HOW’S YOUR RESEARCH GOING TO HELP US?: THE PRACTICES OF COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH IN THE POST-APARTHEID UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION

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By

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the practice of university engagement at one South African university. I have examined one feature of engagement: community-based research in the Greenveld region of South Africa. Three research questions framed this study: 1) How do academic research and community service interact?; 2) What are the particular ways that context complicates this interaction?; and 3) What meaning does reciprocity have for researchers and residents? How is reciprocity practiced? How is reciprocity experienced?

In this study, I examined how a host of relationships (e.g., researcher/participant, administrators, grantors) and contexts (e.g., institutional, local, regional, national) complicated the practice of community-based research. Using interviews, observations and documents, I examined the practices of community-based research at a rural, South African research facility. In speaking with researchers and administrators affiliated with the facility, and local residents often affected by facility projects, a nuanced image of community-based research emerged. Local residents believed that given the resources at the disposal of the facility and the poverty in the area, community-based researchers should offer tangible goods and services. In contrast, researchers had diverse preferences and practices regarding their use of community-based research, local participation and reciprocity, often providing very little in terms of direct service or tangible goods.
Amid these diverse opinions and preferences were contexts that further complicated the practice of community-based research. First, the facility was located in one of the poorest regions of South Africa. When overlaid with apartheid, the result was an area suffering from many social, political and economic problems. Second, the institutional context of the university complicated the practice of community-based research. While a post-apartheid culture worked to popularize outreach and engagement, many at the university did not fully embrace such practices.

In the end, it is suggested that community-based research be viewed as a social practice. When focused on practice and experience, community-based research begins to appear more diverse than characterized in the literature. Approached this way, community-based research shows the imprint of context (e.g., local, regional, national, institutional) and individual preferences (e.g., perceptions of reciprocity and participation).
DEDICATION

For Barbara Oliver,

in memoriam
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Even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. (Wittgenstein, 1922, 6.52)

February is hot and humid in Greenveld. Still, the taxi-bus managed to kick up dust as it swung in to pick up Mapule and me. We had just finished a long day of interviews and I was looking forward to the hour ride home. I had only known Mapule for two weeks but had become quite close to her. She was a serious woman of 28 who had already experienced a lot. As a young mother of four girls, she had recently lost her oldest daughter to cerebral palsy. Her husband was a migrant laborer whom she saw one month a year. She missed him and their daughter and spoke about both often.

I felt fortunate that Mapule agreed to help with translation and guide me around the tortuous village roads she had traveled all her life. She knew Greenveld: who just got out of the hospital; who drank too much; who was a communist. Details were not lost on her and I felt thankful to have her around. She was also a chatty linguist. I often sat in awe when, in one conversation, she would bounce between English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Sotho.

The bus was packed and Mapule and I struggled to find a seat. Mapule sat next to an elderly man who quickly struck up a conversation with her. Although they were not

1 Greenveld is a pseudonym. Other pseudonyms will be noted when they occur.
speaking in English, I could tell from their body language that they were talking about me. The conversation seemed to become heated as I noticed Mapule looking over at me. She smirked with what I recognized as discomfort. The man raised his voice as Mapule, and the rest of the bus, grew uncomfortable. Passengers would look at the man, then me, and then turn away.

Mapule appeared frustrated and broke into English saying to the man, “Well ask him!” With a raised voice the man turned and said, “What are you doing here?” I explained that I was an American doing research in the area. I was used to saying I was American. It seemed to turn discomfort and distrust into curiosity, the conversation inevitably turning to pop music or my accent. This did not work here. “Are you treating her well? How much do you pay her?,’’ he said. “160 Rand a day,” I answered, hoping he knew 100 Rand was the standard. He either didn’t know or didn’t care, because he followed up with, “How’s your research going to help us?” I spoke to him about reciprocity and participation, but this did not seem to comfort him. He got off at the next stop and said, “Well, make sure it does. Too often you people come down here and don’t do anything.”

This encounter underscored for me how knowledge production is more than just collecting, analyzing and disseminating data. Research is about relationships. And like any relationship, it can be messy, tense and, with work, beautiful. While one dissertation cannot fully address this idea, what I express in this study is how these relations impacted a group of researchers, eager to contribute to a post-apartheid South Africa, and the people they researched, eager to thrive in it.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Academic practice is often criticized for its irrelevance to and disconnect from people's lives. Increased scholarship on community problems is one result of this critique (Lerner & Simon, 1998). Often described as community-based research, this is a methodological approach that combines elements of popular education, action research and participatory research (Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker & Donohue, 2003). For many, community-based research is a normative approach rooted in reciprocity and participation between researchers and participants (Rhoads, 1997). Rather than refuting or supporting the moral components of research, in this study I examine the practices and experiences of this methodology.

In this chapter, I outline my study. I begin this chapter by setting the post-apartheid context of South Africa. After this, I discuss my conceptual and theoretical framework. I follow this with a presentation of my methodology and conclude by addressing the significance of my study.
Post-apartheid South Africa and Higher Education

The legacy of apartheid remains imprinted in South African landscape. Wherever one looks, the remnants of apartheid remain. Sometimes these are only subtle reminders, like the redundant double entrances to older, downtown shops over which used to hang “Whites Only” or “Non-Whites Only” signs. Other times there are more tangible reminders, as when Black\(^2\) gas station attendants referred to me as *baas*, an Afrikaans word meaning boss or master, and how Blacks were expected to address White men during apartheid.

More than each of these examples, a clearer reminder of the intransigence of apartheid is the racial separation that continues to characterize South African space. My fieldwork took place in Greenveld, a poor, rural area that straddled the border of two, former apartheid homelands. The homelands were the linchpin in Grand apartheid, the scheme that divided South Africa into Black and White areas (Thompson, 2001). Through layers of legislation, Grand apartheid became an organized attempt at state-sanctioned racial separation. Of the many laws at the disposal of the Nationalist government, the Natives Land Act of 1913 proved central. This law had two purposes: first, it identified rural spaces that would be reserves for African ethnic groups; and second, it forbade Black land rights outside these reserves. These rural, Black reserves became known as the Bantustans, or homelands, and were designed as areas for already existing, rural Africans and also the ancestral home of all Black South Africans (Lapping, 2000).

\(^{2}\) Apartheid racial categories consisted of Whites, Indians (Asiatics), Coloureds and blacks (Bantus). When referring to all non-Whites, the term Blacks was often used as a substitute. In this study, I refer to black South Africans as Blacks and note the presence of other ethic groups (i.e., Indians, Coloureds, Afrikaners). My use of these categories corresponds to their current use in South Africa and is not meant to reinforce their historical usages.
Blacks were required to claim certain tribal affiliations and forcibly removed to their corresponding homeland. While Blacks were allotted 13% of the country’s total land area, this was sorely inadequate to accommodate this 75% of South Africa’s population (Sparks, 1990). Consequently, overpopulation, environmental degradation and apartheid-induced underdevelopment typified homeland life.

In the eyes of the apartheid government, although not the United Nations, the homelands were considered either sovereign countries or semi-autonomous. Blacks were now citizens of their homeland and foreigners in South Africa. Homeland presidents were elected and often took ‘international’ flights to South Africa to consult with the Nationalists in Pretoria, Cape Town and Johannesburg. The apartheid government argued the homelands would be preserves of African culture (Sparks, 1990). In a recent BBC interview, former Nationalist president F.W. De Klerk said that with apartheid, the Nationalist government hoped to create a ‘little Europe,’ that is, a collection of ethnically homogenous, yet independent, countries. Critics (Lapping, 1989; Pickles, 1992; Sparks, 1991) countered that the homelands merely supported White privilege through population control: first as a dumping ground for urban Africans who lost employment in the city and second, to guard against the future migration of Africans into White areas (Christopher, 1994; Lemon, 1991; Thompson, 2001).

The apartheid government exerted incredible influence in the homelands. The South African government supported homeland leaders, based on their allegiance to apartheid policies. When civil unrest occurred in the homeland, the South African military was brought in to end the resistance. To many, the homelands functioned as
Soviet-styled satellite states, replete with puppet governments answerable to Pretoria (Krog, 2000).

South Africans were thrust into the international spotlight when, in June 1976, Black schoolchildren protested the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction (Lapping, 1989). Students flooded the streets of Soweto, demanding Afrikaans, the language of apartheid, be replaced with English. What began peacefully turned violent as Prime Minister John Voster sent in police and military to restore order. The demonstration ended with 500 protestors, mostly elementary and high school students, killed. The Soweto Uprising, as it is called, reverberated for years and ushered in a period of civil unrest lasting until the collapse of apartheid in 1994.

The anti-apartheid struggle permeated South African society, academics being no exception. The organized, Black resistance found a strategic ally in South Africa’s many liberal, English-speaking universities whom were “jolted when thousands of schoolchildren came into conflict with an intransigent state and began to die in the streets” (internal Facility memo, no date, p. 3). In a blurring of activism and scholarship, different faculties confronted apartheid through action research. With civil unrest reaching a zenith in the urban townships, a small cadre of University researchers began to ask about South Africa’s “forgotten population” in the marginal, rural homelands (internal Facility memo, n.d., p. 3). Out of this came a commitment from the Department of Health Sciences to address the public health issues facing South Africa’s rural poor. This commitment was formalized in 1988 when the University purchased land adjacent to two of South Africa’s most underdeveloped homelands and established the Facility. In
subsequent chapters, I will express that the influence of apartheid continues to affect social relations in South Africa, in particular research relations.

Theoretical framework

Critical theory forms the theoretical foundation of this study. I recognize that it is difficult to capture ‘critical theory’ in one, concise definition. While many write about its differentiated nature (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Lather, 1991; Zavarzadeh, Ebert & Morton, 1995), there are common features. First, the critical researcher focuses on uncovering flows of power (Allen, 2003; Deleuze, 1989; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). That is, the critical researcher examines social phenomena for competing power interests so to “uncover winners and losers in particular social arrangements and the processes by which such power plays operate” (p. 281). The critical researcher also recognizes the “various and complex ways that power operates” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 281), to oppress, resist and cooperate (Allen, 2003). Second, the critical researcher examines these processes of inequality based on a normative hypothetical of how society ought to appear (Ettlinger, 1999; Young, 2000). Although hypotheticals rarely mirror empirical conditions, critical studies are an attempt to examine actually existing conditions, to see where the hypothetical converges with the empirical, and detailing the possibilities for more convergence (Ettlinger, 1999; Young, 2000). Third, the economic determinism of orthodox Marxism is rejected. The presupposition is, instead, that multiple axes of oppression work to create an ‘overdetermined system’; that is, issues of race, gender, sexuality, ability, age, and location form part of a larger and more complex analysis of everyday life (Althusser, 1971; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).
The university is often romanticized as a self-contained space with intellectuals cloistered in stacks and labs. While certainly an enduring image, it is arguably more hyperbole than reality (Bok, 1982). In contrast, higher education institutions are now being looked to as key players in a changing development environment (Gibbons et al., 1994). This role is hotly contested, however. Concerns include that universities are over-stepping their bounds and over-extending themselves by becoming involved with regional development (Wresch, 2001). Adding to this debate are those who maintain that there should be increased engagement (Boyer, 1990; Kellogg Commission, 1999). Increased attention is paid to the strategic role universities can have in local development projects (Gilley, 1990). Notably silent in these debates, however, are critical analyses over the very definition of development and the university’s role in both upsetting and supporting certain structures (Delanty, 1998; Escobar, 1995).

In considering the university within this increasingly muddled notion of development (Sachs, 1993), one finds an institution able to both constrain and enable change (Goddard, 1997; Keane & Allison, 1999; Thanki, 1999). The role of the university as an economic booster is well documented (Bok, 1982; Cisneros, 1995; Florax, 1992; Gibbons et al, 1994) and when one speaks of the developmental spin-offs of higher education, one assumes these to be economic, reflecting the dominant development discourse. Some of these spin-offs include student consumers, new
employment sectors, and patents (Florax, 1992; National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, 1996).

