevent this from taking place because these interruptions can be perceived as a threat to the relationship and a reminder of the distinct needs of the partners (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012). Specifically, this implies that the needs of students and their timelines will determine what community needs can be addressed by a particular SL relationship at any given time. The process of engagement is essential to democratizing engagement and education (Benson et al., 2000; Saltmarsh et al., 2009). When the engagement process excludes the preferences of one of the partners this can affect the quality and type of the relationship being created. The power imbalance in this case is leading to an asymmetrical relationship. A major aspect of this asymmetry involves the community organizations respondents having to accommodate FHS's timeframe, which can undermine the partnership as it sets a condition in place that compromises the mutual benefit from the relationship (power will be discussed in Chapter Five).

**Benefits of the Partnership**

Using the conceptual framework to understand the level of exchange between community organizations and FHS, respondents from community organizations were asked about benefits from the partnership. Access to resources and future collaboration opportunities, visibility for the community organization, a supportive work environment for staff, a fresh perspective on their work, technical expertise and free labor were benefits the site representatives mentioned they have gained from the relationship with the faculty. Some of these benefits were immediate and took place during or right after the SL experience. One respondent (S. 3) from an international organization which runs a primary health care facility mentioned their constant need for academia to provide the expertise they always lack, “we need academia. We need students who can observe, who can dig into deeper. Who can take the data and give us a feedback.″ The presence of students encouraged staff at the organization to work more efficiently which was appreciated by the community respondents who could detect positive energy in the work environment when students happened to be on site; as (S.6) the respondent from a local ministry stated, “The presence of students is beneficial. The staff working with students gives more [works better] because they are motivated. The presence of young men and women and new tasks is important.”

The output of the students’ engagement was usually of good quality and mostly the product that the organization could benefit from either immediately or in the future. As the respondent (S. 12) from a private local NGO mentioned, “Students provided affordable expertise.” This is expected in a context like Lebanon which is struggling economically and where community organizations are understaffed, over-worked, and operate with limited resources.

Respondents from community organizations benefited from the SL partnership by access to university resources beyond just the labor of the students. For example, some were able to benefit from the technical expertise of faculty members with whom they developed a relationship as a result of the SL. Respondent (S. 10) from a local NGO who has collaborated with FHS for three semesters commented, “I always seek FHS when I need anything even for issues not related to students.” Respondents from community organizations also benefited from working with faculty in FHS on projects not related to student work through the personal connections they created with specific individuals in FHS. For example when respondents have a good relationship with a faculty member they can seek their assistance on other projects not related to the SL relationship.

Respondents from community organizations reported that they also benefited from the reputation of the university. The respondent from one international organization (S. 2) used the name and reputation of the university to persuade their staff to accept a new protocol, “Someone from AUB came, from a well know university, one of the most important in Lebanon.” Similarly, the respondent from one municipality (S. 5) discussed how collaborating with the university offered visibility to the municipality and enhanced its credibility in their community, “Just by saying that a university like AUB and a municipality like us are together, gives this collaboration weight which is important.” The relationship with AUB, “ Brought visibility to the organization” commented the respondent from a local NGO (S. 12); which also resonated with another respondent from a public hospital (S. 16) who stated, “When patients and staff see that we are hosting public health students from AUB this is something very important for us.”

AUB is a reputable university, and as the respondents’ accounts demonstrate their association or interaction with faculty and students enhanced the image of the community

organization within its own context. A partnership with a credible and reputable university can enhance the status of the organization. Partnerships offer legitimacy to community organizations especially in a context where the government is weak and public support is limited (Smith, 2001). In such a context, partnerships with a highly credible university can enhance the "status and moral authority" of the organization (Boyle & Silver, 2005, p. 246).

***Unequal Exchange within the Relationship***

Despite the reported benefits, seven respondents from community organizations expressed an imbalance in the relationship, where university faculty are able to achieve their goals (e.g., student learning outcomes) and benefit more from the relationship. The respondent (S. 7) from a public hospital described the imbalance, "Faculty met their goals. We are giving FHS what they want. We are doing it as a service to AUB. We gained one thing only: the name of AUB at our center." Although respondents from community organizations benefit from the name and reputation of the university they were unsatisfied with conditions of the relationship related to continuity in engagement and limited presence on site. They expressed feeling an obligation to accept these conditions as change was beyond their control. As the respondent from an international organization that operates a health center stated:

> FHS has students, they have SL courses. If they want to send students, they can, if they do not want to send students, they will not. I cannot force AUB/ FHS students to come to the center every semester or regularly. (S. 3)

Research findings indicate that given the value respondents from community organizations placed on the connection with FHS, community organizations were willing to accept the status quo to maintain the existing relationship. Demanding change in existing conditions might risk the ongoing relationship and community organizations were unwilling to take that risk. Community organizations collaborated with the university to gain power, not with academia, but

in their context and in their relationship with other NGOs. In other words, the community organization will gain status vis-à-vis other organizations and community members in the area it serves.

In agreement with previous research (d'Arlach et al., 2009; Ngai et al., 2010; Nichols et al., 2015; Sandy & Holland, 2006), respondents from community organizations expressed that they valued the relationship with AUB/FHS and emphasized aspects related to nurturing and valuing of the partnership. All community respondents commented positively on the ease of communication with individual faculty regarding students and agreed that interactions were respectful in nature. Community respondents described faculty members as "polite", "professional" and "easy to communicate with." Caring and respectful relations can facilitate partnerships that bridge boundaries dividing the world of academia where knowledge and expertise reside and that of the community (Sandy & Holland, 2006).

The value of the SL relationship itself, and levels of engagement were also discussed by Dorado and Giles (2004), who described three forms of engagement: tentative, for newly formed and short-term inexperienced partners; aligned, where partners are actively engaged in negotiations to meet their respective goals; and committed, where partners are committed to the partnership itself that extends the student presence. The latter is favored more by community organizations, as they can perceive the opportunity in the SL relationship to achieve benefits beyond the student project. In this research, all community organizations expressed commitment to the relationship itself despite limited engagement and interactions with faculty.

***Engagement Structures***

The engagement structures in a community-university collaboration will impact the extent to which a reciprocal partnership can exist between a community organization and an academic partner. Compared to community organizations, universities present a highly structured context and this can present the community organization with barriers as to where and how they can enter this structure to initiate a process of collaboration (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012). In the context of this research, the organizational structure of the university could have resulted in a form of power that weakened the possibility of a partnership. One example is the evaluation system that is coordinated by the Center for Public Health Practice (CPHP). The assessment tools used by CPHP did not inquire about the dynamics of engagement in the relationship, which could have brought power issues to the forefront. The community organization respondents felt that the evaluation system served students' interest and not that of the organization or the ongoing relationship. This led to further feelings of exclusion whereby the respondents from community organization were denied space to provide feedback and express the needs and concerns or even better understand the purpose of the student presence at their site. The system also did not reflect the interest of FHS to involve its partners (community organizations) in the evaluation process which in, democratic engagement, should not be isolated from the outcome. The respondent from one public health facility (S.7) sounded exasperated when they noted, "The evaluation [FHS has in place] is for students [and] not for the relationship."

Respondents from community organizations also reported unequal access to the resources of FHS; while students were coming to the field site of the community organization and completing their work, respondents from community organizations felt they had limited or no

access to resources in FHS or the university. Respondents from community organizations did not find it easy to communicate or discuss their needs with FHS, although individual faculty were accessible (by email mainly). A respondent from a public hospital (S.7) stated, “We wanted to meet to discuss what each partner expects from the other. Our relation started by email. Honestly we cannot develop the relationship without the other partner [still email relationship].”

Another respondent from a private local NGO (S. 12) which had hosted students for seven semesters was in doubt about whether they were allowed access to the premises of the faculty to conduct an activity. This respondent went further to express reluctance to ask for permission because of fear of refusal or being perceived as asking for something they had no right to, “I wanted to ask to use a facility but wasn’t sure I am allowed or if I have the right to ask.” This hesitance to communicate needs to a partner in a relationship could be interpreted as the existence of psychological barriers resulting from structural factors that are intimidating the community sites (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012).

Responses of community organizations indicated that they did not have enough preparation time to discuss expectations from the relationship or familiarize themselves with the SL pedagogy and what it entails regarding engagement of students and faculty. The existing structures did not provide space and continuity to build a trusting relationship for community respondents to be overt about their expectations beyond student engagement. Although conditions for engagement were discussed early on in the relationship, it could be that the way they were being shared did not leave space to negotiate any conditions, to the extent that these expectations were perceived as rules to abide by and not to question.

Freire (1996) cautions that the dominant culture of traditional institutions such as universities are usually oppressive by nature. Nevertheless, individual faculty within these intuitions may attempt to create spaces and opportunities for dialogue to take place (Deans, 1999). In this research, all interviewed faculty respondents expressed concern about the ability of the existing structures in FHS and AUB to facilitate and address the time and effort demands of an SL pedagogy. Faculty respondents reported structural factors in the university acting as barriers to more reciprocal relationships. For example scheduling of courses, time constraints for faculty, and funding availability to ensure support for faculty teaching SL were examples of factors that faculty reported could limit frequent and long-term engagement necessary for mutual relationships.

Faculty respondents did not seem to feel obliged to invest in the relationship and one reason could be that they did not perceive incorporating SL and building partnerships with the community to be a requirement by administration in FHS. As such, the primary reason for faculty respondents to engage in SL was to ensure that student learning- outcomes were met and not to sustain a relationship with the community. One faculty respondent (F. 2) reported the difficulty in trying to maintain a long-term relationship without situating the SL in a program that supports this continuity, "We tried, but logistically it is becoming more and more difficult", adding, "Service-learning cannot be in a course or for one instructor, it should be on a programmatic level. There needs to be a process built in in the faculty." Another faculty respondent (F. 3) also described the relationship as one-sided with a system in place that does not give space to organizations to discuss the ongoing relationship beyond feedback about experiences with students. Several faculty respondents went further to question the readiness of

FHS to address structural factors necessary to create partnerships and the willingness of faculty members to invest further in such relationships.

Reciprocity is very much influenced by the level of engagement that takes place and both reciprocity and engagement will vary depending on the motives and context of each partner (Hammersley, 2012; Long & Campbell, 2012). Faculty seemed satisfied with this system as it ensured a venue for students to conduct course activities. They did not question whether this system is able to create a reciprocal relationship, which would then necessitate creating different mechanisms for engagement. The way the SL relationship was created and maintained by FHS did not allow for building authentic relationships that can empower organizations. Despite the long duration of some collaborations, respondents from community organizations did not perceive the engagement as balanced. The program structure was not providing a sense of developing something together, which is necessary for empowerment to occur (Rowland, 1997). As discussed earlier in this chapter, FHS faculty did not engage with their community partner to agree on the structure for SL partnership. They continued to perceive their identity as a “server” in a relationship with set specific tasks (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006). Using the lens of a democratic engagement framework (Saltmarsh et al., 2009), respondents from community organizations were keen and motivated to create a partnership with their academic partner (FHS); however there were no clear pathways for engagement that allowed this to happen. The existing organizational structure created obstacles to forming reciprocal relationships that can facilitate exchange. The type and level of engagement are related to how the university identifies its role in the partnerships it seeks to form.

***Faculty Identity as a Partner***

Faculty views and interpretations of the relationship were very much influenced by their understanding of civic and democratic engagement and their being positioned in a privileged context of the University where knowledge and expertise reside. As one faculty respondent (F.3) stated:

> The partnership has to be both sides. You cannot be a partner with a community organization and expect them to host students and spend time with them as part of their everyday job because they are usually doing their work. If students are at the site, they have to sit with the staff from site, ask them questions. There must be an equal amount of time invested from the site above and beyond just asking students to go there and giving them assignments" ( F. 3)

In the absence of a supportive organizational structure, faculty were unable to invest time and effort to examine the nature of the ongoing relationship with each partner or consider introducing any changes to the existing engagement process. These results are expected given that the primary motive for faculty respondents is supporting student learning and not the investing in interactions or creating a relationship with host organizations.

Faculty respondents reported that the fact that a community organization was always willing to receive their students and identify projects that meet course needs then this presents a form of an informal agreement or a partnership between the community organization and FHS. In fact, two of the six faculty respondents who perceived the relationship as a "partnership" referred to continuity in the relationship, meaning that FHS has been placing students at the same community organizations for many years.

Faculty respondents accepted the imbalance in the relationship; they were aware that community organizations gained visibility from the relationship with FHS, but not necessarily from student presence or output. One faculty respondent (F. 2) stated that visibility is the

privilege organizations sought to access, “You see how you are needed with smaller, local, very specific kind of NGOs to be more visible, so these are the privileges they want to access.”

Faculty respondents were also aware of the negative impact of interruptions in the relationship; as one faculty respondent (F. 6) commented, “We are not making an impact,” which resonated with another (F. 3) who also commented on the limited commitment on behalf of faculty, “In a regular course we evaluate [learning outcomes] and this is the end of assessment. In an SL course this is not sufficient; there is an extra step which requires time and commitment.”

Authentic relationships necessitate examining existing structures and engaging in a dialogue that can build trust between partners (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Mitchell, 2008; Worral, 2007) none of which were taking place in the SL partnerships explored in this research. In their Democratic Engagement White Paper, Saltmarsh et al. (2009) stated that adopting pedagogies such as SL and creating organizational structures to conduct activities in communities does not necessarily imply that attention is being paid to the process of engagement, the how and why. Faculty respondents were not invested in their identity as a partner in the relationship. They accepted the status quo and did not state any intention to examine or change the dynamics of the relationship with their community partners.

***Not a Partnership***

Absence of a formal agreement, insufficient interaction and engagement by students and faculty, and lack of continuity were reasons for community respondents not to consider the relationship a partnership but a form of collaboration. Community organizations expressed that the faculty were not investing enough time and effort in creating a serious relationship that extended beyond the limited student activities. In other words, they were not investing in this

relationship as an equal partner. This limited engagement led community respondents to feel excluded in the relationship. As the respondent (S. 1) from a private local hospital said, "In a partnership, both sides should feel they belong. I have not felt this yet." In this research, frequent meetings, with faculty, students, and staff from the community organizations that can provide opportunities for a dialogue necessary to establish authentic relationships were not happening. For example a respondent from a local NGO (S.14) reported, "Not a partnership because there is nothing formal." One respondent from a municipality (S.15) described it as, "A collaboration, coordination, not a partnership." This resonated with another respondent from a public hospital who referred to the limited interactions with FHS:

> I don't want to be harsh, but I don't think it's a partnership. In partnerships there is a lot of exchange. The amount of information or scope of exchange; I don't think it was high. (S. 6)

Another respondent from one public hospital reacted strongly when asked if they perceived the relationship as a partnership:

> No, no; now we are speaking the truth. Although with other faculties [at other universities] I do have a partnership. Here no, sorry. Never. Partnership is more, more give and take. (S. 7)

Other respondents from community organizations tried to provide their own definition of a partnership, emphasizing the importance of personal connections in the relationship. As one respondent from a local NGO (S. 10) reported, "From my experience a partnership can take many forms; I can call it a partnership because there is trust between the two [partners]." Another respondent from a ministry (S. 11) referred to the relationship as, "The beginning of a partnership; for sure it needs some tuning to become more of a partnership." One community respondent from a local NGO (S. 12) agreed and added, "No, not partnership. I believe we are

building threads of a network, threads of a partnership. They [FHS] are trying to be closer and take our needs into consideration."

All community respondents, but none of the faculty respondents, expressed the need for a formal agreement to formalize the relationship, ensure continuity, clarify expectations from each side, and ensure collaboration beyond student work. One such example is the agreement between the faculty and one municipality which was formalized a few years back and has led to different projects (research and training) extending beyond SL being implemented jointly. The formal agreement could have been perceived by organizations as one form of structure that can ensure more equitable conditions in the relationship. One respondent from a private local NGO clearly explained how a formal agreement can clarify ambiguities about their role beyond direct student supervision, as well as the rights and obligations for each partner:

> Having an agreement early on makes things easier. To mark our center as a collaborating center with the University. In this case there is continuity, more guidance and stronger partnership. They [the university] would feel this center belongs to them. (S. 1)

## Concluding Remarks

In the SL literature, different frameworks describe partnerships that increase in depth, complexity, and closeness over time, moving from transactional one-time projects to a transformational relationship that is more complex (Bringle, Clayton & Price, 2009; Enos & Morton, 2003). Community organizations in general tend to favor transactional partnerships where the results are direct and tangible (Dorado & Giles, 2004; Enos & Morton, 2003). The findings of this research support this. Both parties expressed a clear preference for tangible benefits that address their respective needs. Community organizations have limited resources, and their decision to remain in a SL relationship can entail a level of risk, such as cost or

reallocation of staff to supervise students. However, none of the respondents from community organizations expressed any cost concern for staff and time. In fact, most reported that students were not a burden. Instead, students were perceived as one way to maintain links with FHS and AUB, which could eventually result in some reward that the organization valued in addition to the student output.

The level of engagement was not perceived, by most respondents from community organizations and faculty, as sufficient to be called a partnership. The exchange of benefits taking place between the community organization and FHS can be described as an "exchange" orientation to reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012), where the motives of each partner lead to varied justifications to sustain the ongoing relationship. More importantly, it is worth noting that although this reciprocity can lead to equitable interchanges, the relationship can "be maintained in inequitable conditions" (Dostilio et al., 2012, p. 22). In an "exchange" relationship, one side will reciprocate based on the other's behavior, irrespective of whether that behavior or action is disengaging or not, which leads to continued interactions with a hope for eventual equitable conditions.

Levels of engagement of faculty respondents were related here to underlying factors preventing the university from developing its identity as a partner in the relationship, which would necessitate shared responsibility for the partnership and its characteristics. Mitchell (2008) stated that "exploring identity, personal histories, and experiences of privilege and oppression are important to engage effectively and authentically" (p. 61). One of the key features of authenticity is self-awareness needed for those in the relationship to engage in a dialogue to become aware of and acknowledge their biases that can impact their interactions. As research findings indicate, an open discussion between representatives from community organizations and

faculty about the ongoing relationship had yet to take place. Voices of respondents from community organizations indicate that the university is distant and uninterested in engaging as an equal partner.

Using the lens of the conceptual framework I adopted for this research, it was evident that faculty respondents were not motivated to be democratically engaged with community organization to create an authentic partnership. Creating an authentic partnership with community sites is a core concept in critical SL (Mitchell, 2008), as it can result in mutual benefit for both partners. An authentic relationship makes it easier for those engaged in the relationship to identify areas of common interest and need that can eventually be addressed by the partnership (Davis et al., 2017; Dostilio et al., 2012). When the SL relationship is mutual, all participating sides become independent and benefit equally. However, power differentials and levels of engagement can affect the degree of mutuality and reciprocity and thus the outcome of the relationship (Schefner & Cobb, 2002; Shiller, 2017).

The respondents from the community organizations expressed an awareness of their value to FHS. Faculty respondents were also clear about the advantages a relationship with an academic partner can bring to the community organizations. The interrupted and shallow relationship, however, was preventing the creation of safe spaces and functional structures to allow democratic participation and engagement that would enable power sharing which is necessary for a partnership to occur (Bringle et al., 2009; Gerstenblatt, 2014).

Interviews with community respondents indicated that although organizations were empowered in their own contexts, they seemed to be marginalized in their relationship with FHS because of the type of engagement taking place. Foucault (1982) argues that power exists everywhere in different and changing positions that individuals occupy in their relationships.

When positions shift, power can shift as well and render some in a more powerful position than others (Foucault, 1982). As such, at any point, individuals in a relationship have the capacity to apply power in ways that can modify the ongoing power dynamic (Golob & Giles, 2013). Democratic engagement, that is participatory and inclusive, can be one way to empower community organizations in their relationship with the university so that they have the ability to negotiate the feeling of being excluded and marginalized that is resulting from the ongoing partnership with the academic partner. Through democratic engagement, participants will enable community organizations to negotiate power issues without feeling awkward or uncomfortable as Freire (1996) described.

In the next chapter I will discuss the power context in which the SL partnership was taking place.

# 5. Findings and Discussion: Partnership in Context

The conceptual framework for this research was guided by the idea of education as a democratic process, where engagement is a process not an end in itself and where democratic values lead to engagement that is inclusive, reciprocal, and collaborative. This research was also guided by the critical SL framework, which assumes that mutual benefit is a shared value and places engagement within a social justice framework. Creating authentic relationships requires examining the systems of power and the power imbalance created in the service relationship (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Mitchel, 2008; Worrall, 2007). Freire (1996) emphasized the importance of not only being aware of the existing power structures but also willing to engage in a dialogue to better understand the existing power relations (Deans, 1999).

The conversation that takes place within a SL collaboration is bound to include differing views, ideas and realities that can result in asymmetrical relationships due to power differences, depending on whether parties perceive they are working *with* each other or one party is working *for* another (Camacho, 2004; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Pompa, 2002). Power issues impact the type of relationship and degree of reciprocity among partners and eventually the outcomes of SL experiences (Camacho, 2004; Davies et al., 2017; Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012). It therefore follows that these constructs must be explored to understand how they are experienced by partners engaged in SL in Lebanon.

This research aimed to examine how power differences might impact the establishment of an authentic equitable partnership, and how power was enacted and distributed in the partnership using the critical SL framework proposed by Mitchell (2008). In Chapter Four, I discussed two themes related to motives for engaging in the partnership, the nature of the relationship created and relational exchange in the relationship. In this chapter, I will discuss an additional theme

that emerged which was related to the power structure that a university exerts over community organizations. Two subthemes were developed within this additional theme: power of academia, powerlessness and acceptance and justification of academia power.

## Power Relations in the Partnership

### *Defining Power, Awareness of Power Differential*

The critical SL model seeks to deconstruct systems of power existing in the SL partnership and the first step in this process was to explore how power is described by the partners engaged in the SL relationship (Mitchell, 2008). This study's participants from community organizations described power in terms of the entity that had more expertise, resources, reputation, and ability to get what they want, to decide freely, and to say "no" to the other partner. They defined power as a "state", "condition" or "power within." Respondents also defined power as one party trying to dominate, exert influence on the other ("power over"), "somebody who has control over things" as the respondent (S. 3) from a private NGO commented.

When I asked participants from the community organizations how they defined power, they struggled with the question. Although they were comfortable describing personal interactions with individual faculty members, they were often unaware of the power dynamic within which these interactions were occurring. One participant from a local NGO (S. 13) said, "The question is a bit difficult (laughing)." Another respondent (S. 9) also from local NGO was surprised by the question adding, "I never thought about this matter." The interview as part of this research, it seemed, was the first time an open discussion about power had taken place, as another respondent from an international organization (S. 2) affirmed, "This is the first time I think about these matters loudly [openly] and I am seeing the gaps."

Following the initial expressions of unease and surprise, community respondents tried to minimize the significance of power issues by focusing on their relationships with faculty members in FHS and the actual or expected benefits from this relationship. The respondent from a local nonprofit organization that has collaborated with the faculty for over six semesters was surprised by the open discussion of power and tried not only to undermine the subject of power but to distance their NGO from this discussion, commenting:

> We never thought of who has power, who is stronger (laughing). Good question, we never think this way. We are an association. We help people. If we have power or not is secondary. We care to be in a good relation with the faculty and to benefit. (S. 13)

***Not a Power Relationship***

The fact that their organizations chose to freely join or leave the relationship led five of the 16 organization respondents to perceive the power relationship as balanced between the two partners and that is there is no power differential between their organization and FHS. "No one tries to dominate anyone; it's an agreement," spoke the respondent from a local public hospital (S. 16). This resonated with another respondent from a local NGO (S. 12) who commented, "There is no imbalance [power differential]; there is respect, no side is forcing the other to anything. No side decides for the other." Another respondent from a ministry (S.11) expressed a similar perspective, "Both sides have power. FHS can stop [relationship] anytime and we [at any time] can also say no; our ability to say yes or no means the relationship is balanced."

All 16 organization participants expressed awareness of the "power" that AUB as an elite academic institution possessed in terms of resources and expertise. However, none related a perception of this power differential as necessarily a factor that impacts ongoing interactions in the relationship. "I don't see it as a relationship with a power component," stated (S.10) from a

local NGO. Another representative of a local organization (S.9) denied the existence of any power, “I think it is a collaboration more than a power dynamic between the two. I don’t think power is a factor in this relationship” unaware that even collaborations entail a power dynamic that can impact this collaboration. Disregarding the power dimension also resonated with the representative from a government hospital, who although clearly frustrated with aspects of the relationship, did not seem cognizant of how the power dynamic was impacting interactions when they stated, “There is no power here, they [FHS] send whom they want, they are taking what they want [from the relationship] but there is no power in this relation.” (S. 7). Despite the tone of frustration in the above comment, the respondent was unable to describe the power dynamic behind the ongoing interaction. They were unable to acknowledge that one partner having full control in deciding who to send reflects being the more powerful partner, in this case the academic partner who is getting what they want from the relationship under the conditions they set in place. How the respondents from community organizations perceived and defined power impacted their perception of the ongoing interactions and their role within this relationship.

Despite having an advantage in terms of resources and privileges, faculty respondents expressed having no intention of controlling or coercing the community respondents representing the different community organizations. One faculty member (F. 5) noted that, because there is trust in the relationship the knowledge power academia possesses, it is being used to “influence and mentor” the organization and not to play the “upper hand.” However, not having the intention to dominate or control the other does not necessarily mean that power dynamics are not impacting the relationship, especially given the position of the faculty in a privileged knowledge producing entity. As another faculty member noted, “I don’t think they [community

organization] are aware of what they will be missing if the university doesn't do it [implement SL] right. Yes, they are gaining but there is much more to gain but they don't see it". (F. 2)

***Interactions Embedded in Power Dynamics***

Using Foucault's (1982) description of power existing in all relationships, the university as the more powerful entity applies its power in its relationship with the community partners in order to establish a system that allows it to achieve its own goals. If faculty members are unable to conceive of their identity as an equal partner and what that entails in the relationship, this raises the question whether they would be able to discuss and share power with the community partners. Furthermore, if most community respondents did not perceive the relationship as an equal partnership but a collaboration of some sort, then this would impact their expectations from this relationship and their roles within it; this was the case with the respondents from community organizations.