University efforts in this regard are commonly referred to as outreach. Outreach has myriad forms involving a variety of purposes, rendering a generalized notion of ‘outreach’ less meaningful. Nevertheless, it is easy to think of the many activities coined as outreach. Perhaps the most visible outreach project is the American, Land Grant model. Extension is not limited to Land Grant institutions, however. Myriad colleges and universities extend their resources through continuing education courses, service-learning, medical clinics, and business incubation, among others programs.

Regardless of the contribution, the role of the university as an agent of development remains a contentious role. In South Africa, policy makers (Department of Education, 2000; Government of South Africa, 1997) and scholars (Gibbons, 1998; Kraak, 2000; Jansen, 2000; Subotzky, 1999a, 1999b, 2000) have paid increased attention to the strategic role universities can serve in poor urban and rural communities. Notably silent, however, is a critical debate about how engagement is practiced and experienced. In looking at one aspect of engagement, community-based research, this study addresses this silence.

Community-based research

The literature captures community-based research as the product of three primary antecedents. The first is the popular education movement. Popular education and critical pedagogical practices have been used in diverse contexts to support social justice
struggles. Freire (1970) popularized these methods in Latin America and coined the term *conscientização*. This is the ability of learners to critically reflect on their social conditions, and upon reflection, act to change that which prevents justice. A second antecedent to community-based research is the action research model (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Within action research there are a dizzying array of other permutations: critical action research, action science, action learning, and participatory action research. While each are significantly different in their target populations (e.g., students, workers, practitioners, the ‘oppressed’), each has the ultimate goal of using research to create change. The third antecedent of community-based research is participatory research. Park (1992) defines participatory research as “a way of creating knowledge that involves learning from investigation and applying what is learned to collective problems through social action” (p. 30). Taken together, three principles of community-based research emerge.

1. it is a collaborative process between researchers (and often students) and local residents;

2. it recognizes the presence of different forms of knowledge and knowledge production and advocates for the use of different methods to get at this knowledge;

3. it has the goal of social change en route to social justice. (Strand et al, 2003)

Participation figures prominently in the principles and practices of community-based research. Chambers (1994) describes participatory approaches as a family of “methods to enable rural people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act” (p. 953). Participation is rooted in two assumptions. First, local people are empowered through their participation in research projects
Describing this empowerment, Chambers (1998) writes, “local people have the knowledge and ability to be the subjects of their own development” (p. 4). Second, participation leads to data trustworthiness (Hermes, 1998; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Lather, 1991). As the participatory argument goes, with better communication, one understands pressing and culturally-relevant needs (Chambers, 1994). These grassroots deliberations are believed to be more accurate than those conducted without participation.

Complementing discussions of participation are those of reciprocity. Kendall (1990) defined reciprocity as “the exchange of both giving and receiving between the ‘server’ and the person or group ‘being served’” (pp. 21-22). Reciprocity is a symbol of a changed academic culture that stands in contrast to a more paternal posture (Rhoads, 1997). Indeed, reciprocity is used to rout out paternalism through the creation of caring relationships (Folbre, 2001). Kendall argues that research relationships constructed this way alter the power relations between researcher and the researched. Working this way avoids the traditionally paternalistic, one-way approach to service in which one person or group has the resources which they share ‘charitably’ or ‘voluntarily’ with a person or group that lack resources....The needs of the community determine what the service tasks will be. (Kendall, 1990, p. 22)

Others have written of this as an issue of fostering a sense of ‘caring’ through empathy and mutuality (Folbre, 2001; Noddings, 1984). Caring for one’s research participants was seen as revolutionary as it re-worked the traditional boundaries of scientific research. With prescriptions to avoid bias through distanced observation, research was often a solitary task that involved little interaction with one’s participants. However, as Palmer (1983) argued, this tended to ignore the mutuality in the background of all knowledge
creation. For Noddings (1984), it was caring that was important. “Caring involves…a ‘feeling with’ the other...I receive the other into myself and I see and feel with the other” (Noddings, 1984, p. 30). The thrust here is that one becomes invested in the other, in an emotional sense, and thus ceases to construct them as research objects, but as equals in knowledge creation.

Purpose and Design of the Study

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was to examine the practice of university outreach at one South African university (‘The University’). I have examined one feature of outreach: community-based research in the Greenveld region of South Africa. At the heart of this research is an interpretation of the lived realities of community-based research. Three research questions framed this study:

1) How do academic research and community service interact?;

2) What are the particular ways that context complicates this interaction?;

3) What meaning does reciprocity have for researchers and residents? How is reciprocity practiced? How is reciprocity experienced?

In addressing these questions, I examined the fine-grained details of academic practice in the field. Community-based research is often abstracted from the actual sites of practice (e.g., the squatter camp, inner city, school), and presented uncritically as a counterpoint to less participatory approaches (Greenwood & Levin, 2000). I suggest that in doing so, one is prevented from seeing research methods as social practices that are differently
practiced in different contexts. It is not uniform over space. In this research, I examine how community-based research practice is complicated by a host of relationships (e.g., researcher/researched, other faculty, grantors) and scales (e.g., personal, organizational, local, national, global). I will address these issues with reference to data collected recently in South Africa.

Research Design

This study was rooted in a subjectivist epistemology. For the subjectivist, knowledge comes from one’s relationship with other knowers. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that a subjectivist epistemology reflects the assumption that “the investigator and the investigated object are…interactively linked” (p. 110). For the subjectivist, knowledge creation is transactional (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Palmer (1983) describes this as a communal image of reality. Knowing, he writes, “is a profoundly communal act. Nothing could possibly be known by the solitary self, since the self is inherently communal in nature….We now see that to know something is to have a living relationship with it” (Palmer, 1983, p. xv).

This study was designed to learn more about the practice and experience of community-based research. To these ends, I have used a critical ethnographic approach to learn more about these practices. With the help of 36 participants, I will present these experiences, pointing to ways that community-based methodologies are currently practiced, but also how they may be improved.

Simon and Dippo (1986) suggest three qualities of critical ethnography. First, it “must employ an organising problematic that defines one's data and analytical procedures
in a way consistent with its project" (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 197). As in other projects, research is presupposed by epistemological and ontological assumptions. For the critical ethnographer, this ‘organizing problematic’ is a focus on flows of power that influence meaning and action (Deleuze, 1988; Fairclough, 1993). Second, critical ethnography “must be situated… within a public sphere that allows it to become the starting point for… critique and transformation” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 197). This implies a great deal of moral authority and comes dangerously close to paternalism (Lather, 1991). What is important, however, is that participants decide on their own whether or not to “use ethnographic work as a resource… to clarify the basis of everyday life and [its] possibilities" (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 199). Third, the critical ethnographer must recognize that their work is "constituted and regulated through historical relations of power and existing material conditions" (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 197). Carspecken (1996) argues that critical ethnographers must recognize where they are in relation to the ideological and material conditions of others.

Significance of the study

University engagement and community-based research are increasingly becoming part of popular discussions of university behavior. The literature is rife with theoretical pieces that address the ontological and epistemological foundations of community-based research (Strand et al, 2003). Furthermore, there are myriad pieces that report on the results of data collected during the use of community-based practices. These same studies, however, rarely view community-based research as an object of study in its own right. That is, what do we know about the practice and experiences of this methodology?
This research also fills an important gap in addressing the pitfalls and promise of improving community-based practices.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the practice of university outreach in one South African university. In the next chapter, I present the conceptual and theoretical literatures that frame this study. I devote significant space to the community-based literature itself. I attempt, however, to connect this with wider discussions of knowledge production, in particular Michael Gibbons’ theses of a new ‘mode’ of knowledge production. These literatures, and community-based methodologies, contain explicit and implicit references to the democratization of knowledge. I pick up these ideas in the next chapter where I spend time with the radical democracy literature and what these writings say about creating inclusive and deliberative public spheres.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on community-based scholarship and the theoretical perspectives on which much of the research and this study are based. I begin this chapter by locating community-based scholarship within broader discussions of university engagement. I then turn to a specific discussion of community-based scholarship, paying particular attention to issues of participation and reciprocity.

University engagement

The university has traditionally been represented as a hermetically-sealed environment. This representation of a closed academy, free of outside influence was an ideal Immanuel Kant proposed in 1798. In his The Conflict of the Faculties, he described a model for autonomous higher education whereby outside influences were not allowed to affect scholarship. Kant (1798/1979) wrote about the practice of scholarship, arguing that it “must be conceived free and subject only to the laws given reason, not by government” (p. 43). Kant’s idea of the university must be placed in historical context. Written during the Enlightenment, he and other philosophers rebelled against the influence of the Church and the State on the university. Both had exerted much influence
up to then (e.g., the Middle Ages and the Renaissance), having a profound effect on the content and methods of knowledge production (Delanty, 1998). Kant’s image of higher education is currently under intense examination. While he proposed rather firm boundaries between society and the university, many doubt this is possible. That is, how firm are the boundaries between the academy and society?

With growing public discomfort over what was seen as solipsistic research, universities and academics began to reconsider their position in society. Given the vast resources of physical and intellectual capital at its disposal, higher education institutions are being seen as uniquely positioned to address pressing social problems creatively and effectively (Cisneros, 1995; Walshok, 1995). These pressures for reform have ushered in a period of deeper engagement.

Universities and colleges often seek recognition as places of elite learning, high caliber research and a training ground for future leaders. Many would argue that these factors are, in fact, the mission of higher education (Rosovsky, 1990). Increasingly, questions are being asked about these purposes. Who decides them? What lay at the root of them? Can we change them? One of the many ways these questions have been answered is through the recognition of the service that higher education can offer the public. Out of this comes the engaged university: an institution that uses research and teaching to offer meaningful, societal change (NASULGC, 1996).

Many argue that the origins of university engagement began in 1862 with the adoption of the Morrill Act that created the Land Grant colleges and universities in the United States. Central to this federal dispensation was a requirement that the university extend themselves into the community. Largely, this took the form of agricultural
outreach to the rural periphery. In many ways, this was a one-way delivery of applied, academic knowledge. Created in the university, useful studies were delivered to farmers to improve their production. Extension has changed as the American economy and society have changed. While the Land Grant model has retained its agricultural focus, other engagement initiatives include industrial extension, technology transfers, consumer science and community development (Ludwig, 1999, NASULGC, 1996). Reflecting these changes, the Kellogg Commission (1999) argued that the university “must put its critical resources (knowledge and expertise) to work on the problems the communities it serves faces” (p. 10). Similarly, Boyer (1990) wrote, “Campuses [must be] more energetically engaged in the pressing issues of our time….The human community is increasingly interdependent, and higher education must focus with special urgency on questions that affect profoundly the destiny of all” (pp. 76-77).

Boyer (1990) captured this new model of engagement well when he wrote about scholarship as the integration of research, teaching and service. He argued for a more nuanced version of scholarship based upon intra- and inter-community linkages. The first, intra-community linkages, Boyer (1990) called the “scholarship of integration” and described this as the need for interdisciplinary research (p. 18). Brooks (1994) argues that disciplinary specialization makes addressing social problems difficult. In that social problems are complex and typically work at the intersection of multiple theories and phenomena, the explanatory value that one school of thought has upon a given problem is inevitably quite limited. The second, inter-community linkages, Boyer (1990) called the “scholarship of application” and described this as the ability of research to be acutely focused on pressing problems (p. 21). Eschewing the more paternal posture that
academic research traditionally practiced, Boyer maintained that this type of research is done in partnership with the community. The effort is to produce authentic partnerships, which “entails sharing ideas and goals, then working together toward a mutually beneficial end” (Gilley, 1990, p. 17).

The effort at linking the town and the gown in mutuality is an essential feature of university engagement. By reasserting the role of authentic engagement and shared fates, much of the literature argues that a bevy of positive changes may result to all parties involved (e.g., positive student development, insightful research and the creation of healthy communities). University-community partnerships are traditionally a means to achieve these possibilities of engagement. Based upon “a foundation of shared community interests,” partnerships are seen as one step in dispelling the town/gown division (Saltmarsh, 1998, p. 7). In contrast to the more paternal models of university extension, where the content of service was determined on campus and then disseminated to the locality, a Boyerian model of partnership is rooted in caring for the other party. That is, some type of mutual relationship forms between the partners.

This engaged university model has not escaped the developing world. In fact, as South Africa reels under the legacy of apartheid, higher education institutions are being seen as uniquely positioned to contribute to national development goals. This is well captured in the Education White Paper 3 (Government of South Africa, 1997) that states that the research system must,

Keep abreast with the emerging global trends, especially, the development of participatory and applications-driven research addressing critical national needs, which requires collaboration between knowledge producers, knowledge interpreters and knowledge managers and implementers. (pp. 31-32)
The South African government, therefore, recognizes the unique advantages the university can have in national development.

A university’s ‘developmental’ role did not escape the apartheid regime. In 1959, the apartheid government passed the Extension of Universities Act that separated the South African higher education system along racial lines. For Whites this meant very little, being able to enroll in any institution. For Blacks, however this meant attending one of the poorly funded ‘Bush colleges’ in the rural homelands (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). Although seen as another tool in the macro-separation of races, this act largely backfired (Beale, 1998). Rather than producing a cadre of compliant technicians to support Black areas (i.e., curricula focused on civil service), the Bush colleges and universities became training grounds for anti-apartheid activists including Steve Biko and Nelson Mandela. Academics in a host of disciplines were arrested due to their action, their research, and the marriage of the two.

The political climate has become far more conducive to academic freedom and South African universities are now being asked to participate in the post-apartheid transition. As stated in the African National Congress’s Reconstruction and Development Programme (i.e., its guiding policy document), “The new democratic government…will investigate and report urgently on the role of the higher education sector in national reconstruction” (African National Congress, 1994, p. 58). In response, many universities have changed their governance structures and devoted significant energy and funds towards civic engagement (Department of Education, 2000; Government of South Africa, 1997). The South African higher education system has
witnessed a flourishing of new projects ranging from urban regeneration to innovative community-based research and service-learning projects (Lazarus, 1999).

University Engagement and the ‘New’ Knowledge Production

Much of this earlier discussion concerns a reconfigured academic posture: from one that encouraged academic disinterest from his/her research subjects, towards one that demands greater interaction and relevance. Elsewhere this has been discussed as a change in the way knowledge is produced (Gibbons, 1998; Gibbons et al, 1994; Nowotony et al, 2003). In this section, I describe two different forms of knowledge production. The first is a conventional notion of scholarship that most academics and lay persons will recognize. This more traditional mode is best captured as knowledge for knowledge’s sake. That is, the problems being addressed are of interest to a specific discipline or sub-set of a discipline, rather than a wider social interest. Elsewhere this is described as basic research (Delanty, 1998; Gibbons et al, 1994). Contrasting basic research is a mode of knowledge production that is more diffused. Called Mode 2 (Gibbons et al, 1994), or the “second revolution” (Etzkowitz, 1998, p. 823), relevance to the market and society characterizes this model of science. I present these different modes of knowledge production as this points to a larger shift in the way that universities are conceived: from enclaves of esoteric information, towards change agents.

When we speak of changing social relations in the 21st century, the literature is rampant with discussions of the knowledge economy (Drucker, 1994), the global economy, the information age (Seely Brown & Duguid, 2000), the network economy (Castells, 1996), the associational economy (Cooke & Morgan, 1998), and postmodernity (Harvey, 1989). Despite one’s opinion about the heuristic value of each term, these
adjectives point to an anxiety associated with change. In writing of this transformation, Drucker (1994) described it as “an economic order in which knowledge, not labor or raw material or capital is the key resource; a social order in which inequality based on knowledge is a major challenge” (p. 53). In this conceptualization of the economy and society, knowledge represents the deciding variable in the competitiveness of people, regions and states. Given this privileging of knowledge, higher education institutions are seen as particularly important factors. Much of the literature argues that regions greatly benefit from colleges and universities that are responsive to the needs of local people, altering its foci (e.g., coursework and research programs) to match the needs of this new, local constituency.

Higher education institutions are being looked upon as facilitators of development. Yet the nature of development and the method of university engagement remain up for debate (Goddard, 1997; Keane & Allison, 1999; Thanki, 1999). Often, when discussing the developmental spin-offs associated with higher education, the literature refers to economic growth in the form of new student consumers, technology transfers, and university-industry partnerships.

This change of focus, from disciplinary-based questions, towards ones that reflect the needs of society and the market, reflects a growing concern with competitiveness. In writing about his experiences at an international petroleum conference, Pappas (1997) wrote, “the recurring themes of the conference were that higher education institutions are critical in strengthening the economic competitiveness of regions” (p. 1). Etzkowitz (1998) wrote about this as the ‘second revolution’ in the academy. The first revolution reflects Kant’s admonition to remove the state and church from the academy. This
second revolution reincorporates the different knowledge producers into strategic partnerships, or as Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, (2000) call them, helixes. In this helix model, the suggestion is that higher education institutions have become intertwined with the state and industry in the pursuit of economic competitiveness (Martin & Etzkowitz, 2000).

Etzkowitz (1998) goes on to argue that this move towards a more intertwined university-state-industry relationship is characterized by a new set of norms. That is, what it means to *do* science and to be a scientist is different than what it was in the past. This idealized past is best captured in the writing’s of Merton (1973). The Mertonian model of science reflects a classical image of the academic; that is; the scientist who is invested in knowledge production by the intrinsic rewards she or he receives from creating new knowledge. Etzkowitz (1998) writes, “Traditionally, the most deeply held value of scientists is the extension of knowledge. To contribute to this is the highest striving of a scientist” (p. 824). In this second revolution, however, these norms have been supplanted by those that allow scientists to meet two goals simultaneously: the pursuit of truth and profit (Etzkowitz, 1998).

This transition towards a helix model has alternatively been described as a move towards entrepreneurial science (Etzkowitz, 1998). By linking with the government and industry, but maintaining their role in the university, researchers have been able to assume new roles. While they are able to maintain themselves as researchers, interest in the more Mertonian pursuit of truth, they are also able to have a pecuniary interest in the success of their work. These notions of success, of course, are different now. More traditional models of research success concern its acceptance among one’s peers. Peer
reviewed journals still capture this practice. However, within this helix model, success remains peer-determined, however the pool of one’s peers greatly expands to include knowledge consumers and implementers.

Other examples of the changing nature of knowledge production have been captured as the Mode 2 thesis. Coined by Gibbons et al (1994), this model is very similar to Etzkowitz, although goes deeper into an analysis of practice. The most notable similarity is the fissure that each argue occurred in knowledge production. Where Etzkowitz (1998) refers to this earlier stage as Mertonian, Gibbons and others (Nowotony et al, 2003) have described this as Mode 1. There are similarities to Merton’s view of science that include:

1. Knowledge production occurs in the university;
2. Problems are based on the interests of a specific academic community, that is, they are of disciplinary interest (i.e., pure, basic, ‘blue skies’ research);
3. Mode 1 knowledge is characterized by a homogeneity of skills, in that problem is addressed ‘in-house;’
4. Excellence is determined through peer (i.e., scholarly) review.

Gibbons (1998) argues, like Etzkowitz (1998a, 1998b) that a new method of knowledge production is emerging that will supplant Mode 1 practices. About this, Gibbons (1998) writes,

> It is my contention that there is now sufficient evidence to indicate that a new, distinct set of cognitive and social practices is beginning to emerge and that they are different from those that govern Mode 1. These changes appear across the research spectrum and can be described in terms of a number of attributes which, when taken together, have sufficient coherence to suggest the emergence of a new mode of knowledge production. (p. 5)

Mode 2 knowledge production is characterized by several features. First, “knowledge is produced in the context of application” (Gibbons, 1998, p. 6). This is seen
as a deviation from ‘basic’ science, as captured in Mode 1, which is often not applied in nature. That is, Mode 1 science need not be applied, whereas Mode 2 science is always applied. The concern here is to make science and research relevant to the contexts addressed in the study. Gibbons (1998) writes, “Knowledge is intended to be useful to someone, whether in industry or government, or society more generally” (p. 6).

Second, transdisciplinarity characterizes Mode 2 research (Nowotony et al, 2003). Transdisciplinarity is meant to convey the fluid nature of academic collaboration. Research teams are mobilized from a range of disciplines and theoretical perspectives to solve problems (Nowotony et al, 2003). The research problem, therefore, is not derived from a discipline. “Mode 2 knowledge is embodied in the expertise of individual researchers and research teams as much as, or possibly more than, it is encoded in conventional research products such as journal articles” (Nowotony et al, 2003, p. 186). Therefore, the strength of the research lies in its innovative capacity to bring a plural set of theory and method to bear on a specific problem.

Third, there is a greater diversity where knowledge is produced and how these producers are organized. Mode 1 knowledge was the university’s domain. Mode 2 knowledge is still produced in higher education institutions, however, this often includes collaboration with private labs, non-university institutes, government agencies and consultancies. These collaborations form networks of problem-solvers that can change depending on the specific problem being addressed and/or required expertise. Nowotony et al (2003) further argues that these networks are more horizontally organized than the vertical, hierarchical image of the academy.
The fourth characteristic of Mode 2 knowledge is its reflexive nature. Research characterized as Mode 2 works to address the variety of ways that science can benefit the public interest. The standards of ‘objective science’ are reworked so to acknowledge the useful contribution that the public can have in solving research problems. Reflecting the collaborative nature of Mode 2 work, research becomes a “dialogic process, an intense (and perhaps endless) conversation between research actors and research subjects” (Nowotony et al, 2003, p. 187).

Finally, the fifth characteristic concerns quality control. Given the relationships that are formed among research partners (i.e., researchers and participants) and its problem-based approach, Mode 2 knowledge determines appropriateness through standards of social accountability. With the expanding number of groups and interests represented in research projects, peer review has expanded. Quality research is now determined by other criteria than the review of a community of scholars.

Mode 2 quality is determined by a wider set of criteria….This implies that ‘good science’ becomes difficult to determine. Since it is no longer limited to the judgments of disciplinary peers, the fear is that control will be weaker and result in lower quality work. Although the quality control process in Mode 2 is more broadly based, it does not follow that because a wider range of expertise is brought to bear on a problem that it will necessarily be of lower quality. It is of a more composite, multidimensional kind. (Gibbons, 1998, p. 10)

Good Mode 2 science therefore includes concerns for marketability, cost effectiveness and social acceptability (Gibbons, 1998).

There are clear overlaps here with both Boyer’s notion of engagement and Etzkowitz’s (1998) Helix model of science. The Helix model expresses the changing organization of knowledge production very similarly to the Mode 2 thesis. Where the Helix expresses the weaving of different knowledge producing sectors, Gibbons writes
about heterogeneity and transdisciplinarity. Boyer (1990) likewise speaks of a similar pattern when he wrote about the ‘scholarship of integration,’ defined as “making connections across disciplines, placing specialties in larger contexts” (p. 18). Boyer goes on to argue that such interconnections are essential to contemporary universities as the disciplines are becoming too confining. The hope, he argues, is that such problem-based, interconnected research networks will force new “topologies of knowledge” to occur (Boyer, 1990, p. 19).

Similar to the issues of social accountability in Mode 2, Boyer (1990) speaks of the “scholarship of application” (p. 23). Whereas both Gibbons and Etzkowitz are quick to argue that the merits of research are determined by its effectiveness in application (e.g., marketing and consumption), Boyer diverges from this. While certainly interested in relevant research, Boyer speaks of this as an issue of service. Something missing from both Mode 2 and the Helix model, Boyer (1990) is interested in how research contributes to the public good. He writes, “Scholarly service…is particularly needed in a world in which huge, almost intractable problems call for the skills and insights only the academy can provide” (p. 23).