The respondents from community organizations were able to easily refer to and describe interactions with the faculty members, but they were unable to reflect on or describe how the occurring interactions with the academic partner were reflecting an underlying power dynamic. When the respondent (S.7), quoted earlier stated, "There is no power here, they [FHS] send whom they want, they are taking what they want [from the relationship] but there is no power in this relation", it was clear that they were unaware that when faculty decide whom to send and under what conditions, this is an indication faculty are the powerful partner in the relationship; and as such are using that power to run things the way they wish. Rahnema (1992) cautioned against "manipulated participation" where, although participants do not feel they are forced into taking any action, they are actually led to take measures or to act in certain ways (Rahnema,

1992, as cited in Osman & Attwood, 2007, p. 18). The response of (S. 7) reflects this situation where the respondent accommodated and justified the conditions set by the faculty.

It is not surprising that both the community organization and faculty respondents were unable to clearly describe the power dynamics in the relationship since both tended to define power as a “thing or a state”, which is too narrow of a definition to capture the complexities of social interactions where power comes into play (Tew, 2006). According to this understanding of power, organizations would be unable to detect the power dynamics within the context of an ongoing relationship and how it is impacting mutuality in the relationship. This definition of power is in contrast to Foucault’s (1982) conception of power, which exists only when put into action. Foucault argued that “power designates relationships between partners” (Foucault, 1982, p. 786). Power is neither positive nor negative, and it is not a fixed entity that can be owned and applied by any one partner. Power is present in all relationships and is exercised by everyone not just the dominant partner in all our daily interactions (Foucault, 1982). Osman and Attwood (2007) describe how this Foucauldian perspective sheds light on relationships between the key elements of SL: service, power, participation and learning. Both community organizations and academic partners have motives and expectations and they will engage in practices accordingly even though there are no guarantees for any outcome. Although well-meaning power relations will play a role in the resulting SL practices, and as such must be examined. Foucault (1982) elaborated how people are usually unaware of how power is affecting interactions, so they end up preferring not to question what is happening and describe actions without relating these actions to how power is being enacted.

This research found that the community organizations were marginalized in the SL relationship and lacked power to determine the opportunities and conditions in the relationship.

Rowlands (1997) examined enactments of power as they help define power dimensions within a partnership. Rowlands embraced the perspective of Foucault that power can be experienced and understood within existing relationships. Power also underlies empowerment and can be operationalized in different contexts. Thus, empowerment is not only about access to resources but also about control over these resources and opportunities; with control comes power. Rowlands (1997) describes four enactments of power: “power over” to indicate control or compliance; “power with” to indicate collaborative action; “power to” to indicate production or action where new possibilities are created; and “power within” which is about personal agency, efficacy, and dignity. Partnerships with a power differential, such as the ongoing relationship between FHS and community organizations, are at risk of becoming exploitative (Rowlands, 1997).

Tew (2006) writes about how those who are privileged and possess power may not be conscious of this power or have any conscious intention to “oppress others”, just as those in the weaker position may not be aware of the realities of being suppressed beyond a feeling of frustration or blaming the self for not doing a better job. Both “power over” and “power with” can co-exist and lead to either productive or negative outputs (Rowlands, 1997). For example, interpersonal relations can offer opportunities for collaboration while simultaneously maintaining a system of inequality in the way it is structured. This could explain how in this research the community organizations expressed satisfaction with the interpersonal dimension and personal connections despite the relationship with the academic partner being inequitable. It might also explain how the community organizations, who denied any power issues in the relationship, perceived the ability to freely decide whether to remain in the relationship as an indication of equal power among partners. This can be interpreted as an attempt by the

community organization respondents to justify remaining in an uncomfortable condition in their relationship with the faculty.

Foucault argued that individuals are not the origin of power but rather "one of its prime effects" (Tew, 2006, p. 36). According to this view, individuals are not free to apply power based on their free will and rational intentions. This is because the power that exists everywhere, in all interactions and social practices, can direct the capacity of individuals to make it seem as if they are acting for themselves when in reality contextual factors force them to act in certain ways (Tew, 2006). The findings of this research align with this understanding of power. Although influence is one form of power, in this research it was not perceived as a coercive attempt by the faculty partners to control or exert *power over*. The absence of coercive power, however, does not exclude the presence of other forms of power being enacted and impacting the relationship. This could explain why faculty members did not express any attempts to examine the system in place in order to ensure power sharing with their community partner. For example, faculty members did not question or examine the level and extent of community partner engagement in the decision-making process or the extent to which a safe space is created where the community partner is able to express their concerns. Schefner and Cobb (2002) argued that if the collaboration is "uniting actors with different agendas and power differential" (p. 293), despite good intentions, the difference in power will lead to differential outcomes for the partners. Unless attention is given to the existing power hierarchy, the group with more power will dominate and this hierarchical origin will increase the probability that the more powerful entity will prevail over any collaborative attempts (Schefner & Cobb, 2002).

When academic faculty select a community organization for an SL partnership and assign students to complete an assignment, this allows power to be held with students and the course

instructor. Unless SL activities are carefully facilitated, they can unintentionally become “an exercise in patronization" (Pompa, 2002, p. 68). The challenge becomes how to create relationships among different but equal entities and perceive these differences as “categories of connection to analyze power dynamic” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 58). One way to overcome this challenge is to create authentic relationships that emphasize reciprocity and interdependence and are characterized by respect and trust (Mitchell, 2008; Pompa, 2002).

## The Power of Academia

Academia’s power was a subtheme constructed under the theme of power. The way power is managed in the SL relationship will have implications for how reciprocity is established and handled within the partnership (Davis et al., 2017). The type of reciprocity in a partnership will depend on the level of engagement and this will fluctuate depending on the motives of the partners and the relationship context. When partners are democratically engaged, and “working with” each other, reciprocity will become thicker; such collaborative reciprocal networks can create opportunities for change.

The negative attributes of the partnership discussed in the previous chapter such as low engagement of faculty and students and the sporadic relationship that existed only when students were present, were brought up by respondents as factors, which if modified, could enhance reciprocity, and render a more equitable distribution of power in the relationship. The limited engagement, described by the organization respondents, was perceived as abuse of power by the academic partner. The respondent from a public hospital, for example, expressed dismay at the way the engagement took place with FHS and with student placement, “We are not used to this. We are the power. They [faculty] have to ask us” (S. 7).

The community organizations in which the participants worked had relationships with more than one university. These relationships with multiple partners served as networks for the organizations within which exchange can occur. The networks that an organization establishes with multiple partners can also limit the power that any one university will have over the organization (Barrera, 2015). Hosting students from different universities could have allowed community organizations to gain power from these networks and as a result, some became more vocal in expressing frustration with the relationship. However, even when organizations chose freely to enter and remain in the relationship this does not mean they will freely express their ideas and views. Those organizations that participate and engage will be the ones that possess more power and are in a better position to collaborate with the university as well as be vocal about their expectations from the relationship (Osman & Attwood, 2007)

**Reaction to Academia's Power**

The second subtheme that emerged was related to powerlessness and acceptance of academia's power.

*Powerlessness*

All 16 community organization participants seemed to be accepting of the elitist position of the university and to firmly believe that academia is difficult to change, as they must cater to the needs of many students as well as being bound by their schedules and time considerations. These considerations dictate when students can be available to conduct SL tasks and the nature of the tasks students can implement. Despite feeling frustrated about the status quo, respondents from community organizations accepted to remain in the relationship, to prioritize the welfare of the students over their own, and to not risk the relationship with FHS.

*Compromised Priorities*

Nine organization participants expressed how they had to compromise their own priorities in favor of the students and how the faculty members undermined their expertise. These respondents understood that students have academic commitments and obligations to meet, however this did not prevent them from feeling the relationship was unfair (S. 7). They also expressed frustration since they are the entity with the field expertise, and possession of expertise is how they defined power. As one of the respondents from an international NGO commented, “We know the context more” (S. 2). The same respondent went further to express feeling unvalued in the relationship as they perceived all efforts initiated by FHS were aimed primarily at ensuring that the needs of students are met. In other words, when the needs and preferences of the NGO conflicted with those of the students, faculty members prioritized what was best for their students. Community participants acknowledged that faculty at the beginning of a SL relationship explain the limitations of what students can do, however this did not prevent respondents from community organizations from being optimistic and hopeful they might gain more than they did. The respondent from a local NGO (S. 10) noted:

> They [faculty] told me from the beginning students can only do this much. I accommodated their [student] need. It is normal. This is academia and students have specific objectives to work on. In the beginning I used to wish students could work on another task as this is more of a need for us. Now I set my priorities with those that the faculty propose for the students. (S. 10)

Feeling helpless because of being excluded from decision-making led nine community partner participants to report how they have been demanding changes without success. “I wish there was some flexibility for us,” the respondent from an international organization (S. 2) stated after a pause, adding, “I would have preferred that we agree together on conditions; this [conditions] is

being forced on us" to indicate feeling excluded from decision-making. The respondent changed their tone to one of despair and added that they understood the challenges encountering academia, noting, "We have no control over these issues."

## Acceptance of Academia's Power

Fear of disrupting the relationship was a major concern for all of the community organization respondents, as it could compromise current or future benefits. As such, this is one reason why the organizations choose to accommodate the requests and conditions set by faculty. They expressed a perception that a reputable university like AUB would have access to other organizations to place their students, and this made some organizations doubt their value as a site to the academic partner. This, however, may not reflect an accurate picture of the situation, as one faculty member (F.2) noted how they often struggle to identify a site that meets the criteria set by FHS. None of the organizations was aware of this challenge that faculty members encounter, indicating an absence of open dialogue and democratic participatory process where the needs of both partners are shared openly and explicitly.

### *They Know Better*

The respondents from community organizations accepted the conditions set in place by the FHS, apparently based on the assumption that the faculty knows what needs to be done in the context of the SL partnership. Overtly, the organization respondents did not express being or feeling exploited but tried to make sense of the conditions in place, for example a respondent from a ministry commented:

> We never felt exploited in the relationship. On the contrary, when we ask FHS to participate in an activity where we want them to be with us if FHS accepts it would be very good. If not, it is not a refusal for collaboration but more of a conflict in timing. (S. 11)

Another respondent (S. 16) from a government hospital reported that they did not feel they could question the actions or decisions of FHS and was very hesitant to act independently but was willing to wait for instructions:

> I tell them these things [suggestions, feedback, verbally, over the phone]. They [FHS] never told me to send my feedback by email. Maybe they should have asked me to be more formal [communicate in writing]. No, we never asked again because I felt that they [FHS] know what they have to do. (S. 16)

This anecdote resonated with another respondent (S. 12) from an active NGO who also did not feel they had the right to interact with FHS beyond emails, saying, "I don't have the opportunity to do this. Maybe I am not allowed, and it is also not my right." Bringing up the issue of "rights" reflects a power dynamic and doubt about what is "allowed" in the relationship. This could also reflect a lack of clarity about each partner's role in the relationship, which is why many requested a formal agreement with the university to clarify roles and expectations. Such doubts may result from a lack of or insufficient interaction between partners and the absence of a safe space to express concerns. Another respondent (S. 2) from an international NGO went further to blame the organization itself, commenting:

> We are so busy with other matters. Maybe the shortcoming is from us. I am not saying [FHS] should have asked us. Maybe we also should implement an evaluation (S. 2)

Another respondent (S. 10) from a local NGO attempted to normalize the situation by noting that it is expected that organizations would accommodate the faculty more. By doing so, this respondent established a clear power differential between the two partners:

> I am not dealing with another NGO. I am dealing with an academic institution. It is normal [acceptable] that they set their standards. I consider it the duty of the NGO to accept this because we are working with a university. (S. **10)**

Management at several community organizations insisted on maintaining a relationship with AUB, in particular FHS, despite the extra burden on staff and the lack of a clear benefit from hosting students in SL partnerships. For example, one representative from a local NGO (S. 13) reported being given directives to maintain the relationship and not to risk it in any way. Such a directive could have created pressure on the staff who are directly engaged with the students to accept conditions as set by the academic partner. Another respondent from a public hospital (S. 16) commented that it is their teaching mission to host students from any academic institution and so they will continue to accept students from FHS. Accepting students because it is their mission to help others was an argument used by several organization respondents to justify accepting to remain in a relationship despite the limited benefit or unsuitable conditions in place. When I tried to understand this attitude during the focus group meeting, the respondents confirmed that this type of thinking is rooted in the culture of community organizations and civil society: This is what they are used to doing and will continue to do.

These findings are in line with what Freire (1996) predicted that when the context does not allow an open trusting dialogue to take place, feelings of powerlessness and acceptance of the status quo can be expected. Freire (1996) discussed how through open, honest dialogue community members and faculty are more able to understand their reality, in this case the nature of the ongoing relationship with academia. The knowledge gained through such a dialogue will empower the organization to accordingly modify their expectations of the relationship and their subsequent actions. In the research context, the power dynamic in the relationship of the SL partners appears to resemble the teacher-student relationship that Freire (1996) was critical about since it presents the teacher as the expert, possessing the knowledge and authority while the student is the passive element that must be guided. Most community respondents were hesitant

to demand changes or ask for more say in the process and were accepting of a more passive role in the relationship.