Service, therefore, becomes a central feature of engagement. Goddard (1997) got close to this when he wrote, “More recently the role of universities in regional development has been seen as going beyond this narrow technical and economic approach to embrace the role of universities in enhancing the stock of human capital” (p. 2). Human capital is very much an issue of economics (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2002), but Goddard points correctly to the manner that knowledge production can address issues of service, community and justice. This is often the focus of community-based
scholarship in that it concerns the social impact of university service; a situation where the university contributes “to the social and cultural basis for effective democratic governance” (Keane & Allison, 1999, p. 899). I turn to these issues next.

Community-Based Research

As the previous discussion captures, research is often criticized for its irrelevance to and disconnect from people’s lives. Increased scholarship on community problems has been one result of this critique (Lerner et al, 1998). Often described as community-based research, this is an action-oriented research design that focuses on communities, with the expectation that the community participates in the research and benefits from its outcomes (Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993). For many, community-based research represents a moralistic approach that encourages reciprocity between the researcher and the researched (Rhoads, 1997).

Community-based research is one of the more common methods academics use to gain social relevance and meaningfully connect with local communities. It is not, however, a monolithic project. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) list seven different types of action/community-based research: participatory research, critical action research, classroom action research, action learning, action science, soft systems approaches, and industrial action research. These many different types of community-based research are the result of disciplinary foci, researcher preferences and/or the specific problem(s) being addressed.

Community-based research is largely the product of three primary antecedents. First, was the popular education movement. Popular education and critical pedagogical
practices are often equated with the work of Paulo Freire (1970). Freire’s work in Latin America, in particular Brazil, was rooted in using education to combat social injustice. Freire argued that education could be used to raise a critical consciousness that permitted the student to better understand his social situation. Reflecting his Marxist influence, Freire’s goal was to combat the complacency that false consciousness induced. People were educated about their lives and social conditions in an effort to encourage change-oriented behavior.

As with Freire, the Highlander Research and Education Center has contributed to the practice of community-based work through popular education. In 1932 The Highlander Center was formed in New Market, Tennessee as a means to organize local workers to fight for social and environmental justice in the community. Like Freire the Highlander center argued that in order for local problems to be addressed, then local people must articulate them and then make the change themselves. The focus here was to destabilize the power that teachers, managers and experts have upon lay people. “The founding principle and guiding philosophy of [The Highlander Center] is that the answers to the problems facing society lie in the experiences of ordinary people. Those experiences, so often belittled and denigrated in our society, are the keys to grassroots power (Highlander Center, no date). To these ends, Highlander has worked with local people to develop research skills used in critical community research projects such as environmental justice, tax justice, and educational equity (Strand et al, 2003).

Highlander’s approach to popular education has been so successful and widely accepted that many argue they have set the standard for community-based research (Strand et al, 2003).
A second antecedent to community-based research is the action research model. Action research began as a method used in industrial settings to improve worker productivity. In Lewin’s early studies, he suggested that if workers had a greater sense of democratic management in their work lives, then greater productivity would result. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) have described this as ‘industrial action research,’ and point to its use in eliciting organizational change through research. Within action research is a dizzying array of other permutations: critical action research, action science, action learning, and participatory action research. While each are significantly different in their target populations (e.g., students, workers, practitioners, the ‘oppressed’), each has the ultimate goal of using research to create change. Therefore, both Gibbons (1998) and Boyer’s (1990) socially-relevant higher education, find their roots in the action research literature.

The final antecedent of community-based research is participatory research. Park (1992) defines participatory research as “a way of creating knowledge that involves learning from investigation and applying what is learned to collective problems through social action” (p. 30). Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) provide three attributes that correspond to this definition. First, there is a shared ownership of resources. In particular, neither the results of nor credit for the research are kept by the researcher. Second, there is a community-based analysis of social problems. Community participation, it is argued, produces a more accurate assessment of what is actually happening in a locale. This stands in contrast to a more hierarchal form of research where the researcher is viewed as the expert who determines what a community needs. Conducted this way, research becomes dislodged from the actual sites of practice. In
response, the effort is to root research problems to the actual contexts through local deliberations about pressing needs. Third, there are efforts taken towards social action. Reflecting both popular education and action research, participatory methods are focused on eliciting social change.

Hall (1992) argued that the origins of participatory research come from the community development projects that began in postcolonial Africa, Asia and Latin America. After decades of colonialism, many developing countries had a keen awareness of the effects of social exclusion. As colonial subjects, most Africans, Asians and indigenous persons around the world had been excluded from the very processes that had defined their lives. Economic, social and political policies were each created with little or no local influence. The postcolonial reaction was to privilege the use of more inclusive and democratic approaches. Hall (1992) argues,

‘Participatory research’ were the words that evolved in the Tanzanian context of the early 1970s for a practice that attempted to put less powerful people at the center of the knowledge creation process; to move people and their daily lived experiences of struggle and survival from the margins of epistemology to the center. (pp. 15-16)

Participatory research is ultimately interested in democratizing knowledge creation (i.e., opening the process to include non-academics) and social change (i.e., using research to address pressing social problems) (Stoecker & Bonacich, 1992). This stands in contrast to the models of science described earlier as Mertonian, while supporting the alternative modes of knowledge creation captured in Boyer (1990), the Mode 2 thesis (Gibbons, 1998; Gibbons et al, 1994; Nowotony et al, 2003) and the Helix model (Etzkowitz, 1998).

Park (1992) described the frustration that social scientists had when conducting research in postcolonial Tanzania. Steeped in positivism, which included interests in
empirical patterns, objectivity and generalization, these researchers became exceedingly frustrated as their methods became too rigid to work in this context. The result was poor data. In their struggles, they realized that local communities were conducting similar social research far more effectively and with greater relevance to local problems. The success of these methods was attributed to the more communal nature of the knowledge creation.

Contained within these antecedents emerges certain principles of community-based research. Strand et al (2003) write about three features:

1. a collaborative process between researchers (and often students) and local residents;

2. recognition of the presence of different forms of knowledge and knowledge production and advocates for the use of different methods to get at this knowledge;

3. a goal of social change en route to social justice.

These features speak to the previous discussions of popular education, action research and participatory research as elements of each are present. These features correspond to earlier discussions of the changing modes of knowledge production. As Gibbons (1998), Boyer (1990, 1996) and Etzkowitz (1998) have discussed, the manner in which academic research is performed today is more diverse than previously envisioned. Boyer and Gibbons’ theses, in particular, are reminiscent of the above features of community-based research, such as the focus on collaborative research teams (i.e., transdisciplinarity, the scholarship of integration) and social action (i.e., problem-based research, the scholarship of application). Supporting Gibbons’ (1998), Strand et al (2003) argue that community-based scholarship is indicative of a cultural shift as it concerns academic practice, from research on communities to research with communities. Among the more noticeable
changes are those that concern issues of participation and reciprocity. I address each of these below.

A Normative View of Community-based Research

As the previous discussion illustrates, the role of a diverse set of knowledge producers is a fundamental feature of community-based research. Finding its roots in popular education (Freire, 1970) and postcolonial struggles (Hall, 1992), the merit to including local people and catalyzing local change has reached far beyond the academy (Mohan, 2002, World Bank, 1994). These are largely normative stances, arguing for a certain approach to research. In this section, I expand upon these norms with a discussion of the radical democratic and service-learning literatures. Radical democracy has applications to many different fields, but especially those concerned with decision-making among different populations on issues that affect the lives of these populations. Among these norms most often contained in this literature, and most relevant for discussions of community-based research are participation, reciprocity and justice.

Community, Collaboration and Participation

Collaborative frameworks start from the assumption that social action is improved and strengthened by forging relationships within and between different communities. Dewey (1954) wrote that a community

…presents an order of energies transmuted into one of meanings are appreciated and mutually referred by each to every other on the part of those engaged in combined action….The work of conversion of the physical and organic phase of associated behavior into a community of action saturated and regulated by mutual interest in shared meanings, consequences which are translated into ideas and desired objects by means of symbols, does not occur all at once nor completely.
At any given time, it sets a problem rather than marks settled achievement. (pp. 153-154)

Dewey described the purpose of collaborative frameworks. Presupposed here, however, is a firm definition of community. ‘Community’ is a chaotic concept, however (Anderson, 1991). We are inundated with references to community: African-American community, gay community, scholarly community, etc. But what is community? Saltmarsh (1998) defined community as “both a place and a set of relationships” (p. 6). This view lacks depth, however, defining community largely by sameness, be that a physical characteristic, an ideology or a location. Members of these groups are seen to have some like characteristics that bind them together in a harmonious community. In truth, however, communities are far less neat. Communities can consist of different groups that may not get along or share many similarities aside from a proximal location. At times, proximal location is not even the binding characteristic, as diffuse networks of persons are made easier through digital communication.

Rhoads (1997) reworks community to address difference but also to comment how this difference can be harnessed for combined action. Tierney (1993) speaks of communities of difference, and argues similarly that through difference, groups may be linked through an affirmation of their shared destiny. Thus, diverse populations can be linked through their difference and in the process develop a caring relationship for the other. The creation of caring relationships returns us to Dewey’s quote and his call for using communities to forge combined action. This is the collaborative spirit that forms the foundation for much community-based scholarship.
Often collaboration is used to strengthen the quality of the research and learning experiences. The merits of including diverse perspectives in one’s research are diffuse throughout the collaborative literature. Chambers’ (1994, 1998) use of collaboration in his participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) are relevant here. Used widely in development organizations, PRAs are a set of methods that allow researchers to capture qualitative assessments of rural life. Using interviews, observations and focus groups, the researchers work to include the local population as much as possible into the research process. The purpose of PRAs are two-fold. First, it is believed that through dialogue with local people, the most accurate data can be collected. The assumption here is that by including local people into one’s research, the researcher is able to reduce a priori assumptions that s/he may bring into the field. By eliminating these assumptions, Chambers argues that the information is more relevant and not filtered through academic eyes. Agar (1996) describes this simply as the search for the *emic*, or insider/native, points-of-view. Second, it allows for relevant problem-solving. With seemingly more accurate data, and data that is more relevant to the people in the field, Chambers (1994) argues that this leads to appropriate problem-solving. In contrast to top-down research and development projects, that fail to take account of local applications, relevancy is ensured in collaborative/participatory projects as local people have made it clear what is needed or wanted.

Strand et al (2003) speak similarly of the benefits that collaboration has for research, teaching and learning. Students, they argue, stand to make important gains through their participation in collaborative projects. Community-based research “offers the chance to learn through the best combination of experiential and intellectual learning
strategies” (Strand et al, 2003, p. 10). Collaborative approaches also offer students and researchers the opportunity to practice critical listening and discussion skills.

The standard for collaboration is often placed very high. That is, community-based research is

ideally…fully collaborative, with those in the community working with academics- professors and students- at every stage of the research process: identifying the issue or problem, constructing research questions, developing research instruments, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting results, writing the final report, issuing recommendations, and implementing initiatives. (Strand et al, 2003, pp. 9-10)

Thought of this way, collaboration is more than the practice that Gibbons (1998) and Etzkowitz (1998) speak about in their models of knowledge production, who describe collaboration largely between elite structures (e.g., researchers, private labs, government agencies, consultants). This Deweyan notion of collaboration has a more inclusive focus. That is, while collaboration can work to strengthen diversity within research, it can also restructure the power dynamic involved in research relations. In this model, collaboration works to weaken the division between researchers and researched, constructing each person as able to produce knowledge.

Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) provide an example of the inclusive features of collaboration when writing of their “workers-as-critical-researchers” approach (p. 146). They propose that workers (i.e., participants) should not be viewed as depositories of data but as agents who constantly analyze their surroundings. Practically this could play out with participants being actively involved in examining interview transcripts, field notes and other documents. By tapping into this perspective we are given additional filters.
Rather than skewing results, this allows an alternate reading from the margin. Such perspectives are useful in that they are often outside the discourses of mainstream science. The hope is not to reify worker knowledge as some virginal interpretation, but to recast this as a process where rigor is based upon multiple perspectives. Supporting a normative ideal of participation, this also works to validate marginalized knowledges and analyses, giving it an authority often denied by traditional (e.g., Mode 1) science. This validation strikes to the social change feature, central to community-based work.