To understand the power interplay in a SL relationship, it is necessary to understand the context in which the relationship occurs. It is not surprising for the organizations to feel uncomfortable discussing power issues. Lebanon is a collectivist culture and social harmony is favored making it highly unlikely that an organization would question the practices of the university, the more powerful partner in the relationship, for fear of disrupting the relationship in place (Khakhar & Rammal, 2013). Thus, an open discussion of power issues with a powerful entity will not happen naturally and needs to be planned as part of the partnership building process. This accepting position of the community organization respondents also aligns with Foucault's definition of power as existing in all relationships, firmly "rooted in the social nexus" rather than an additional structure above it (Foucault, 1982. p. 792). In the existing social and cultural context of this research, an American HEI is a highly powerful and credible entity. Structural features of the SL program in FHS and the conditions in place prevented partners from democratic engagement and inclusive collaboration that would allow them to practice "power with" and create something new together. The program in place did not offer community organizations a sense of creating something together with the faculty; for example, scheduling of the SL experiences and the evaluation system in place exclude input of the community organizations. On the contrary, these findings reveal that the existing features of the program encourage an attitude of dependency where faculty use the community organization as sites to place students and in return, expect the organization to benefit from hosting the students. Such a context defeats the aim of a partnership.

Systems that connect people will always entail a power element. The question becomes how this power differential impacts the discussion or negotiation of mutuality within the partnership. The above discussion indicates how the power differential was impacting the level of engagement and reciprocity in the relationship.

**Concluding Remarks**

To explore the partnership experiences in service learning I used a conceptual framework (CF) that is informed by conceptions from Dewey (1986), Freire (1996) and values of democratic engagement (Saltmarsh et al., 2009). I used the Critical SL Model (Mitchell, 2008) to explore partnership experience, reciprocity and the power differential in the SL relationship.

Research findings indicate that the SL model adopted by FHS did not attempt to democratically engage the community partners or map and examine the existing structures and power dynamics within the partnership. Power differentials impacted the level and type of engagement and prevented reciprocity in the relationship, compounded by a cultural context that discouraged open dialogue from happening.

Authentic partnerships demand continuity and prolonged engagement to prevent exploitative relations (Mitchell, 2008). Yet, when there are interruptions in the partnership between semesters, a dismantling of power structures will not occur between those who are served (community organizations) and those who are servers (academic partners). This means that questioning the distribution of power will not take place. Reciprocal long-term engagement that enables reflection on social issues and acceptance that these reflections might be uncomfortable, are essential elements for successful community service learning (d'Arlach, Sánchez & Feuer, 2009). Becoming aware of power differentials is what Camacho (2004) described as a first step in dismantling the hierarchy between those who serve and those who are

served. When academic professionals and community representatives are unable to effectively map reciprocity and power within a partnership, their ability to manage power inequalities within the partnership is compromised.

Promoting relations within existing power structures limits the usefulness of a partnership. Community organizations will take up a bigger service role, while decisions and power remain with the university. Davis et al. (2017) recognize the inequalities present in community partnerships and the negative impact of power applied by those in the more powerful context. Despite the fact that existing structures of the ongoing SL partnership led to feelings of helplessness, intimidation and having to compromise priorities, the organization respondents expressed the need to accommodate and justify the existing relationship.

The transformation of power dynamics in community university partnerships requires that the democratic principles of engagement guide the enactment of power in the relationship (Himmelman, 2001; Saltmarsh et al., 2009). Community action exists on a continuum extending from “collaborative betterment” to “collaborative empowerment” (Himmelman, 2001). Collaborative betterment occurs when a campus engages with the community on an SL project over a specific period for example one semester (exchange reciprocity). Collaborative empowerment, on the other hand, is initiated by the community, which tries to shift the power in the SL relationship by enhancing its own sense of ownership and control in decision-making (Himmelman, 2001). For a relationship to move from betterment to empowerment is challenging as it will entail addressing power issues and not just enhancing communication and trust, otherwise community organizations will end up assuming a bigger service role while decisions and power remain with the HEI (Himmelman, 2001).

Power as a theme was interwoven throughout all discussions in this research. With an open discussion of power issues, organizations become cognizant of potential opportunities to benefit from the partnership; they also can become more conscious of the power imbalance in the relationship. With this knowledge, they have the potential to become more assertive in demanding conditions to ensure a reciprocal interaction with the academic partner. A SL partnership does not compromise the power of the university. On the contrary, such partnerships can reinforce the identity of the university and affirm its authority. The elite status of universities stems from their long history of offering education and engaging in research. Such services are crucial for the HEI's identity, as well as ensuring its institutional legitimacy. When universities democratically engage in partnerships to empower communities they are in fact, connecting their expertise in research and teaching (their resources) to social issues present in the community, and this gives them an edge they need to maintain their elitist identity. When a university engages in initiatives that aim to address social justice issues and empower communities, they are also able to sustain their distinct identity as an elite institution at a time when these identities were being subjected to external challenges. In the late 1980's the identity of HEI as experts in teaching and research was challenged with increasing competition in the HE industry (Boyle & Silver, 2005). Systems, which bring about "power together" do not necessarily lead to shared identity, however, they bring about "power by embracing differences and multiple views" (Tew, 2006, p.38)

# 6. CONCLUSION

## Reflection on my Research Journey

When I embarked on this research, my aim was to better understand the experiences of the community organizations that are in a partnership with our faculty in SL projects. I strongly suspected that the faculty, as the academic entity, was benefiting more from this relationship and if this was what my research found I wanted to be able to change the process of how SL is being implemented. When I started the interviews, I expected the interviewees to appreciate the space of the interview and to be vocal about their displeasure in the relationship.

However, I was somewhat disappointed and surprised by the fact that, for many participants, documenting dissatisfaction was not as straightforward as I had expected. As I indicated in the results chapters, interviewees were reluctant and hesitant to report on negative experiences and at times went even further to justify the negative aspects in the relationship. I was aware of the power imbalance between the faculty where I work and the community partners; yet I did not expect that this imbalance could also have implications on the extent to which some interviewees were willing to express their feedback, given the opportunity to do so. I believe it was challenging for some participants to separate me from the institution where I work, despite my attempts prior and during the interview to explain the rationale and purpose of the research.

I was surprised by the level of acceptance of power imbalance in the relationship. I was not sure of whether it was the impact of the collectivist culture or the fact that the academic partner is an “American” university, or both. I would be interested to expand on this research and explore the SL relationship with other universities in Lebanon in order to compare the SL partnership experience. Now when I reflect on this research, I can see how my interest in this

topic as well as my initial surprise in the reactions of the participants, was very much influenced by my own position and background. My primary and university educations, which were in western schools as well as my being employed in a powerful American university, has shaped my values and my identity as a public health professional ; and has created for me a subculture which is more individualistic and where social harmony is not necessarily the best option. I am not sure if someone with different affiliations would have experienced the same reactions to the power imbalance.

**This Research**

In this thesis, I explored the SL partnership experience between an academic faculty situated in a private American university and community organizations situated in its neighboring communities. The issue this raised for me, as someone with a public health background who has been involved in SL since its inception in the faculty, was understanding whether SL as applied by FHS is creating a reciprocal partnership with the community, and if so, under what engagement conditions. I thus articulated my overarching question for this research to explore how community-university partnerships are created and sustained, if at all, in a SL experience in a public health context in Lebanon. This study is the first to explore the partnership experience within SL from the perspective of the community organization in Lebanon and the region. More specifically, this is the first study that attempted to bring out into the open a discussion of power and reciprocity within such relationships.

To respond to this question, I designed a research approach where I could engage directly with partners in the relationship. Holding conversations with 16 representatives from different community organizations, I hoped to gain insight into how these organizations perceived the relationship with FHS, what they value in the partnership, and the extent to which power of the

university (academia) is affecting the establishment of an authentic partnership. I elaborated on these insights by holding similar conversations with the six FHS faculty members who are implementing SL in their courses.

The findings of this research shed light on the motivations and expectations of community organizations from the SL relationship with the university, how organizations perceive their relationship with the faculty, and whether a partnership is being created. The findings also highlight the benefits and relational exchange that occurred between the two partners and the structural barriers to establishing such a reciprocal relationship. This study aimed to answer three research questions:

1. What do community partners value in their relationship with the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut?
2. How do power differences impact the establishment of an authentic partnership?
3. How is power enacted and distributed in the partnership?

In summary, my findings indicate that like other traditional HEIs there is a preference to adopt a framework that privileges the expertise existing in the university, that the faculty was engaged in a traditional SL model where the focus is not on the process of engagement but on the outcome of the SL experience. The definition of a partnership was very much linked to gains and to current or future access to resources. Each community partner had their own subjective meaning of the SL partnership they experienced. Community respondents, depending on their expectations and experiences from the partnership, as well as their own contextual conditions interpreted events differently. There was no attempt to examine or deconstruct the system of power inequality. In agreement with most literature on community-university partnerships (Stoecker, Beckman & Min, 2010), the findings of this research indicated that benefit is tilted

toward the academic partners as the entity possessing more power in the relationship. Respondents from community organizations felt that a partnership is one that is characterized by mutual benefits, shared decision making, and sustained engagement. Except for one experience, which was formalized with an agreement, the relationship the faculty created with community organizations cannot be labelled a partnership since it negates what the literature describes as characteristics of partnerships. Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (2011) described these characteristics as mutual collaboration between parties sharing common interests, privileges, and power. Partnerships are also typically characterized by integrity, closeness resulting from frequent interactions and engagement, and equity (Bringle, Clayton & Price, 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq & Morrison, 2010).

Foucault articulated that the study of power cannot be narrowed down to a study of the institutions as “power relations are rooted in the system of social networks" (p. 792). How power is exercised is not only about the relationship among partners but about how "certain actions modify others” (p. 788). The analysis of power relations necessitates clearly identifying factors such as the conditions surrounding the relationship, the objectives of those who are exercising power and their means for doing so as well as the structures and systems in which power is institutionalized ( Foucault, 1982). Using the lens of the conceptual framework (Mitchell, 2008) it was clear that the partnership created with the faculty was reinforcing the power imbalance and maintaining the powerful position of the academic partner. The relationship created was more of a collaboration between a powerful academic entity and a community organization. Community organizations did not feel that the faculty was positioning itself as an equal partner. Power was held and applied by the academic partner who possessed the responsibility of initiating and maintaining the partnership. Limited space was allowed for

community organizations to engage in a dialogue with the academic partner and to voice and advocate for their priorities, in clear contrast to what democratic engagement is all about.

The declared motives to engage in the relationship were similar to other literature, such as extra free labor, technical expertise, and motivation of staff (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Edwards et al., 2001). However, what was interesting is that none of the respondents from community organizations ascribed much value to student engagement and outputs but were more motivated by the reputation of the university and the benefits that this reputation might bring their organizations currently or in the future. Organizations placed a high value on this expected benefit, to the extent that community organizations accepted to remain in the relationship despite the unequal conditions in which the relationship was being maintained. Although benefit from student work was limited in most cases, the significant benefit was the power the organization acquired by being in a relationship with a powerful academic entity. Further, organizations felt it was their mission as a civil organization to accept and support students for the public good.

**Findings in Theory and Practice**

The findings of this research help shed light on the characteristics of successful relationships by referring to the components of the conceptual framework that was guided by the critical service-learning framework (Mitchell, 2008). The conceptual framework I adopted was grounded in conceptions of engagement which is reflexive, participatory and democratic (Dewey, 1986; Freire, 1996; Saltrmarsh et al., 2009) and Foucault's interpretation of power and how it is embedded in all human interactions (Foucault, 1982). The conceptualization of power by Foucault (1982) does have implications on how we think about SL partnerships. Engaging with academia can enable community organizations to access power; and how power is enacted in the partnership can limit as well as enable exchange.

Using the critical SL model, these components were brought together to guide the formation of reciprocal and authentic partnerships. Adopting a critical SL framework indicates an acceptance of the political nature of community work. In practice, this means identifying and negotiating social issues and structural factors that are leading to unequal power sharing. This necessitates continuous dialogue and reflection by all partners in order to bring forward the different perspectives of those engaged in the partnership. This, however, was not taking place. The critical SL framework allowed me to examine the distribution of power and how it is impacting reciprocity and exchange between partners. It allowed me to have an open discussion with the community participants on how power is being shared by the academic and the community partner.

The findings of this research indicated that simple basic collaborations can happen even if they do not meet the components of the conceptual framework: participatory and relational engagement; transformational relationships (collaborative, reciprocal); addressing the power differential. However, in such circumstances, these collaborations will not lead to building authentic partnerships that can empower the community organizations. Not to mention that these collaborations will not improve social conditions impacting the health of the populations to in the chosen community. For change to happen, the faculty and the university must take the lead in addressing the structural barriers that are reinforcing power inequities among partners. The faculty must also act as an equal partner.

Listening to community partners engaged in the SL relationship I was able to draw key themes that the faculty as the academic partner must seek to address to create a partnership that ensures authentic and reciprocal engagement that can eventually lead to social change in the community. Considering that the nature and frequency of interaction is key for the partnership,

the faculty must revise the existing SL structures and process of engagement with community organizations. Revising the existing structures will be a challenge as the current structure is very much impacted by the level of institutionalization of SL at the university level. Although the university is increasingly taking supportive measures for community engagement, for example the establishment of a Center for Civic Engagement (CCE), the degree of integration of SL is still limited. For instance, CCE is not situated under an academic program but is a parallel entity. Similarly, at the level of faculty, acknowledging SL engagement and reward for involvement in SL is still very limited, for example, promotion criteria for faculty are mainly research based.

The faculty must put more effort into ensuring that both academic and community members are able to speak a common language, that is to have a clear understanding of what SL is and how it differs from other experiential pedagogies. Research conducted by Davis, Cronley, Beamon and Madden (2019) indicated that often both faculty members and community organizations are unable to articulate the differences between these pedagogies and this will be a barrier to creating a community- university partnership.

Investing in human relationships is crucial for engagement. Faculty must find venues to ensure stable engagement that is uninterrupted by the university calendar. As Hoyt (2010) stated, the conversation must continuously flow among partners. This is how trust is established and maintained. The faculty should become creative in considering venues such as training workshops or events that can take place during winter and summer breaks in order to limit interruptions in the relationship. Though FHS will be more open and supportive for creating change there will be obstacles and limitations set by existing university structures and policies. However, while continuing advocacy at the university level, the faculty can and must be

proactive in ensuring space and time for open discussions and reflections where expectations from the partnership, the roles of each partner, and power issues are overtly discussed.

I believe that this research has created a platform where discussion of power issues can occur more openly for both partners. Yet, I do not expect that this will be an easy process for either partner. Faculty teaching SL must become more aware of how the power of academia can be intimidating to the community partner. As such, they must be proactive in mapping out power differentials and initiating reflections and discussions on power dynamics. To be able to achieve this, faculty must invest in building trust with their partners so that power issues can be openly discussed in the created space. In other words, the faculty as well as the university must begin to identify and assume the role of partner and create the pathways or channels for that to happen. In this research, the faculty was not perceived as a partner "working with" the community organizations (Saltmarsh et al., 2009) which is key in democratic engagement.

The findings of this research cannot be interpreted outside the context of a developing country and a collectivist culture. The perception of power in a collectivist culture impacted the reaction of community respondents to the power dynamic in the going interactions. In a collectivist context, power issues are not usually discussed overtly for fear of disrupting social harmony among partners (Dirani, 2006; Jabbra, 1989). The discussion was clearly outside the comfort zone of most participants. In fact, respondents did not seem to consider power differential as a significant matter. Power differences are accepted and appreciated and, in most cases, cannot be disrupted, as the value of disrupting such a balance is more significant in the relationship. Being situated in a collectivist culture seemed to impact the acceptance of unequal relationships. Although during the interview respondents from community organizations became aware of the inequitable conditions in which the relationship was being maintained, this did not

prevent them from justifying and accommodating the unequal conditions governing the relationship. Because of the cultural context and existing norms regarding power relationships, the faculty must be proactive and take the lead in initiating discussions around power dynamics and authentic partnerships. I feel I can play a role in facilitating this process, having conducted this research and listened to both perspectives.

Institutional factors such as the mission of an organization can impact the progression of a partnership (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). FHS will continue to support and promote civic engagement, as this is a core public health principle. If the faculty is keen on creating authentic partnerships, then it must ensure that in addition to supportive organizational structures, knowledge flow is not unidirectional from the university to the community as this can risk creating stereotypes of the community as a helpless entity rather than an entity with assets. FHS is situated in a research university mostly rooted in traditional models of education where the researchers are the experts and the university is positioned as the entity where knowledge is situated. Such models place power and control in the hands of academicians and do not fulfill the expectations of a democratically engaged partnership. If FHS wants to have the impact it seeks, then the theories and models that inform its community engagement must be informed by community development and not solely by learning and teaching research methodologies. The unique dynamics of partnerships in a developmental context means that participants in a partnership, whether individuals, communities, or institutions, must possess the ability to partner (Hammersley, 2012). HEIs are expected to take the lead and build their capacities in this domain to ensure a successful SL partnership.

**Practical Applications and Implications**

With the increase in experiential learning being adopted in HE to enhance learning outcomes of students, universities have been adopting pedagogies that can facilitate engagement with the community. SL is one such approach that has been found to ensure both results: better learning outcomes and increased community engagement (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Mayot, 2010). In Lebanon and the region, SL is a young field and not much research, if any, has been conducted to inform best practices for its implementation.

The findings of this research can have implications for HE and how SL as one experiential pedagogy is being implemented in similar contexts. Research findings will be shared in scientific journals (for example Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement; Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning) and professional conferences, particularly those occurring in less developed settings. Given the scarcity in SL research of a developing context and with the increasing trend for HEIs to adopt community engagement and civic education, the findings of this research have the potential to inform how partnerships are being created and maintained particularly the discussion of power dynamics in a developing setting.

The FHS where I work is invested in SL. The findings of this research will be shared with the SL task force in the faculty, where it will enrich and expand on the data already collected by the CPHP who currently hosts the SL initiative. Jointly with CPHP we can combine data from this study and data being collected by the CPHP to present a strong case to administration in FHS as well as the Center of Civic Engagement at the University. With more entities and units speaking the same language and asking for change, senior administration might be more receptive to considering the introduction of structural changes that will enhance the

identity of the university as a partner. As Saltmarsh and Johnson (2020) explained, building an identity as an equal partner committed to community engagement is one way for the university to align its organizational culture and practices with its partner identity.

My research will bring in the voice of the community organizations that we collaborate with at different phases of the SL relationship. For example, the SL task force runs satisfaction surveys with the sites after students complete their fieldwork. My findings will be used to inform and revise the survey to allow more space for organizations to report on the nature of the relationship and ongoing dynamics with the faculty. Although personal connections are very important in creating a relationship, there should be clear pathways for community organizations outside the university to access to resources and people within the university.

My findings will offer practical recommendations for the faculty; for example having more “formal agreements” with organizations and offering communication training for all participants, both of which are considered ways to recognize and deal with power differentials (Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012) . Such agreements would clearly state the obligations and expectation of each side, which would facilitate granting power privileges and empowering the community partner. My findings will also be shared with other academic units in the university such as the Center for Teaching and learning (CTL) which offers training and support to faculty across the university as well as the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE). Most importantly, findings will be shared with the community organizations that were interviewed. Sharing results that bring to the open the unequal conditions can empower the organizations to become more vocal about requesting a more participatory and inclusive process in the relationship. The findings, if coupled with action steps that the faculty will embark on, can be a first step for mapping power relations and acting in a way to address the power differential. Dostilio (2014)

explored factors in the partnership that promote democratic engagement and emphasized the importance of leadership that promotes structures to create space and transparency, as well as ensuring dialogue and reflection on the interactions taking place. A democratically engaged partnership can bring attention to structures in HE that resist this type of engagement and this will be a starting point for possible change.

Faculty members incorporating SL can engage in discussions regarding the language of need in the SL rhetoric as needs could imply deficits or gaps and this imposes structures of inequality. How the power relationship between the community organizations and FHS is produced and maintained must continuously be monitored and assessed. Faculty can further recognize existing knowledge and expertise in the community and invite community representatives into their SL classes. Faculty can also consider engaging community members in developing course syllabi as well as evaluations. This will be challenging within the faculty and in the social context that favors harmony and avoiding disruptions in existing structures. I was recently invited to serve on the Community Engagement task force in charge of preparing learning outcomes for community engagement courses (under the general education requirements in the university) and have already highlighted the importance of monitoring the process of engagement and power issues in community university partnerships.

## Recommendations for Future Research

As highlighted in my limitations, my study focused on the experience of community organizations with one faculty in one university. The experience of AUB may not be the same as the experience of community organizations with other universities in different cities in the country. Similarly, the experience with other faculties in the same university may differ. It would be interesting to explore the relationship with other universities to determine whether

power differential is perceived in a similar manner, particularly regarding western influence and perception of power.

In undertaking this research, I have been able to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of SL. More specifically, in the field of community-university partnerships within SL relationships in a collectivist context in a developing country. I have shown that partnerships cannot be examined without considering the context and culture in which the relationship is taking place. Both context and culture will impact how a community partner defines an authentic relationship and accordingly their expectations from the partnership.

The pedagogy and philosophy of critical SL was conceptualized and introduced by Robert Rhoads in 1997, who attempted to challenge how fieldwork should become more just (Mitchell & Latta, 2020). Rosenberger (2000) attempted to apply a Freirean lens to SL and emphasized the need for teachers and students to realize that when they adopt SL pedagogy, they are in a position of power and privilege. In their reflection, Mitchell and Latta (2020) articulated the relevance and centrality of the action- reflection dynamic to community engagement. The mapping of power imbalance and acting in ways to reconfigure this imbalance is key to ensuring equity and justice in the partnership (Mitchell & Latta, 2020). Critical SL was operationalized by Mitchell (2008) and has been adopted as a framework to explore community-university practice that seeks to ensure authentic partnerships. Adopting this framework for my research allowed me to explore ongoing interactions and engagement and the power imbalance in the relationship between the faculty and the community organization. Introducing culture into the framework further allowed me to interpret and understand the perception of power among partners, which will have implications on how power will be discussed and partnerships created and sustained in a SL relationship.

**References**

American University of Beirut (n.d.). Retrieved from: http://website.aub.edu.lb/ccecs/Pages/home.aspx

American University of Beirut (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.aub.edu.lb/aboutus/Pages/mission.aspx

Anderson, G. L., & Jones, F. (2000). Knowledge generation in educational administration from the inside out: The promise and perils of site-based, administrator research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *36*(3), 428-464.

Anderson, L. S., Royster, M. O., Bailey, N., & Reed, K. (2011). Integrating service learning into an MPH curriculum for future public health practitioners: Strengthening community-campus partnerships. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, *17*(4), 324-327.

Anyan, F. (2013). The influence of power shifts in data collection and analysis stages: a focus on qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Report*, *18*, 36.

Bahng, G. (2015). Using community partnerships to create critical service learning:The case of Mar Vista Gardens. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, *21*(1), 55-70.

Bahous, R., Bacha, N. N., & Nabhani, M. (2011). Multilingual educational trends and practices in Lebanon: A case study. *International Review of Education*, *57*(5), 737-749.

Barrera, D. (2015). Examining our interdependence: Community partners' motivations to participate in academic outreach. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *19*(4), 85-114.

Basinger, N., & Bartholomew, K. (2006). Service learning in nonprofit organizations: Motivations, expectations, and outcomes. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *12*(2), 15-26.

Battistoni, R. M., Longo, N. V., & Jayanandhan, S. R. (2009). Acting locally in a flat world: Global citizenship and the democratic practice of service learning. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *13*(2), 89-108.

Bawa, A.; Munck, R. (2012). Forward: Globalizing civic education. In McIlrath, L., Lyons, A. & Munck, R. (Eds.). *Higher education and civic engagement: Comparative perspectives* (pp. xi-xix). Springer

Benson, L., Harkavy, I. R., & Puckett, J. L. (2007). *Dewey's dream: Universities and democracies in an age of education reform: Civil society, public schools, and democratic citizenship*. Temple University Press.

Benson, L., & Harkavy, I. (2000). Higher education's third revolution: The emergence of the democratic cosmopolitan civic university. *Cityscape*, 47-57.

Benson, L., Harkavy, I., & Puckett, J. (2000). An implementation revolution as a strategy for fulfilling the democratic promise of university-community partnerships: Penn-West Philadelphia as an experiment in progress. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *29* (1), 24-45.

Bertelsen, R. G. (2012). Private foreign-affiliated universities, the state, and soft power: The American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *8*(3), 293-311.

Birbili, M. (2000). Translating from one language to another. *Social Research Update*, *31*(1), 1-7.

Bissat, L. (2002). *The role of civil society in rural community development: two case studies from Lebanon* [ESCWA-World Bank Capacity Building Workshop on Rural Development in the Middle East, June 2-3].

Blouin, D., & Perry, E. (2009). Whom does service learning really serve? Community-Based organizations' perspectives on service learning. *Teaching Sociology, 37*(2), 120-135.

Bortolin, K. (2011). Serving ourselves: How the discourse on community engagement privileges the university over the community. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *18*(1), 49-59.

Boyer, E. L. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, *49*(7), 18-33

Boyle, M. E., & Silver, I. (2005). Poverty, partnerships, and privilege: Elite institutions and community empowerment. *City & Community*, *4*(3), 233-253.

Boyte, H. (2009). Repairing the breech: Cultural organizing and the politics of knowledge. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-learning & Civic Engagement*, *1*(1), 1.

Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In defense of being “native”: The case for insider academic research. *Organizational Research Methods*, *10*(1), 59-74.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic Analysis, 48.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (2000). Institutionalization of service learning in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *71*(3), 273-290.

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (2002). Campus–community partnerships: The terms of engagement.

Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A., & McIntosh, R. E. (2006). Analyzing Morton's typology of service paradigms and integrity. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *13*(1), 5-15.

Bringle, R. C., Clayton, P., & Price, M. (2009). Partnerships in service learning and civic engagement. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service Learning & Civic Engagement, 1*(1), 1-20.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2005). Confronting the ethics of qualitative research. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *18*(2), 157-181.

Bulmer, M. (1982). When is disguise justified? Alternatives to covert participant observation. *Qualitative Sociology*, *5*(4), 251-264.

Cain, P., Daly, A., & Reid, A. (2021). How Refugees Experience the Australian Workplace: A Comparative Mixed Methods Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(8), 4023.

Camacho, M. (2004). Power and privilege: Community service learning in Tijuana. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *10*(3), 31-42.

Carnegie Commission of Higher Education (n.d.).The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Retrieved from: http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/.

Carter, J. (2004). Research note: reflections on interviewing across the ethnic divide. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *7*(4), 345-353.

Cashman, S. B., & Seifer, S. D. (2008). Service learning: An integral part of undergraduate public health. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *35*(3), 273-278.

Chavez-Yenter, D., Badham, A., Hearld, K. R., & Budhwani, H. (2015). Service learning in undergraduate global health education: The effect of team dynamics on civic attitudes and skills. *The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, *3*(1), 1-9.

Chen, H. Y., & Boore, J. R. (2010). Translation and back-translation in qualitative nursing research: Methodological review. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *19* (1-2), 234-239.

Chupp, M. G., & Joseph, M. L. (2010). Getting the most out of service learning: Maximizing student, university and community impact. *Journal of Community Practice*, *18*(2-3), 190 212.

Clayton, P. H., Bringle, R. G., Senor, B., Huq, J., & Morrison, M. (2010). Differentiating and assessing relationships in service-learning and civic engagement: Exploitative, transactional, or transformational. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *16* (2), 5-21.

Clifford, J. (2017). Talking about Service-Learning: Product or Process? Reciprocity or Solidarity? *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *21*(4), 1-13.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, *39* (3), 124-130.

Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. (2018). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing among Five Approaches. 4th Edition, SAGE.

Cruz, N. I., & Giles, D. E. (2000). Where's the community in service-learning research. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *7*(1), 28-34.

Cronley, C., Madden, E., & Davis, J. B. (2015). Making service-learning partnerships work: Listening and responding to community partners. *Journal of Community Practice*, *23*(2), 274-289.

Curwood, S. E., Munger, F., Mitchell, T., Mackeigan, M., & Farrar, A. (2011). Building effective community-university partnerships: Are universities truly ready? *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *17*(2), 15-26.

Darby, A. N., Ward-Johnson, F., Newman, G., Haglund, M., & Cobb, T. (2013). Motivation to collaborate: Applying motivation theory to community organizations and universities working together. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement*, *4*(2), 119-136.

Davis, K. L., Kliewer, B. W., & Nicolaides, A. (2017). Power and reciprocity in partnerships: Deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning in community-engaged scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *21*(1), 30-54.

d'Arlach, L., Sánchez, B., & Feuer, R. (2009). Voices from the community: A case for reciprocity in service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *16* (1), 5-16.

Davis, J., Madden, E., Cronley, C., & Beamon, K. (2019). Voices from the field: A qualitative exploration of community partners' definitions of service learning. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement*, *10* (1), 146-155.

Deans, T. (1999). Service Learning in Two Keys: Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy in Relation to John Dewey's Pragmatism. *Michigan Journal of Community Service- learning*, *6*, 15-29.

Dempsey, S. E. (2010). Critiquing community engagement. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *24*(3), 359-390.

Dewey, J. (1986). Experience and Education. The Educational Forum, 50:3, 241-252, DOI: 10.1080/00131728609335764

Dirani, K. (2006). Exploring socio-cultural factors that influence HRD practices in Lebanon. *Human Resource Development International*, *9* (1), 85-98.

Dorado, S., & Giles Jr, D. E. (2004). Service-learning partnerships: Paths of engagement. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *11*(1), 25-37.

Dostilio, L. D., Harrison, B., Brackmann, S. M., Kliewer, B. W., Edwards, K. E., & Clayton, P. H. (2012). Reciprocity: Saying what we mean and meaning what we say. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *19* (1), 17-33.

Dostilio, L. (2014). Democratically Engaged Community–University Partnerships: Reciprocal Determinants of Democratically Oriented Roles and Processes. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *18* (4).

Edwards, B., Mooney, L., & Heald, C. (2001). Who is being served? The impact of student volunteering on local community organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *30* (3), 444 - 461.

Enos, S., & Morton, K. (2003). Building partnerships for service learning. In *Developing a theory and practice of campus-community partnerships* (pp. 20 – 41).

Eyler, J. (2002). Reflection: Linking service and learning—linking students and communities. *Journal of Social Issues*, *58* (3), 517-534.

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *5*(1), 80-92.

Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, *8*(4), 777-795.

Furco, A., Root, S., & Furco, A. (2010). Research Demonstrates the Value of Service Learning. *The Phi Delta Kappa, 91*(5), 16-20.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 3rd edition. Penguin Books.

Golob, M. I., & Giles, A. R. (2013). Challenging and transforming power relations within community-based participatory research: The promise of a Foucauldian analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *5*(3), 356-372.

Gostin, L. O., & Powers, M. (2006). What does social justice require for the public's health? Public health ethics and policy imperatives. *Health Affairs*, *25*(4), 1053-1060.

Gray, D. E. (2014). *Doing research in the real world*. 3rd edition. Sage.

Gregorio, D. I., DeChello, L. M., & Segal, J. (2008). Service learning within the University of Connecticut Master of Public Health program. *Public Health Reports*, *123* (2), 44-52.

Gazley, B., Littlepage, L., & Bennett, T. A. (2012). What about the host agency? Nonprofit perspectives on community-based student learning and volunteering. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterl*y, *41*(6), 1029–1050.

Gerstenblatt, P. (2014). Community as agency: Community partner experiences with service learning. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, *7*(2), 7.

Gewirtz, S., & Cribb, A. (2006). What to do about values in social research: the case for ethical reflexivity in the sociology of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *27*(02), 141-155.

Giles Jr, D. E., & Eyler, J. (1994). The theoretical roots of service learning in John Dewey: Toward a theory of service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *1*(1), 7.

Glover, R. W., & Silka, L. (2013). Choice, power and perspective: The neglected question of who initiates engaged campus-community partnerships. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, *6*, 38-56.

Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1998). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (ED). *The landscape of Qualitative Research Theories and Issues* (pp.195-220). Sage

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, *18* (1), 59-82.

Hammersley, L. (2012). Community-Based Service-Learning: Partnerships of Reciprocal Exchange. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, *14*(3), 171-184.

Hatcher, J. A., & Erasmus, M. A. (2008). Service-learning in the United States and South Africa: A comparative analysis informed by John Dewey and Julius Nyerere.

Henry, S. E., & Breyfogle, M. L. (2006). Toward a New Framework of" Server" and" Served": De (and Re) constructing Reciprocity in Service-Learning Pedagogy. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *18* (1), 27-35.

Heras Colàs, R., Masgrau Juanola, M., & Soler Masó, P. (2017). The Institutionalization of Service-Learning at Spanish Universities. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning in Teacher Education, 5 (*1), 85-97.

Himmelman, A. T. (2001). On coalitions and the transformation of power relations: Collaborative betterment and collaborative empowerment. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *29* (2), 277-284.

Hoyt, L. (2010). A City-Campus Engagement Theory from, and for, Practice. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *17*(1), 75-88.

Humphrey, C. (2013). Dilemmas in doing insider research in professional education. *Qualitative Social Work*, *12*(5), 572-586.

Hurd, C. A., & Bowen, G. A. (2020). Introduction to the Journal Issue: Attending to Outcomes, Relationships, and Processes to Advance Democratic Practices in Service-Learning and Community Engagement. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, *8*(1), 18861.

Jabbra, J. G. (Ed.). (1989). *Bureaucracy and development in the Arab world* (Vol. 51). Brill.

Janesick,V. ( 1998). The Dance of qualitative research design. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (ED). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* (pp. 35-55). Sage.

Janke, E. M., & Clayton, P. H. (2012). *Excellence in Community Engagement and Community-Engaged Scholarship: Advancing the Discourse at UNCG (*1). University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Janke, E. M. (2013). Increased community presence is not a proxy for reciprocity. *eJournal of Public Affairs, (2)2*. Retrieved from https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/E_Janke_Increased_2013.pdf

Johnson, A. M., & Notah, D. J. (1999). Service learning: History, literature review, and a pilot study of eighth graders. *The Elementary School Journal*, *99*(5), 453-467.

Jovanovic, S., Moretto, K., & Edwards, K. (2017). Moving from thin to thick conceptions of civic engagement: Faculty identity and goals for democratic learning. *The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, *5*(1).

Kaschak, J. C., & Letwinsky, K. M. (2015). Service-learning and emergent communities of practice: A teacher education case study. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, *88*(5), 150-154.

Kevern, J., & Webb, C. (2001). Focus groups as a tool for critical social research in nurse education. *Nurse Education Today*, *21*(4), 323-333.

Khan, M. E., Anker, M., Patel, B. C., Barge, S., Sadhwani, H., & Kohle, R. (1991). The use of focus groups in social and behavioral research: Some methodological issues. *World Health Stat Q*, *44*(3), 145-149.

Khakhar, P., & Rammal, H. G. (2013). Culture and business networks: International business negotiations with Arab managers. *International Business Review*, *22*(3), 578-590.

Kinloch, V., Nemeth, E., & Patterson, A. (2015). Reframing service learning as learning and participation with urban youth. *Theory into Practice*, *54*(1), 39-46.

Kliewer, B., Sandmann, L. R., Kim, J., & Omerikwa, A. (2010). Toward understanding reciprocity in community-university partnerships: An analysis of theories of power [proceedings: Adult Education Research Conference]. Kansas University: New Prairie Press.

Kniffin, Camo-Biogradlija, Price, Kohl, Dickovick, Williams & Bringle, R.G. (2020). Relationships and Partnerships in Community– Campus Engagement: Evolving inquiry and practice. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, *8*(1), 18586.

Krauss, S. E. (2005). Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The Qualitative Report*, *10*(4), 758-770.

Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance through interviews and dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(3), 480 500.

Labonte, R., & Robertson, A. (1996). Delivering the goods, showing our stuff: The case for a constructivist paradigm for health promotion research and practice. *Health Education Quarterly*, *23*(4), 431-447.

Leiderman, S., Furco, A., Zapf, J., & Goss, M. (2002). *Building partnerships with college campuses: community perspectives* (Report-descriptive 141). Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Educations' Engaging communities and Campuses Program.

Long, J., & Campbell, M. (2012). Collaborative partnerships and learning: Broadening the experiences for a community organization, school, and pre-service teachers. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement*, *3*(2), 99-119.

Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, *16*(2), 193-205.

Marullo, S., & Edwards, B. (2000). From charity to justice: The potential of university-community collaboration for social change. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *43*(5), 895-912.

Mayot, C. (2010). Bridging Classrooms to Communities in Service-learning Programs. In Xing J. & Ma C. (Eds.), *Service-Learning in Asia: Curricular Models and Practices* (pp. 17-30). Hong Kong University Press.

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (2000). Qualitative research in health care: Assessing quality in qualitative research. *BMJ*, *320*, 50-52.

McCarthy, F. E., Damrongmanee, Y., Pushpalatha, M., Chithra, J., & Yamamoto, K. (2005). The practices and possibilities of service learning among colleges and universities in Asia. *Pacific-Asian Education*, *17*(2), 59-70.

Mellor, R., & Lovell, A. (2012). The lived experience of UK street-based sex workers and the health consequences: an exploratory study. *Health Promotion International*, *27*(3), 311-322.

Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education, 33*(1), 1-17.

McDonald, J., & Dominguez, L. A. (2015). Developing university and community partnerships: A critical piece of successful service learning. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, *44*(3).

McIntosh, M. J., & Morse, J. M. (2015). Situating and constructing diversity in semi-structured interviews. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, *2*, 2333393615597674.

McKeever, B. W. (2014). The status of health communication: Education and employment outlook for a growing field. *Journal of Health Communication, 19*(12), 1408-1423.

Miller, P. M., Brown, T., & Hopson, R. (2011). Centering love, hope, and trust in the community: Transformative urban leadership informed by Paulo Freire. *Urban Education*, *46*(5), 1078-1099.

Miller, P. M., & Hafner, M. M. (2008). Moving toward dialogical collaboration: A critical examination of a university-school community partnership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *44*(1), 66-110.

Mills, J., Bonner, A., & Francis, K. (2006). The development of constructivist grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *5*(1), 25-35.

Ministry of Social Affairs (2004). Retrieved from *http://www.undp.org.lb/communication/publications/downloads/IntGov_en.pdf*

Miron, D., & Moely, B. E. (2006). Community agency voice and benefit in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *12*(2), 27-37.

Mitchell, T. D., & Latta, M. (2020). From critical community service to critical service learning and the futures, we must (still) imagine. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, *12*(1), 3-6.