“Critical worker research operates under the assumption that the validation of workers knowledge can lead to their empowerment” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 150).

In a study of women in Australian mining towns, Gibson-Graham (1994) attempts a similar inclusive research project. The purpose of this research was, in some ways, typically ethnographic: an interest in the experiences of women living in industrial towns. However, the authors also had a social change agenda, wanting to upset the “existing discourses of ‘mining town women’ and ‘miner’s wife’ that confined their subjectivity” (Gibson-Graham, 1994, p. 219). As with Kincheloe and McLaren’s (1994) worker-researchers, in this study women were incorporated as co-researchers in the hopes that in speaking with other women about these constraining identities, they each may work to deconstruct them and build more affirming ones. About this, Domosh (2003) writes, “Through the research process and the narration of their experiences, these women became active “deconstructors of their essentialized identities, active that is in understanding the conditions of its production, and therefore active in creating new discursive spaces in which new subjectivities can emerge” (pp. 110-111). So, through
collaborative research, the authors worked to change women’s opinions about themselves.

Community-based research, therefore, has used participation for a number of different ends. First, it is used to improve the data that is collected. As Chambers (1994) notes, with better and more communication with local people, the researcher will collect better data. Second, research is used as a tool for change. Harking back to the action research approach, the research process is stretched beyond just knowledge creation and towards catalyzing relevant local change. For some, these may be smaller projects that are relevant to specific, local demands (i.e., better services, housing, electricity, etc.). In others cases, the focus is on upsetting more engrained societal problems, such as worker exploitation (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994) or misogyny (Gibson-Graham, 1994). This latter approach shares many similarities with the radical democratic literature, to which I turn to next.

Community-Based Research and Communicative Democracy

The community-based literature has largely ignored linkages to radical democracy (Fraser, 1997; Habermas, 1984; Young, 1993, 2000). There are, however, important overlaps, particularly around issues of participation. Radical democracy is a moral philosophical approach towards understanding and working towards increasing the quality and quantity of justice (Young, 1993). Within this literature, there have been debates about what justice necessarily entails. The primary debate has been over whether justice should focus on issues of redistribution, recognition or at the intersection of each (Fraser, 1995; Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Young 1997).
Nancy Fraser’s work on justice has been instrumental in this debate. In her many works on the topic (1995, 1997), she has argued that the plurality that now defines many social movements has worked to complicate more traditional definitions of justice. Before the flourishing of identity politics (Taylor, 1992), justice was largely an issue of redistribution. According to Fraser (1995), redistributive justice operated along a continuum, from affirmative to transformative modes. Affirmative redistribution was typical of the liberal welfare state, characterized by “surface reallocations of existing goods,” yet without any change in the structures that produced the injustice in the first place (Fraser, 1995, p. 87). In contrast to this was transformative redistribution, or socialism. A socialist conception of redistribution looked at the structures that caused the inequality (e.g., relations and modes of production), and worked to transform these conditions. Proletarian groups mobilized for the ultimate goal of breaking down class differences that locked them in alienating relations. Fraser (1995) argues, however, that we are in a “post-socialist age” (p. 68). If group solidarity is fractured, what then does that mean for justice?

Justice in a post-socialist age presents problems as it concerns the focus of justice. That is, if group affiliations are too fractured to offer solidarity, does embracing difference counter justice? Fraser (1995) writes,

Demands for ‘recognition of difference’ fuel struggles of groups mobilized under the banners of nationality, ethnicity, ‘race’, gender and sexuality. In these ‘post-socialist’ conflicts, group identity supplants class interests as the chief medium of political mobilization. Cultural domination supplants exploitation as the fundamental injustice. And cultural recognition displaces socioeconomic distribution as the remedy for injustice and the goal of political struggle. (p. 68)
Where then does one focus? For Fraser (1995), a justice-oriented democratic movement must dance between the two positions. “Justice today requires both redistribution and recognition” (Fraser, 19995, p. 69). Her goal, then, is to examine the interplay of the two, looking for intersections between cultural and social equality and how each can support the other.

Young (1997) has argued that Fraser, in the end, does not do this. Instead, Fraser is seen to suggest that a politics of recognition retreats from economic struggle. These are worthwhile concerns, Young (1997) notes. “Fraser is right to be critical of tendencies for a politics of recognition to supplant concerns for economic justice” (p. 148). Yet, for Young (1997), Fraser commits a worst act of constructing recognition as unable to address political and economic justice. For Young (1997), recognition can work towards redistribution. Following Habermas’ communicative ethics, Young explores how inclusive, public forums can lead to justice.

In his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Habermas investigates the utility of the public sphere as a tool for radical politics and a moral philosophy. At its basic level, the public sphere is “a theater in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk” (Fraser, 1997, p.70). These spaces (e.g., the commons) are deliberative ones, where participation is the rule, not the exception. The unit of analysis, or the revolutionary catalyst, is the speech act.

Habermas connected this idea of the public sphere with an interest in how decisions are made within it. If one was concerned with questions about what was good, right or just, Habermas (1984) believed that rational forms of communication must be
supported. In his model of communicative ethics, Habermas found a methodological analogue in Freudian psychoanalysis: a model of deliberation between the therapist and patient, based upon verbal exchange, with little preconception of final goal and devoid (at least in theory) of power differentials. Others have expanded this as part of a larger deliberative democratic process based on rational discussion, that is, where decisions are made based on the better argument, rather than on power differentials that force positions, preferences and perceptions (Young, 1993).

Deliberative democracy is but one of several modes of democracy. Young (1993, 2000) described aggregative democracy, whereby candidates, policies and platforms are presented in such a way that they appeal to the widest number of preferences. In that preferences are aggregated, however, the public is prevented from discussing their individual positions. “There is no account of the possibility of political co-ordination and co-operation” (Young, 2000, p. 20).

With desires for open communication and dialogue around issues that affect the public, many believe aggregative models are inadequate to demands for legitimate decision-making (Habermas, 1984). Deliberative democracy is seen as an important alternative. In this model, “participants….offer proposals for how best to solve problems or meet legitimate needs….and they present arguments through which they aim to persuade others to accept their proposals” (Young, 2000, p. 22). The deliberative model is based on four normative ideals to ensure effective deliberation. First, all those who are affected by a decision must be included. Second, not only should there be inclusion of all parties in the debate, but there should be equality of opinion. “All ought to have equal, effective opportunity to question one another, and to respond to and criticize one
another’s proposals and programs” (Young, 2000, p. 23). Third, there must be a level of reasonableness in the deliberation. That is, participants must be fair in judging proposals, ensuring they have an open mind. “To be reasonable is to be willing to change our opinions or preferences because others persuade us that our initial opinions or preferences…are incorrect or inappropriate” (Young, 2000, p. 25). Fourth, the ideals of inclusion, equality, and reasonableness must all occur in public.

Young (1993) notes problems with deliberative forms of democracy. Of main concern are its disciplinary tendencies. During deliberation, communication is typically performed in a detached and unemotional way (Young, 1993). “The concept of deliberation carries a connotation of dispassionateness” (Young, 1993, p. 128). Where Habermas (1984) wrote of rational communication, Young (1993) argued this included a tendency to exclude certain types of communication as beyond what is appropriate or accepted.

Public settings structured by deliberative norms frequently suppress or devalue nondiscursive forms of expression such as movement and gesture, poetry, hyperbole, or jokes…Expressions of passion, anger, depression, fear and so on…are generally discounted…as forms of irrationality. (Young, 1993, pp.128-129)

The result, Young maintained, was to exclude certain populations and forms of argumentation from the discussion. An alternative to this are communicative forms of democracy that recognize difference between groups and uses this difference as a method to achieve justice (Young, 1993, 2000).

There are similarities between communicative and deliberative democracy. Both share an interest in forming a public where issues are discussed. This public sphere is
one that is free of threats and uneven power that may limit the quantity and quality of
dialogue that occurs within it. Yet, where deliberative models suggest a particular mode
of communication (i.e., rational, dispassionate), communicate democracy widens this
definition. In a communicative model, participants are placed within a public sphere with
the hopes of forming connections through difference. That is, there is not the aggregative
desire to make a decision that pleases the most people, that is “majoritarian democratic
procedures” (Young, 1993, p. 131). Nor is there the deliberative desire to ensure that all
participants operate within a certain proscribed method of communication, thereby
limiting what is said and how it is said. A communicative theory of democracy focuses
on relationships between participants. Young (1993) writes:

One function of discussion is precisely to transform people’s preferences, to alter
or refine their perceptions of their interests, their perception of the needs and
interests of others, their relations to those others, and their perception of collective
problems, goals, and solutions....By having to speak and justify his or her
preferences to others who may be skeptical, a person becomes more reflective
about these preferences, accommodates them to the preferences of others, or
sometimes becomes more convinced of the legitimacy of his or her claims. By
listening to others and trying to understand their experience and claims, persons
or groups gain broader knowledge of the social relations in which they are
embedded and the implications of their proposals.

Such an approach to communication is underscored by the normative precondition that
people are viewed as having “a good or well-being which can be affected and which
makes them ‘morally considerable,’ i.e., relevant to moral consideration” (Dower, 1991.
p. 279). This, therefore, is a process of forming allegiances, understanding and mutual
trust across difference; mutuality focused on justice.

Young (2000) described this growing awareness, respect and care for other people
as “differentiated solidarity” (p. 221). She based much of her arguments on the
assumption that inclusion was good for democracy. By including more people in the discussions, the actual discussion becomes richer and the conclusions drawn at the end of the discussion ideally lead to just outcomes. While just outcomes are not implicit to democratic communication, Young (1993) argues that through open dialogue, participants are able to maximize “social wisdom” (p. 131). Social wisdom is the plurality of opinions, preferences and perceptions of a public that affect how one views a specific problem or phenomenon up for discussion.

Discussion in a communicative democracy encourages differently located groups with differing social and cultural experiences to understand social experience, the effects of social policy, and value priorities as they are in these different social locations. Maximizing communicative understanding thus enables the public to develop more comprehensive social understanding than any persons or groups can have from their own location alone. This contributes to the transformation from self-interest to being motivated by justice. (Young, 1993, p. 130)

This is communication based on empathy and a differentiated solidarity.

A communicative theory of democracy is a model of social interaction that recognizes the differences that groups and people may have, but places these groups and people in relationship to one another. This is achieved first through developing a shared sense of solidarity. Solidarity is meant to express “a commitment and justice owed people” (Young, 2000, p. 222). It is often meant to suggest the shared norms and beliefs of like people. Thus, solidarity is often equated, or supports, conventional definitions of ‘community.’ Young argues, however that if we wish to work for a communicative model of democracy, we need to view solidarity as open to diverse and contradictory interests. Solidarity “must rely on mutual respect and caring that presumes distance: that
norms of solidarity hold among strangers and those who in many ways remain strange to one another” (Young, 2000, p. 222). This is a differentiated solidarity.

Differentiated solidarity allows for a certain degree of separation among people who seek each other out because of social or cultural affinities they have with one another that they do not share with others. Differentiated solidarity does not presume mutual identification and affinity as an explicit or implicit condition for attitudes of respect and inclusion. Affinity group differentiation can be affirmed if it is structured in a context of co-operation that discourages group-based selfishness, prejudice, or hatred. Differentiated solidarity, then, aims to balance values of generalized inclusions and respect with more particularist and local self-affirmation and expression. (Young, 2000, p. 221)

Corbridge (1994) describes a similar approach as a moral obligation to “distant strangers” (p. 103) and suggests, like Young, that strangers can be connected by developing a shared interest in each other’s lives. Dower (1991) extends this, suggesting that obligations cross both space and time.

The rationale of moral rules shows that it is arbitrary to restrict the scope of the good promoted by these rules. This rationale does not just include distant peoples, it also includes future generations whose environmental well-being may be crucially affected by our decisions. (Dower, 1991, p. 279)

Finally, Young (2000) suggests, “Strangers with diverse loyalties, local affinities, and goals dwell together in complex causal relationships….Because they dwell together in this way, they have obligations of justice to one another” (p. 224).