Mitchell, T. D. (2008). Traditional vs. critical service learning: Engaging the literature to differentiate two models. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *14*(2), 50-65.

Mitchell, C. & Rautenbach, S.  (2005). Questioning service learning in South Africa: Problematizing partnerships in the South African context. A case study from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *19*(1), 101-112.

Mokwena, K., Mokgatle-Nthabu, M., Madiba, S., Lewis, H. Ntuli-Ngcobo, B. (2007). Training of public health workforce at the national school of public health: Meeting Africa's needs.  *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, *85*(12), 949-954.

Morton, K., & Bergbauer, S. (2015). A case for community: Starting with relationships and prioritizing community as method in service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *22*(1), 18-31.

McIlrath, L., & Lyons, A. (Eds.). (2012). *Higher education and civic engagement: Comparative perspectives*. Springer.

Myntti, C., Mabsout, M., & Zurayk, R. (2012). Through thick and thin: The American University of Beirut engages its communities. In McIlrath L., Lyons A., Munck R. (Ed), *Higher Education and Civic Engagement* (pp. 205-219). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nichols, N., Gaetz, S., & Phipps, D. (2015). Generating social change through community campus collaboration. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *19* (3), 7-32.

Ngai, S. S. Y., Cheung, C. K., Ngai, N. P., & Chan, K. B. (2010). Building reciprocal partnerships for service learning: The experiences of Hong Kong secondary school teachers. *Child & Youth Services*, *31*(3-4), 170-187.

O'Brien, F. (2005). Grounding service learning in South Africa. *Acta Academica*, *3*, 64-98.

Oldfield, S. (2008). Who is serving whom? Partners, process, and products in service-learning projects in South African urban geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *32*(2), 269-285

Osman, R., & Attwood, G. (2007). Power and participation in and through service learning. *Education as Change*, *11*(3), 15-21.

Pompa, L. (2002). Service learning as crucible: reflections on immersion, context, power, and transformation. *Michigan Journal of Service Learning*, *fall*, 67-76.

Porter, M., & Monard, K. (2001). "Ayni" in the Global Village: Building Relationships of Reciprocity through International Service-Learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service learning*, *8*(1), 5-17.

Rawls, J. (1985). Justice as fairness: political not metaphysical. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, *4*(3), 223-251.

Reynolds, N. P. (2015). A push to explore and learn from discomfort in ISL. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *22*(1), 67-72.

Rowlands, J. (1997). *Questioning empowerment: Working with women in Honduras.* London: Oxfam.

Saltmarsh, J., Hartley, M. & P.H. Clayton (2009). *Democratic engagement white paper*. New England Resource Center for Higher Education, Boston: MA.

Saltmarsh, J., Janke, E. M., & Clayton, P. H. (2015). Transforming Higher Education through and for Democratic Civic Engagement: A Model for Change. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *22*(1), 122-127.

Saltmarsh, J., & Johnson, M. (2020). Campus classification, identity, and change: The elective Carnegie classification for community engagement. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *24*(3), 105-114.

Sandmann, L. R., & Kliewer, B. W. (2012). Theoretical and applied perspectives on power: Recognizing processes that undermine effective community-university partnerships. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, *5*(2), 4.

Sandy, M., & Holland, B. A. (2006). Different worlds and common ground: Community partner perspectives on campus-community partnerships. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *13*(1), 30-43.

Schmidt, A. & Robby, M.A. (2002). What's the value of service learning to the community? *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 9*(1), 27-33.

Shalabi, N. (2013). Exploring community partners' perspectives of the nature of service-learning partnerships in Egypt. *The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, *1*(1), 80-91.

Shefner, J., & Cobb, D. (2002). Hierarchy and partnership in New Orleans. *Qualitative Sociology*, *25*(2), 273-297.

Shiller, J. T. (2017). University-Community Civic Collaboration: Reaching for Social Justice in University Partnership. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, *9*(3), 5-18.

Simons, L., & Cleary, B. (2006). The influence of service learning on students' personal and social development. *College Teaching*, *54*(4), 307-319.

Simpson, K., & Freeman, R. (2004). Critical health promotion and education—a new research challenge. *Health Education Research*, *19*(3), 340-348.

Smith, S. R. (2001). Nonprofit organizations in urban politics and policy. *Review of Policy Research*, *18*(4), 7-26.

Stanlick, S., & Sell, M. (2016). Beyond superheroes and sidekicks: Empowerment, efficacy, and education in community partnerships. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *23*(1), 80-84.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research*. Sage

Stoecker, R., Beckman, M., & Min, B. H. (2010). Evaluating the community impact of higher education civic engagement. In H. Fitzgerald, C. Burack, S. Seifer (Ed), *Handbook of engaged scholarship: Contemporary landscapes, future directions, (2)*, (pp.177-196). Michigan State University Press.

Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *11*(2), 63-75.

Tanggaard, L. (2007). The research interview as discourses crossing swords: The researcher and apprentice on crossing roads. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *13*(1), 160-176.

Tew, J. (2006). Understanding power and powerlessness: Towards a framework for emancipatory practice in social work. *Journal of Social Work*, *6* (1), 33-51.

Tryon, E., & Stoecker, R. (2008). The unheard voices: Community organizations and service-learning. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *12*(3), 47-60.

Temple, B., & Young, A. (2004). Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative Research*, *4*(2), 161-178.

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (n.d.). About Carnegie Classification. Retrieved from http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/.

Twinn, S. (1997). An exploratory study examining the influence of translation on the validity and reliability of qualitative data in nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *26*(2), 418-423.

UN Refugee Agency, United Nations World Food Program and United Nations Children Fund, (2020). Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. Retrieved from *https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/VASyR%202020.pdf*

United Nation Development Program (n.d.). Response to the Syrian Crises. Retrieved from www.arabstates.undp.org/.../lebanon/.../corporate%20brochure%20english%20FINAL

Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H., & Snelgrove, S. (2016). Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, *6*(5), 100-110.

Waterbury, J. (2003). *Hate your policies, love your institutions*. Foreign Affairs, *82 (1)*, (pp. 58-68). Council on Foreign Relations, retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/20033428

World Bank (2017). Retrieved from: www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon/overview/

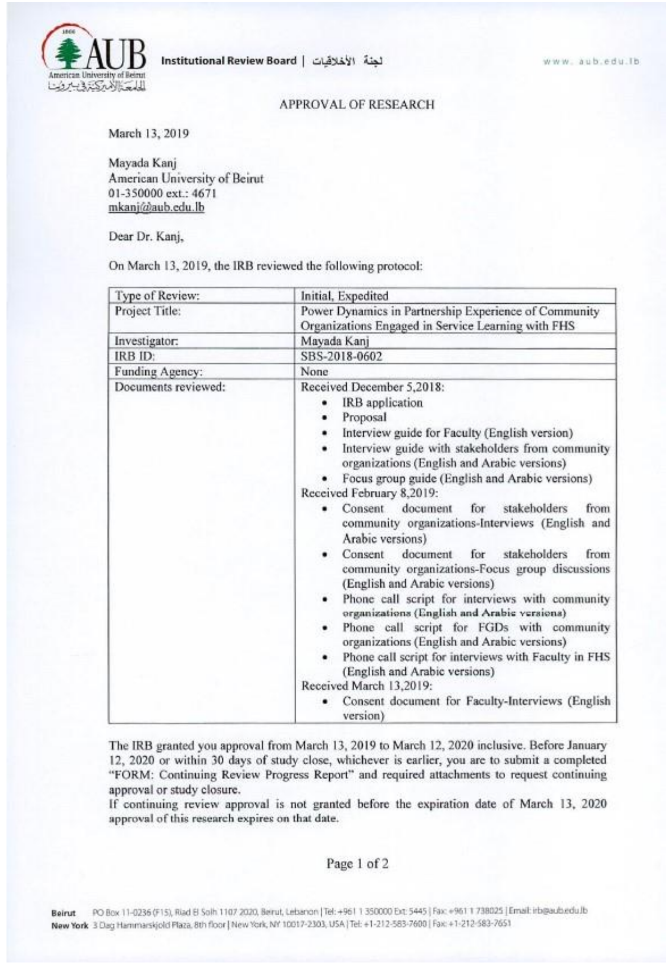
Worrall, L. (2007). Asking the community: A case study of community partner perspectives. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *14*(1), 5-17.

Young, C. A., Shinnar, R. S., Ackerman, R. L., Carruthers, C. P., & Young, D. A. (2007). Implementing and sustaining service learning at the institutional level. *Journal of Experiential Education*, *29* (3), 344-365.

Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). Unstructured interviews. *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*, 222-231.

**Appendix A**

**Local Ethics Approval**



AUB American University of Beirut الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت Institutional Review Board | لجنة الأخلاقيات www. aub.edu.lb

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

March 13, 2019

Mayada Kanj
American University of Beirut
01-350000 ext.: 4671
mkanj@aub.edu.lb

Dear Dr. Kanj,

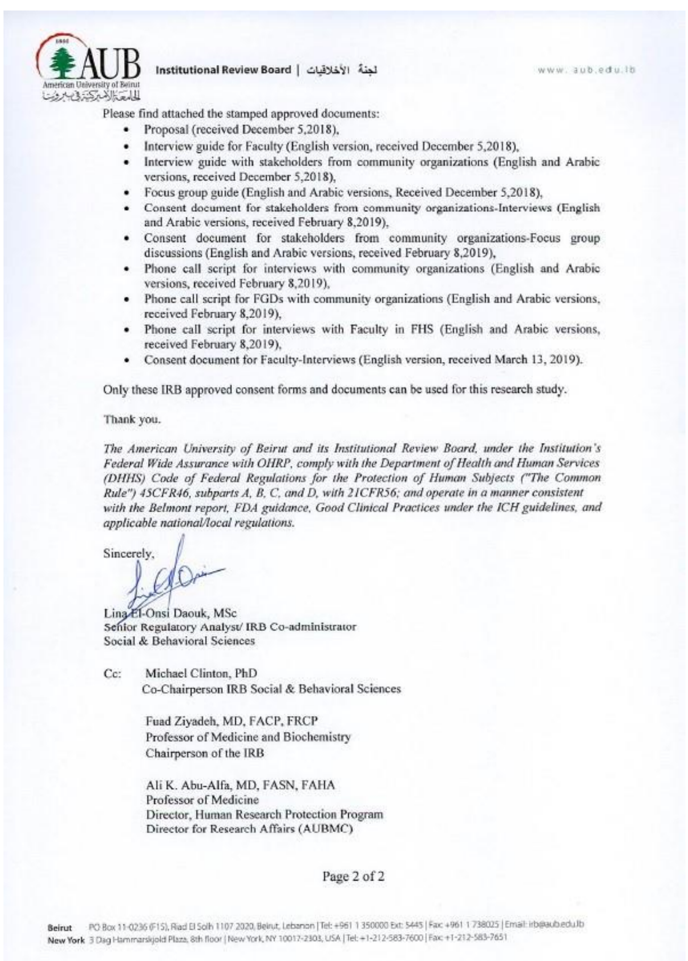
On March 13, 2019, the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

| | |
|---|---|
| Type of Review: | Initial, Expedited |
| Project Title: | Power Dynamics in Partnership Experience of Community Organizations Engaged in Service Learning with FHS |
| Investigator: | Mayada Kanj |
| IRB ID: | SBS-2018-0602 |
| Funding Agency: | None |
| Documents reviewed: | Received December 5,2018:<br>• IRB application<br>• Proposal<br>• Interview guide for Faculty (English version)<br>• Interview guide with stakeholders from community organizations (English and Arabic versions)<br>• Focus group guide (English and Arabic versions)<br>Received February 8,2019:<br>• Consent document for stakeholders from community organizations-Interviews (English and Arabic versions)<br>• Consent document for stakeholders from community organizations-Focus group discussions (English and Arabic versions)<br>• Phone call script for interviews with community organizations (English and Arabic versions)<br>• Phone call script for FGDs with community organizations (English and Arabic versions)<br>• Phone call script for interviews with Faculty in FHS (English and Arabic versions)<br>Received March 13,2019:<br>• Consent document for Faculty-Interviews (English version) |

The IRB granted you approval from March 13, 2019 to March 12, 2020 inclusive. Before January 12, 2020 or within 30 days of study close, whichever is earlier, you are to submit a completed "FORM: Continuing Review Progress Report" and required attachments to request continuing approval or study closure.
If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of March 13, 2020 approval of this research expires on that date.

Page 1 of 2

Beirut PO Box 11-0236 (F15), Riad El Solh 1107 2020, Beirut, Lebanon | Tel: +961 1 350000 Ext: 5445 | Fax: +961 1 738025 | Email: irb@aub.edu.lb
New York 3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 8th floor | New York, NY 10017-2303, USA | Tel: +1-212-583-7600 | Fax: +1-212-583-7651



AUB American University of Beirut الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت Institutional Review Board | لجنة الأخلاقيات www. aub.edu.lb

Please find attached the stamped approved documents:

- Proposal (received December 5,2018),
- Interview guide for Faculty (English version, received December 5,2018),
- Interview guide with stakeholders from community organizations (English and Arabic versions, received December 5,2018),
- Focus group guide (English and Arabic versions, Received December 5,2018),
- Consent document for stakeholders from community organizations-Interviews (English and Arabic versions, received February 8,2019),
- Consent document for stakeholders from community organizations-Focus group discussions (English and Arabic versions, received February 8,2019),
- Phone call script for interviews with community organizations (English and Arabic versions, received February 8,2019),
- Phone call script for FGDs with community organizations (English and Arabic versions, received February 8,2019),
- Phone call script for interviews with Faculty in FHS (English and Arabic versions, received February 8,2019),
- Consent document for Faculty-Interviews (English version, received March 13, 2019).

Only these IRB approved consent forms and documents can be used for this research study.

Thank you.

*The American University of Beirut and its Institutional Review Board, under the Institution's Federal Wide Assurance with OHRP, comply with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Code of Federal Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects ("The Common Rule") 45CFR46, subparts A, B, C, and D, with 21CFR56; and operate in a manner consistent with the Belmont report, FDA guidance, Good Clinical Practices under the ICH guidelines, and applicable national/local regulations.*

Sincerely,

Lina El-Onsi Daouk, MSc
Senior Regulatory Analyst/ IRB Co-administrator
Social & Behavioral Sciences

Cc: Michael Clinton, PhD
Co-Chairperson IRB Social & Behavioral Sciences

Fuad Ziyadeh, MD, FACP, FRCP
Professor of Medicine and Biochemistry
Chairperson of the IRB

Ali K. Abu-Alfa, MD, FASN, FAHA
Professor of Medicine
Director, Human Research Protection Program
Director for Research Affairs (AUBMC)

Page 2 of 2

**Beirut** PO Box 11-0236 (F15), Riad El Solh 1107 2020, Beirut, Lebanon | Tel: +961 1 350000 Ext: 5445 | Fax: +961 1 738025 | Email: irb@aub.edu.lb
**New York** 3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 8th floor | New York, NY 10017-2303, USA | Tel: +1-212-583-7600 | Fax: +1-212-583-7651

# Appendix B

## UOL Ethics Approval

Dear Mayada

I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sub-Committee: | EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) |
| Review type: | Expedited |
| PI: | Mayada Kanj |
| School: | |
| Title: | 'Power Dynamics and Partnership Experience in Service learning' (tentative) |
| First Reviewer: | Dr. Carolina Guzmán Valenzuela |
| Second Reviewer: | Dr. Dimitrios Vlachopoulos |
| Other members of the Committee | Dr. Lucilla Crosta, Dr. Pauline Armsby, Dr. Alla Korzh, Dr. Yota Dimitriadi |
| Date of Approval: | 2 May 2019 |

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

**Conditions**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mandatory | M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor. |

## Appendix C

## Participant information sheet for stakeholders in community organizations

### Partnership Experience in Service learning

My name is Mayada Kanj from the American University of Beirut, carrying out a study to explore the service learning partnership experience of your organization with the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important to understand the purpose of this research and what it will entail. So please take time to read the information and feel free to ask any question or discuss anything that is not clear. Please also note that this research is not requested by the Faculty or the University.

Purpose of the study

This research will try to explore partnership experience taking place between your organization and the Faculty of Health Sciences. More specifically I want to explore whether the relationship taking place is reciprocal and equitable. I expect that findings from this research will inform the community organization and the university on how to engage in more equitable and authentic partnerships.

**Recruitment strategy**

- The interview will be conducted with around 16 organizations who have collaborated or are still collaborating with the Faculty in service learning since 2012.
- In each of the chosen organizations I will conduct in depth interview with the most informed person about the service learning process of your organization with the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- My primary contact in each organization is the Director who will inform me of whether the interview should be conducted with him/her only (as most informed) or with another staff member they recommend and who worked closely with the Faculty.

During the interview I would like to ask questions relevant to your experiences in the partnership with the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB

The interview can take around 40 minutes of your time. The information will be confidential, stored under lock and key in my office (at AUB). Information collected during the interview will be only available to me as the primary investigator and to the ethics committee overseeing the study. No individual information such as names or contact information will be recorded or used in any report, and all files will be destroyed 3 years after study completion. Data will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while assuring confidentiality.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time. Even if you decide to take part now, you can change your

mind later anytime during the interview. Refusal or withdrawal from the study will not affect the relationship of your organization with the Faculty or your own organization.

Your participation does not involve any physical risk. However, since the number of interviews I will conduct is small there is a risk of the participant or the organization to be identified. For this reason I will protect anonymity of respondents by using codes to refer to your quotes or to your organization in the data.

You receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however your participation does help to contribute to the knowledge on partnerships created in a service learning collaboration in Lebanon and possible in the Arab countries; as SL is increasingly being used in higher education to promote relationship of university with surrounding community.

If you have questions, I would be happy to answer your questions now or later. I will give you a copy of this form to keep and my email and mobile number to call if you need to speak about the study. If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about research or your rights as a participant, please contact the AUB Social & Behavioral Sciences Institutional review Board (SBSIRB) at AUB, Beirut, Lebanon: tel. 01350000, extension: 5445, extension: 5444, or email: irb@aub.edu.lb

Would you like to participate in this study?

--------- Yes ---------- No

If yes, please sign: ___________________________ Date ______________________

**Signature of witness __________________________ Date _______________________**

The interviewee was provided with a complete explanation about the study and has consented freely.

Participation in the focus group discussion

When results of interviews are analysed I would like to invite all participants who were interviewed to a FGD to share and validate these findings and discuss results among the participants. The time and date of the FG will be set after consulting with participants.

Are you interested in participating in this FGD?

**Yes I am interested _____________ I am not sure I will decide later _______________**

**Consent to Record Interview**

(Question should be posed before any recording begins)

May I record this interview? ___________ Yes ___________No

**(If you choose not to be recorded, I will take notes during the interview)**

**Consent to Quote from Interview**

I may wish to quote from this interview either in the presentations or publications resulting from this work. In this case, a pseudonym will be used in order to protect your identity and the identity of your organization; unless you specifically request that you be identified by your true name.

Do you allow me to quote from this interview? ______ Yes ___________No

Signature of the researcher ______________ Date_____________ Time_____________

**Principal Investigator:**

Dr Alla Korzh: alla.korzh@online.liverpool.ac.uk;

Researcher: Mayada Kanj Email: mkanj@aub.edu.lb telephone: 01374444 ext. 4671

Department of Health Promotion and Community Health, Faculty of Health Sciences,

American University of Beirut, Lebanon

## Appendix D

## Interview guide for community Organizations

This guide will be used to interview stakeholders from community organizations as well as faculty who teach SL courses (after minor tweaking to reflect perspective of university faculty)

**Experience of SL perceived; benefit and motive: What do community partners value in their relationship with the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB /community organization?**

1. Tell me about your experience with FHS in service learning? How long have you been in this relationship?
2. What motivated your organization to host SL students?
    a. **Probe**: what motivates your organization to continue in this relationship?
3. What kind of impact do you believe the students you host create for your organization? Why?

**Nature of relationship created: is the relationship reciprocal (type of reciprocity),**

4. How would you describe the nature of your relationship with FHS?
    a. **Probe**: for those who have been engaged for more years ask about how relationship changed over the years
    b. **Probe:** would you describe your relationship as a partnership; why?
5. What outcomes do you expect from this relationship?
    a. **Probe:** Do you perceive FHS as a resource for your organization? Describe how
6. What do you believe FHS is gaining from this relationship?
    a. Do you see this relationship as reciprocal? And if so how?
    b. **Probe**: can you give an example of an experience that made you conclude this?

**Power inequality; Perception of power privileges/ awareness of power inequality**

7. How do you define power**?**
    a. **Probe:** what informed this definition? Ask for examples that could illustrate this
8. Can you describe the power distribution in the relationship you have with the faculty?
    a. **Probe**: whom in the relationship do you believe has more power privilege? Why?
9. Would you describe your relationship with FHS as equitable? Why yes or no?

    a. **Probe**: ask for examples of how power is being shared with FHS.
    b. **Probe:** can you share an experience that made you conclude this (whether equitable or not)?

10. Can you describe a time during the relationship with FHS was inequitable?
11. When you noticed these power inequities, how did you approach this subject with FHS? In other words, can you describe a situation when you felt the need to discuss power inequities?
    a. **Probe**: what challenges did you encounter in that discussion?
    b. **Probe**: How were those challenges addressed?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the questions we have discussed?

Thank you very much for your time and insights,

Next steps: once I complete all interviews I will be inviting you for a meeting to share the findings.

# Appendix E

Interview guide for Faculty who teach service-learning course

**Experience of SL: perceived benefit and motive: What do faculty who teach SL value in their relationship with the community organizations which host their students?**

1. Tell me about your experience to date in service learning?

2. What motivated you to teach a SL course?

    a. Probe: What motivates you to continue teaching a SL course?

3. What kind of impact do you believe students in SL have on the organizations which host them? Why?

**Nature of relationship created: is the relationship reciprocal (type of reciprocity)**

4. How would you describe the nature of your relationship with community organization hosting the students?

    b. **Probe:** for those who been engaged for more years ask about how relationship changed over the years
    c. **Probe:** would you describe your relationship as a partnership? ;why?

5. What outcomes do you expect from this relationship?

    d. **Probe:** Do you perceive community organizations are a resource for FHS? Describe how

6. What do you believe FHS is gaining from this relationship?

    e. **Probe**: do you see this relationship as reciprocal? And if so how?
    f. **Probe**: can you give an example of an experience that made you conclude this?

**Power inequality; perception of power privileges /awareness of power inequality**

7. How do you define power?
    a. **Probe**: what informed this definition? Ask for examples that could illustrate this.
8. Can you describe the power distribution in the relationship you have with the community?
    a. **Probe**: whom in the relationship do you believe has more power privilege? Why?
9. Would you describe your relationship with the community as equitable? Why yes or no?
    a. **Probe**: ask for examples of how power is being shared with the community.
    b. **Probe**: Can you share an experience that made you conclude this (whether equitable or not)?

10. Can you describe a time during when the relationship with the community was inequitable?
11. When you noticed these power inequities what did you do? Did you approach the subject with the community organization? In other words can you describe a situation when you felt the need to discuss power inequities? Why yes or no?
    a. **Probe**: what challenges did you encounter in that discussion?
    b. **Probe**: How were the challenges addressed?
    c.
12. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the questions we have discussed?

Thank you very much for your time and insights.

# Appendix F

## Focus Group Guide

The purpose of the focus group discussion is to validate themes obtained from interviews and to capture different perspectives of community stakeholders in an open discussion that can trigger expression of ideas, attitudes and feelings.

The FG discussion will start by a presentation of themes identified in the interviews. This will be followed by a discussion that will be guided by the following topic guide. Additional probes under each topic guide will be added once results of interviews are available.

### Partnership

- How do these findings change the way you define a partnership with FHS?
- Do you feel the outcome of the SL experience was influenced by the nature of the partnership you have created?

### Power privilege and power inequality

- How do these findings influence:
  - Your perception of power privilege in the SL relationship with FHS?
  - Your ability and willingness to address these power inequalities?

### Reciprocity in the partnership

- To what extent do you feel that your organization is able to create a reciprocal and equitable partnership with FHS?

## Appendix G

| | **Research questions** | **Interview questions** |
|---|---|---|
| **Participatory / relational /**<br>• Working- with;<br>• motives<br>*( Dewey, Freire, active participation* | What do community partners value in their relationship with the FHS? | • Tell me about your experience with FHS in service learning?<br>• What motivated your organization to host SL students?<br>• *What motivates your organization to continue in this relationship?*<br>• What kind of impact do you believe the students you host create for your organization? Why? |
| **social change: transformational relationships**<br>• Partnership or collaboration<br>• Level of engagement<br>(*Freire/ democratic engagement)* | How do power differences impact the establishment of an authentic/ reciprocal relationship? | • How would you describe the nature of your relationship with FHS?<br>• *how has relationship changed over the years*<br>• *Would you describe your relationship as a partnership; why?*<br>• What outcomes do you expect from this relationship?<br>• *Do you perceive FHS as a resource for your organization? Describe how*<br>• What do you believe FHS is gaining from this relationship?<br>• Do you see this relationship as reciprocal? How? |
| Power differential<br>• Perception of power privileges/<br>• awareness of power inequality<br>*Freire / values of democratic engagement: deconstructing power;* | How is power enacted and distributed in the partnership | • How do you define power? *What informed this definition?*<br>• Can you describe the power distribution in the relationship you have with the faculty?<br>• Who in the relationship do you believe has more power privilege? Why?<br>• Would you describe your relationship with FHS as equitable? Why yes or no?<br>• *Examples of how power is being shared with FHS.*<br>• *Can you share an experience that made you conclude this (whether equitable or not)?*<br>• Can you describe a time during the relationship with FHS was inequitable?<br>• When you noticed these power inequities, how did you approach this subject with FHS?<br>• *What challenges did you encounter in that discussion?*<br>• *How were those challenges addressed*?<br>• Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the questions we have discussed |

Components of Conceptual Framework with Research and Interview Questions