*Reciprocity and community-based research*

The service-learning literature has worked to expand this notion of shared obligations as an issue of reciprocity. Kendall (1990) defines reciprocity as “the exchange of both giving and receiving between the ‘server’ and the person or group ‘being served’” (pp. 21-22). This pragmatic definition, however, fails to address the
emotional component that underscores reciprocal relationships. Noddings (1984) and Folbre (2001) argue that reciprocity is an issue of caring. For Noddings, reciprocity is rooted in an ethic of care, which places one in empathy with another. She (1984) writes, “Caring involves…a ‘feeling with’ the other” (p. 30). This is placed in contrast to a more sympathetic view that attempts to place the giver ‘in the shoes’ of the ‘receiver,’ allowing the receiver to be essentialized, if not pathologized, by the nature of their ‘without-ness.’ However, through caring relationships, we locate their various struggles as part of our own struggles for inclusion and justice. In his book Beyond the White Noise, Montgomery-Fate (1997) quoted an aboriginal Australian woman, Lila Watson, who captures this sense of mutuality. “If you have come to help us you’re wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with ours, then let us work together” (p. 6).

The mutuality and empathy that Watson spoke of, however, is not implicit in all service relationships. Maybach (1994) speaks about the differences between charity and justice models of service. Saltmarsh (1998) defines charity as the process of meeting “the immediate human needs in a direct and forthright manner” (p. 21). Rhoads (1997) argues, however, that charity models tend to limit our sense of connection or mutuality. Charity models of service establish firm identities for participants as either the ‘server’ and ‘the served.’ Each is defined by nature of their resources, or lack thereof, and little else. Constructed this way, it becomes difficult to see the person as enmeshed in wider struggles for inclusion in debates about decisions that affect their lives. That is, charity models of service tend to ignore the important role that reflection on issues of poverty, racism, and other struggles can serve in connecting us to people. Circling back to
communicative democracy, in that charity prevents feelings of mutuality or deep connection, it can have the tendency to limit our ability to have coordinated conversations with differing groups, with differing opinions about justice.

Justice models of service are placed in contrast to charity models. Saltmarsh (1998) defines such models as those focused on fostering “social transformation to improve the quality of community life for those who share in the collective life of the community” (p. 21). For Freire (1970) this was “true generosity.”

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the ‘rejects of life,’ to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands….need to be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working transform the world. (p. 27)

In reference to service-learning in a South American context, Porter and Monard (2001) suggest that true generosity is fundamentally about reciprocity and discuss the features of a justice-oriented service approach. First, the relationship comes from an expressed need among local people. As captured earlier in Chambers’ (1994) notion of participation, problems are determined at the grassroots, rather than externally then laid onto a community. The service must be “built upon the genuine needs of those who will live long-term with the outcomes of the service project” (Porter & Monard, 2001, p. 8). Second, there is shared ownership of the project. Similar to the popular education projects, an effort is made to break down the divisions between server/served, researcher/participant. “The result of creating interconnected webs of stakeholders is they understand the project and each feels a legitimate, shared stake in its success” (Porter & Monard, 2001, p. 11). Third, service must be offered with a desire to make an intimate connection to a community. In contrast to charity, where others are often paid to
provide the service, the focus here is to establish a level of commitment that requires direct contact between all partners. Related, the fourth aspect concerns the physicality of the service. “Communal work means strenuous, physical engagement with one’s whole body. Being fully present means giving with all of one’s strength” (Porter & Monard, 2001, pp. 11-12). Fifth, exchanges must be equitable. If one gains from a community, in terms of data or experience, then a something is expected in return. Equitable giving reinforces feelings of trust and care that are essential in creating relationships based upon justice. Porter and Monard (2001) argue further that through equitable giving, solidarity can also be reinforced. Reflecting Young’s (2000) comments on the importance of solidarity, they write, “solidarity can also be an outcome of reciprocal relationships. Working together to create something of value can help cultivate a shared sense of identity” (p. 14). While Young (1993, 2000) does not argue for shared identities, she does advocate for communal efforts in work. For her, however, that work is performed through inclusive and equitable communication. The radical democratic literature and its focus on communicative ethics and the public sphere are useful in explicating this further.

There are several ways that the radical democracy literature informs community-based research practices. First, issues of participation are well theorized in the radical democracy literature. In particular, the communicative democracy model that Young (2000) wrote of reflects concerns for including all affected parties into wider discussions, but also supporting the most marginalized in wider debates. As with Kincheloe and McLaren’s (1994) worker researchers, the hope was to open the lines of communication among people that were affected by the research. Young (2000) echoes this when she writes, “Through the process of public discussion with a plurality of differently
opinionated and situated others, people often gain new information, learn of different experiences of their collective problems, or find that their own initial opinions are founded on prejudice or ignorance” (p. 26). In writing about community-based methodologies, Strand et al (2003) mentioned a similar desire, 

In the same way that [we] require the equal participation of academic and community people in the research process, [community-based research] also values equally the knowledge that each party brings to that process...[community-based research] answers the question ‘Whose knowledge counts?’ in distinctive ways. It places the less powerful members of society at the center of the knowledge creation process. (p. 11) 

Therefore, issues of open dialogue and communication are concerns for both radical democrats and community-based researchers. In the end, these are normative ideals. That is, the approach that Young (1993, 2000) describes is a hypothetical, rather than actually-existing democracy. As Chapter 4 reveals, the practice of community-based research, just as with the practice of democracy, is much less coherent than the theories that inform it. The utility of normative models, however, is as a benchmark of sorts, holding the hypothetical up to the empirical and examining for convergences and deviations from this idealization, and working for more convergence.

Conclusion

The community-based literature is rife with normative discussions about participation and reciprocity. In this chapter, I have brought together a range of different literatures that address these important issues of ethics and morality. Methodologies such as popular education, action research and participatory research each provide insight into the practices of community-based research. I worked to deepen this discussion with reference to the radical democratic literature that speaks of creating inclusive public
spheres where issues such as research practices and outcomes are discussed. These literatures formed the foundation of this study and provided a framework about what was important to me and the practice of community-based research. In the next chapter, I outline how I collected data for this study.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to examine the practice of university outreach at one South African university (‘The University’). I have examined one feature of outreach: community-based research in the Greenveld region of the Limpopo Province, the site of the Facility. At the heart of this research is an interpretation of the lived realities of community-based research. Three research questions guided this study:

(1) How do academic research and community development interact?

(2) What are the particular ways that context complicates this interaction?

(3) What meaning does reciprocity have for researchers and participants? How is reciprocity practiced? How is reciprocity experienced?

Research Elements

Epistemology

This study is based on a subjectivist epistemology. Epistemology is the manner in which we come to know. For the subjectivist, knowledge comes from one’s relationship with other knowers. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that a subjectivist epistemology reflects the assumption that “the investigator and the investigated object
are…interactively linked” (p. 110). For the subjectivist, knowledge creation is 

*transactional* (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Palmer (1983) describes this as a communal image of reality. Knowing, he writes, “is a profoundly communal act. Nothing could possibly be known by the solitary self, since the self is inherently communal in nature.…We now see that to know something is to have a living relationship with it” (Palmer, 1983, p. xv). I found this subjectivist approach most useful as it corresponds to my interests in learning about perceptions, feelings and opinions about community-based research. Rather than enter the field with firm, a priori assumptions, a subjectivist approach allowed me to keep these but interrogate them with participants. That is, my assumptions were built upon, amended or disregarded after interaction with participants.

### Theoretical Framework

Critical theory forms the theoretical foundation of this study. I recognize that it is difficult to capture critical theory in one, concise definition. While many write about its differentiated nature (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Lather, 1991; Zavarzadeh et al, 1995), there are common features. First, the critical researcher focuses on uncovering flows of power (Allen, 2003; Deleuze, 1989; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). That is, the critical researcher examines social phenomena for competing power interests so to “uncover winners and losers in particular social arrangements and the processes by which such power plays operate” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 281). The critical researcher also recognizes the “various and complex ways that power operates” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 281), to oppress, resist and cooperate (Allen, 2003). Second, the critical researcher examines these processes of inequality based on a normative
hypothetical of how society ought to appear (Ettlinger, 1999; Young, 2000). Although hypothetics rarely mirror empirical conditions, this is an attempt to examine actually existing conditions, to see where the hypothetical converges with the empirical, and detailing the possibilities for more convergence (Ettlinger, 1999). Third, the economic determinism of orthodox Marxism is rejected. The presupposition is, instead, that multiple axes of oppression work to create an ‘overdetermined system’; that is, issues of race, gender, sexuality, ability, age, and location form part of a larger and more complex analysis of everyday life (Althusser, 1971; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

Methodology

This project is a critical ethnography\(^3\) of community-based research. Critical ethnography “refers to ethnographic studies that engage in cultural critique by examining larger political, social, and economic issues and that focus on oppression, conflict, struggle, power, and praxis” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 22). There are similarities to traditional ethnography. As in the classical ethnographies of Malinowski and Mead, critical ethnographers also attempt to understand “the culture and symbolic life of the actors involved” (Maseman, 1982, p. 13). However, the symbols being scrutinized now point to normative issues of inclusion and open communication (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994).

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\(^3\) While my focus was the lived experience of community-based research, I did not use a community-based research design. It was an object of study, not my methodology. There are features of community-based research that were not possible in my work. Most practically, community-based research typically requires extended stays in the field to establish firm relationships and ensure long-lasting social change (Strand et al, 2003). My five months in the field did not afford me this luxury. My goal was not to create the bold projects captured in the community-based research literature. My goal was more modest and typically ethnographic: an understanding of lived experience. This being said, community-based research and critical ethnography do overlap (e.g., reciprocity and community deliberation). I will discuss these overlaps later in this chapter.
The focus is less an interpretation of unique subpopulations and rather the normative analysis of social phenomenon that express avenues of change (Ettlinger, 1999; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lather, 1991; Young, 2000).

Fontana (1994) locates critical ethnography within the wider cultural turn in the social sciences. She cites three emerging trends. First is the recognition of a reflexive ethnography. Classic ethnography sought objectivity through removed observation. However, recent work suggests that the author/researcher can never really remove him/herself from the study (Gibson-Graham, 1997). Rather than ignore the researcher’s role, a reflexive approach is advocated that acknowledges the problematic stance of the researcher and the assumptions she or he may bring to the work. Second, the focus is not limited to human subjects. Film, television and fiction can become parts of a ‘multitextual’ ethnography. The third trend is the move to an overtly political ethnography. Avoiding both relativism and distanced observation (Denzin, 1997; Gergen, 1985) ethnography is often openly normative (Katz, 1994; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Visweswaran, 1994). Seideman and Alexander (2001) describe the normative turn in the social sciences as an abandonment of the foundationalism of science, in preference for moral reasoning. As it concerns ethnography, I understand the influence of normative thinking as a re-reading of ethnography with a focus on inclusion, participation and the destabilization of academic authority/privilege: a critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996; van Maanen, 1988).

Simon and Dippo (1986) suggest three qualities of critical ethnography. First, it “must employ an organising problematic that defines one's data and analytical procedures in a way consistent with its project” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 197). As in other projects,
research is presupposed by epistemological and ontological assumptions. For the critical ethnographer, this ‘organizing problematic’ is a focus on flows of power that influence meaning and action (Deleuze, 1988; Fairclough, 1993).

Second, critical ethnography “must be situated…within a public sphere that allows it to become the starting point for…critique and transformation” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 197). This implies a great deal of moral authority and comes dangerously close to paternalism (Lather, 1991). In my work, I have understood this more as an opportunity to open-up research for deliberation. While not always possible or appropriate, there are moments where it can be meaningfully employed (Strand et al, 2003). As I detail below, I addressed this in different ways, including community-identified problems and community forums where these problems were fleshed out. What is important, however, is that participants decide on their own whether or not to “use ethnographic work as a resource… to clarify the basis of everyday life and [its] possibilities” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 199).

Third, the critical ethnographer must recognize that their work is "constituted and regulated through historical relations of power and existing material conditions" (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 197). Carspecken (1996) argues that critical ethnographers must recognize where they are in relation to the ideological and material conditions of others.

Critical research continues to problematize normative and universal claims in a way that does not permit them to be analyzed outside a politics of representation, divorced from the material conditions in which they are produced, or outside of a concern with the constitution of the subject in the very acts of reading and writing. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 300)
As it concerns my work, I entered the field with certain advantages. Being White, male, American and well-funded, I had social and material resources not available to many of the people I interviewed. This impacted data collection. In particular, when interviewing Blacks, there was often great hesitancy in speaking with me. Although gaining access was not difficult, given the extensive relationships established at the Facility, there was still much resistance to speak with me. When Mapule accompanied me on interviews, however, this typically disappeared. This will be discussed later in reference to my interview techniques and limitations of my study.

Methods

Sampling Criteria

The way one chooses to sample depends on the questions being asked and the purpose of the study (Patton, 1990). In most qualitative work, sample sizes tend to be small, and participants selected purposively (Patton, 1990). Merriam (1998) describes purposeful sampling as “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). My sampling strategy reflected this purposeful method. I focused upon those who had some knowledge of the Facility.

There are no fixed rules for how to establish upper and lower limits for sample size in ethnography. Instead, the goal is data saturation (Morse, 1994). Rather than the number of subjects, saturation refers to the amount of data collected (Morse, 1994) and the adequacy of this data to answer your questions. “Adequacy is attained when
sufficient data have been collected [so] that…variation is both accounted for and understood” (Morse, 1994, p. 230). In this study, I sampled until I began to hear repetition from multiple sources or support from other data (e.g., documents and observation). This is an issue of validity and addressed more extensively below. This is not to say, however, that alternative or non-standard cases were thrown out. While these were left unconfirmed (i.e., not triangulated through other interviews, documents or observation), they were important, alternative views, and taken into account during data analysis (i.e., often referred to as ‘negative cases’ c.f. Morse, 1994). When reporting my findings, however, I note these as being atypical.

To these ends, my goal was to identify participants who possessed rich information (Patton, 1990). I focused on two major participant groups: researchers and Greenveld residents. The former consisted of Facility researchers, Facility administrative staff, University researchers that had at one point worked at the Facility and University staff that had a direct role in administering the Facility. Among Greenveld residents, I included both those who held political office and those who did not. More detailed information about each participant is captured on Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

Criteria for sampling differed depending on the population being recruited. For researchers the criteria were (1) over the age of 18; (2) affiliated with the Facility; and (3) variation in age, sex, ethnicity, disciplinary affiliation, academic rank (junior lecturer to full professor). For Greenveld residents, criteria were similar: (1) over the age of 18; (2) exhibited knowledge of the Facility (e.g., knowledge of specific projects, people, mission, history of Facility); and (3) variation in age, sex and ethnicity. A point of clarification is necessary here in terms of ethnicity. Regarding researcher participants, it
was difficult to recruit Black researchers in the area, as there were very few. During my fieldwork, there were five Blacks conducting research, one being African-American. Regarding Greenveld participants, the area straddled the old borders of two apartheid homelands. As such, the Black population of Greenveld corresponded to two ethnic groups. More so, Facility projects were based in northern Greenveld, an area where one of these groups was predominate. As such, my interviews were predominately with this group (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2 for more specific participant descriptions)\textsuperscript{4}.

\textit{Sampling Strategies}

While what I have described above indicates general, qualitative sampling methods, my ethnographic approach was apparent. This was most visible in how I went about finding people with whom to speak. Patton (1990) indicates there are several ways to select participants, each depending on the purposes of the research and the questions being asked. Approaches can range from those focused on very specific, extreme cases to a widely focused, if not, random approach. Given my ethnographic approach, I was interested in speaking with people who had intimate knowledge of the Facility. Consistent with an ethnographic purpose of cultural interpretation, I wanted to understand the lived realities of community-based research; therefore, I wanted to speak with people who had some experience with the activities being conducted at the Facility. Patton (1990) describes this as the search for “information-rich key informants” (p. 176).

My critical approach also played a role in sampling strategy. I wanted to get at the decision-making structures that impacted how community-based research was

\textsuperscript{4} I have used pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dingane</td>
<td>25 year old mathematics teacher; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpho</td>
<td>42 year old English teacher, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kagiso</td>
<td>30 year old social studies teacher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sipho</td>
<td>20 year old; activist; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayize</td>
<td>19 year old; activist; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montsho</td>
<td>33 year old; activist; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vusimuzi</td>
<td>40 year old; unemployed laborer; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumelele</td>
<td>60 year old; unemployed laborer; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigidi</td>
<td>44 year old; community development worker; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkosi</td>
<td>48 year old; local politician and mathematics teacher; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themba</td>
<td>55 year old; local politician; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamuzu</td>
<td>40 year old; local politician; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sphiwe</td>
<td>38 year old; local politician; male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dikeledi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonceba</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mthuthuzeli</td>
<td>48 year old, unemployed laborer; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>58 year old, occupational therapist; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thandiwe</td>
<td>31 year old, unemployed laborer; male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Description of Greenveld Participants
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>36 year old, environmental scientist, male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>32 year old, healthcare researcher; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenda</td>
<td>44 year old; healthcare researcher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>43 year old; healthcare researcher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>63 year old; healthcare researcher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>27 year old; social science researcher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>34 year old; social science researcher; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomsa</td>
<td>41 year old; social science research assistant; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaco</td>
<td>31 year old; environmental scientist; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabulani</td>
<td>30 year old; environmental scientist; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>48 year old; social science researcher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumisai</td>
<td>42 year old; healthcare researcher; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effa</td>
<td>27 year old; healthcare researcher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>63 year old; environmental scientist; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>53 year old; social science researcher; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvie</td>
<td>41 year old; social science researcher; female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonas</td>
<td>45 year old; senior university administrator; male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugata</td>
<td>49 year old; social science researcher; male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Description of Facility participants
conducted at the Facility. I wanted to speak to people who could comment on the competing interests that affected community-based research practice, not just those that could describe the projects taking place in the area. Therefore, on Main campus and at the Facility, I spoke with both administrators and senior faculty. Along with these elite interviews, I was equally interested in those who were impacted by these decisions.

Prior to my departure, I set up one key interview with the senior executive in the Vice-Chancellor’s Office for External Relations. Roughly equivalent to American, Land Grant extension, this office was responsible for all of the University’s outreach initiatives, in particular the Facility. I wanted to conduct this interview first, because I viewed it as being particularly strategic. Being the lead administrator in charge of External Relations, this contact led me to numerous persons both on Main campus and at the Facility. It also gave me a level of credibility among local researchers, as he was notoriously difficult to reach. He provided numerous contacts around Main campus and at the Facility. On Main campus, his suggestions led me to interviews with faculty and staff in the Department of Atmospheric Science, Economics and Commerce, the School of Law and the university marketing office. At the Facility, he gave me names, email addresses and phone numbers of the research director and Facility administrator. While I had already spoken with the latter, using the Vice-Chancellor’s name provided some credibility and eased access to other strategic contexts. Patton (1990) describes this leveraging of contacts for other strategic contacts as a snowball, or chain, method of participant selection.
I continued these interviews in Greenveld. My time was evenly split speaking with residents of Greenveld and faculty/staff at the Facility. The Facility houses varying numbers of researchers throughout the year, from a variety of disciplines. During my three months, researchers came from departments of atmospheric science, ecology, political science, law, business, sociology, population studies, natural resource management and public health. As at The University, I used each interview as an opportunity to connect with other persons at the Facility. At the Facility, I interviewed the Facility director and 17 researchers.

Gaining access to Greenveld and then interviewing residents required more thought. I initially used my contacts at the Facility to access persons who had some intimate knowledge of the Facility. While this led me to several talkative and interesting persons, they were also unabashed fans of the Facility who had received assistance from researchers. In one case, Fiona was trained and given a job as an occupational therapist as a result of a public health project that trained community healthcare workers. Certainly, these are important persons to include. The Facility was not reviled in the area and to suggest otherwise would be erroneous. However, I wanted to be careful that these persons did not have a conflict-of-interest. That is, if they criticized the Facility, perhaps they would think the help would disappear. I learned quickly that those persons who perched on the edge of poverty often thought it best to not ‘rock the boat.’ For example, in my interview with Fiona, after being told of the many things that the Facility had done well, I asked if there were things she thought the Facility could do better or had forgotten. To this, I was met with “No, I don’t want to talk about the bad things.” For this reason, I found myself needing contacts that researcher-participants did not offer.
I turned to the local town government. My suspicion was that given the Facility’s 15-year involvement in the area, local politicians would have knowledge and opinions about their projects. I was correct and this led me to a wealth of contacts who offered frank opinions of the Facility. This is not to say that these were all critical. In many cases, these were glowing reviews. However, these were not the only opinions, something that I was afraid I would receive by only going through Facility channels.

Given my interest in speaking with people impacted by Facility projects, I met with people based upon their knowledge and/or involvement with the University’s outreach initiatives in general, and the Facility specifically. In Greenveld, I interviewed four local politicians and 14 community members. This included five women and 13 men from a variety of educational and economic backgrounds (e.g., teachers, community activists, and retrenched laborers).

Data Collection and Analysis

Observation

Spradley (1980) describes observation as the earliest stage of ethnographic data collection. The purpose, he maintains, is to provide descriptive detail of the context and the activities that take place there. Observational data helps the ethnographer understand tacit knowledge that people use to live their lives. These are the things that people know, but do not have the tools to express in language. Instead, they are expressed in behavior and artifacts (e.g., documents) (Spradley, 1980). Building upon this in critical ethnography, Carspecken (1996) adds that in addition to descriptive detail, observation
also offers an opportunity to upset *a priori* assumptions held prior to entering the field. Therefore, observation can also offer a useful moment of reflexivity.

Observation lasted the entirety of my five months. It began a means to establish context and interrogate my biases and assumptions. These early observational sessions occurred in highly trafficked, public spaces, including the Student Union on Main Campus, two informal markets and the taxi rank in Greenveld. These sessions averaged 45 minutes. My notes at this stage focused on broad observations such as the nature of activities, unexpected cultural issues that were apparent (i.e., communication style), and population make-up (i.e., racial mixing on campus). These were useful in upsetting *a priori* assumptions. For example, I assumed The University would be racially exclusive, given its history as a White, English-medium university. My first day of observation dispelled this, with Blacks, Indians, Coloureds and Afrikaners being well, if not more, represented than White, English-speakers.

As I became more comfortable and familiar with the context, I began to focus on situations that demanded more “focused” or “selective observations” (Spradely, 1980, p. 73). This occurred both at the Facility and in the wider community. Residences and research offices at the Facility were on the same site, which made observation convenient and less intrusive. I began observation immediately by attending daily teas. These occurred every weekday between 10:00am and 10:30am. Discussions ranged from the nuisance of monkeys getting into the garbage cans, to worries over funding, publications and project effectiveness. Additionally, every Friday there was an informal ‘pub’ where researchers would meet at someone’s cottage with beer and food. These sessions averaged three hours. Discussions were similar to the teas, wavering between the
personal and the professional. Both the teas and the ‘pubs’ offered insight into the
culture of the Facility and the behaviors of the researcher’s that would have been difficult
to obtain had I not lived on the premises.

I was able to observe the community in similar ways. I spent most afternoons in
Greenveld’s informal market, where women sold food, clothing and cigarettes. The
market was the center of activity. When not here, I was at the taxi rank, which was the
regional travel hub for Greenveld. My observations were first a means to collect
contextual data and to introduce myself to the community. In that I was unfamiliar to the
community, several researchers thought it was important and respectful that I spend time
in public spaces so people could get to know me. For the first month, I purchased and ate
my lunch in the Greenveld market. Over this hour, people would come up to talk to me,
ask me who I was, where I was from, what I was doing in Greenveld and what I was
writing in my book. While this never completely went away, I did start to attract less
attention as people grew to know me and what I was doing.

In each venue, note-taking began less focused. I would spend time describing
environments and contexts with, what Geertz (1973) calls, ‘thin description.’ As I
became more familiar with the area, I focused my observations and wrote more ‘thickly.’
In deciding the criteria for my note-taking, I have borrowed liberally from Spradely’s
(1980) ethnographic observation model. This model is focused on nine observational
criteria: space, object, act, activity, actor, event, time, goal and feeling. Spradely (1980)
combined these into a 9 x 9 matrix. I kept a copy of the matrix with me and tried to
address these issues in my field notes. The effort was to note both the discrete features of
each criterion but also how each interrelated. For example, at a local town meeting, I
asked myself “What are the major topics being addressed?”, followed by “Who are the actors in this meeting?” I then tried to relate each with, “What actors are involved with the topics being addressed?” Following this matrix was often too rigid for me and I deviated from it or did not address each criterion. Nevertheless, I used the matrix as both an observational tool and a reminder to thickly describe important situations.

Documents

No study of South Africa can escape an analysis of public policy. One need only look to the stacks of apartheid policy to see how documents capture powerful discourses, such as racism. In my fieldwork, I collected a variety of documents that detailed the life of community-based research.

While in Johannesburg, I collected documents at the university archives and the Government Documents Library, both on Main campus. Both offices hold a wealth of resources unavailable outside South Africa. The archivists opened their entire collection to me and I spent hours reconstructing an apartheid-era and post-apartheid University. In this study, I have used the following archived documents:

1. University Senate minutes: 2/95 through 7/95
2. The Extension of Universities Act

Current policy documents were also essential. Fortunately, many of these were available through the African National Congress website (www.anc.org.za). I used the following documents:

1. White Paper on Education 3
In addition to these sites on Main campus, at the Facility I had unfettered access to all internal memos, university-related policy, Facility policy and external reviews. I used the following Facility documents:

1. a Facility Planning committee meeting minutes
2. an internal review of the Facility
3. an external review of the Facility commissioned
4. internal memoranda

I analyzed these documents similarly as I did the interview transcripts. These documents were useful in “developing an understanding of the setting [and] group[s] studied” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 85). My focus was an examination of lived experience, therefore looking at what the policies say about the practice of research at the Facility. I used hand coding when reading these documents. Document codes related to the interview coding schemes in an effort to triangulate my assumptions (Hodder, 1994). However, new themes and codes also emerged.

*Interviews*

Interview data complemented document and observational data. I conducted 36 semi-structured interviews with 16 faculty members, two staff members, 14 residents and
four local politicians in Greenveld. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to three hours (See Appendices A & B). I conducted these interviews in a variety of different locations, including offices, parks, markets and by the side of the road. In these interviews, I asked a series of questions that focused on perceptions of community-based research and local development. In this sense, they were structured. However, I avoided one-way communication with the participant by leaving the questioning more open-ended. In doing so, the participant often meandered beyond the interview protocol. Fontana and Frey (2000) describe this as “the establishment of a human-to-human relation with the respondent and the desire to understand rather than explain” (p. 654). During the interview, the participant and I would speak about particular issues, however I depended on them to guide the interview, focusing on those issues that were of particular interest or relevance to them. This limited my tendency to anticipate answers and ask questions that elicited expected answers. That is, by having the participant authentically share in the dialogue buffered a priori assumptions. I tried to be aware that each participant had different information to share.

During my initial interviews, I often felt as if Black participants deferred to me. This was particularly apparent when speaking with poor, elderly, Blacks. In response, I asked Mapule to accompany me on all interviews with Blacks, so to diffuse this as much as possible. When I asked around at the Facility of a person fluent in the dominant languages in the area, I was told that Mapule would be well-prepared to help me. Being both well-educated and a life-long resident of Greenveld, she proved to be a fundamental addition to this study. When Mapule was present at interviews, I quickly noticed that participants felt more comfortable. She was able to communicate more clearly where I
was from and how I was not there to report them to any authority (i.e., the few whites in the area were either researchers or police). She explained informed consent (See Appendix C) and we would not begin until this was clearly understood and agreed upon.

All interviews were conducted in English. With White South Africans, this posed little problem. However, when speaking with Black South Africans, there were often communication difficulties. This was very evident in my initial interviews. My accent was often viewed as ‘thick,’ and often difficult to understand. This raised some concerns with me as far as data quality. By bringing Mapule along on all interviews, however, the quality of interviews increased. When either the participant or myself had difficulty understanding each other, Mapule would intercede and explain either my question or their response more clearly. In several cases, questions had to be repeated and rephrased to get at the information that I was interested in. Similarly, the participant often had to repeat or rephrase their response until I understood what they were saying. Discussed more in Chapter 5, this presents some limitations to this study, in terms of the quality of data collected.

Analysis

Carspecken (1996) suggests a three-stage method of data analysis for critical ethnography that I have largely followed, although often bouncing back and forth between the stages. The first stage is a reflexive one, where the researcher examines his/her monological data (i.e., early observations) so to fine tune subsequent data gathering. In this stage, the researcher suggests initial “cultural themes and system factors” (i.e., local specifics within wider social structures) that might not have been clear
before entering the field. This is not to suggest that once early observation is complete, reflexivity ends. Rather, I found myself constantly reflecting on what I read and saw in the field. While Carpsecken (1996) implies that reflection happens only in the beginning, I found it useful even at later stages of writing (Richardson, 1997).

The second stage focuses on a deeper articulation of these cultural themes and system relations. The goal here is to more deeply examine what is happening in the field through the collection of other data types. This involves reflecting upon earlier analyses (e.g., Stage One) and amending this through interview and documents data. Stage two is a period of intense immersion in the data that leads to tentative categories or codes that can be compared to each other, looking for points of convergence and divergence. This is the creation of coding frames, tools used to “organize the data and identify findings” (Berg, 1995, p. 188). In NUD*IST 6.0, the software used for my data analysis, these are known as free codes (Richards, 2002). I used free coding early in my analysis to establish a broad level of analysis. Following this, I become increasingly more specific, fine-tuning codes, adding new and more precise codes and then looking for how these may nest within each other, overlap or stand alone (Berg, 1995).

Carspecken (1996) describes the final analytical stage as placing the localized themes expressed in observational, document and interview data within existing macro-level social theories. At this stage, the researcher returns to his/her theoretical framework and locates the data collected in stage one and two within the larger societal structures. This is not to subsume ground-level data under macro-theory, but rather to read them dialectically, each informing the other and amending our knowledge of the other. In my case, I returned to the literature on community-based research. Discussed more in
chapter four, my experiences in the field expressed that community-based research was far more complex than often described in the literature. Issues of context (i.e., professional/academic pressures, regional politics, regional economics, regional culture) affected its practice and made it deviate from some theoretical ideal.

**Trustworthiness**

Where quantitative researchers speak of internal and external validity, ethnographers refer to trustworthiness. The two are fundamentally different but reflect a concern for rigor. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) suggest that trustworthiness should address the credibility of the researcher’s portrayals of participant stories. Where internal validity speaks of the accurate portrayal of some knowable reality, trustworthiness indicates that data is credible if they correspond to participants’ views of reality. In my work, this was achieved through member checking, where the participant works with the researcher to examine the transcript for consistency and representativeness (Janesick, 1994). After completing each interview, I asked the participant if they would like to read my transcription. Although not always taken, 18 of the participants did ask for review copies, which I provided soon after the interview. Furthermore, before beginning my interviews of Greenveld residents, I organized two peer debriefers to review my interview protocols. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe peer debriefing as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). I recruited two South Africans in the area who were involved with development work but not affiliated with the Facility to read my
interview protocols. In addition to helping me talk through much of the information that I was collecting while in the field, they helped to fine-tune the verbiage in my interview protocols, making sure non-native English speakers knew what I was asking. I address trustworthiness more below in reference to data/analysis dependability.

Critical work demands other avenues to establish trustworthiness. While member-checks or peer debriefing can be used to ensure reliable data, critical work assumes that the researcher operates inclusively and deliberatively with his/her participants. This participatory move helps rigor while also ‘giving back’ to the community. Lather (1991) describes this as reciprocity leading to validity. She urges “giving back to the respondents a picture of how the data are viewed, both to return something to research participants and to check descriptive and interpretive/analytical validity” (Lather, 1991, p. 57). I addressed this in two ways: co-authoring and data dissemination. First, given the close relationships formed while in-country, I have begun discussions with several Facility researchers about potential research paper collaborations. Three researchers expressed interest in a collaborative project that involved the creation of methodological rules for conducting research at the Facility. These discussions are on-going.

Second, before leaving Greenveld, I convened a meeting of faculty, staff and community members to discuss my initial findings. While the response was positive, the open forum that followed my presentation was more useful to the group and me. This meeting of 14 persons turned into a working group in which the ideas I presented were debated, hotly at times. I was told that while the information I presented was difficult to hear, it was nevertheless useful. In recent communication with the Facility, I was told
that in response to the meeting three projects have advertised for a community liaison. This person’s duties will be to educate the community about the realities of academic research (e.g., publishing pressures, grant restrictions), learn the community’s expectations for the Facility and disseminate data for community development. Finally, I have offered to send a draft of my findings to the Facility director and the Vice-Chancellor of External Relations at the University. Both men expressed that my study would be helpful in determining ways to assist the often-maligned Facility.

**Dependability**

My primary method of ensuring dependable data was by using an inquiry auditor (Janesick, 2000). An inquiry auditor was used to review my data collection methods, analysis and findings. Given the importance of context in my study, I recruited a graduate student who was also conducting research at the Facility, but not affiliated with the Facility. He was a senior graduate student in geography from Monash University in Australia and was familiar with community-based research methodologies. He agreed to read all my completed transcripts, in addition to those I completed after my return to the United States, via email. Furthermore, he, and a graduate student in Educational Policy at The Ohio State University, read my findings and analyses, making suggestions for improvement and noting when what I wrote conflicted with their knowledge of my topic, the field-site and the literature on community-based research and higher education policy.
Confirmability

Confirmability is used to ensure that the findings emerge from the data rather than my own bias. Both peer debriefing and inquiry audits helped to reduce the over-influence of my own experience. This being said, I recognized that I could not completely eliminate my own voice from these interpretations. As I have stated above, a subjectivist epistemology recognizes that knowledge is created through dialogue; it is transactional. I worked to interrogate my own voice in reflexive fieldnotes. While journaling, I paid careful attention to my assumptions, biases, motivations and gut feelings that occurred in the field and during analysis. In particular, my assumptions about different racial and ethnic groups were tested continually.

I often found myself receiving lessons on race relations from different South Africans that I met during my stay. Most typically, I was told to be careful around Blacks, as they were most often gangsters. Coloureds were described to me as drunks and addicts. During once such conversation with a man I met in a small town near Greenveld, I was told that Portuguese South Africans were also drunks. When I explained that I was Portuguese he laughed and said, “Yeah, you’re probably no better than a Coloured!”

While I worked to resist these stereotypes, I often found myself taking on certain postures around different groups. When in downtown (and predominately Black) Johannesburg, I realized that I became nervous when I was alone, no matter the time of day. I would clutch my wallet in my pocket and scan the alleys for potential muggers. When unlocking my car, I would hastily get in and lock the door to prevent the car-
jacking I heard was endemic to Johannesburg. Once, when a friend drove me into Johannesburg for an errand, I was getting into the passenger side while continuing our conversation. I lingered with the door open only to be interrupted with my friend yelling to me to get in the car and close the door. I must have looked shocked because he explained that it was far too dangerous in Johannesburg to sit on the street with an open car door. That, he explained, would have attracted car-jackers. I also realized that when speaking with Afrikaners, I often took on an antagonistic tone. This bias was rooted in having read and experienced much of what Afrikaner nationalism wrought on South Africa. It did, however, prevent effective communication, be it social or in formal interviews. My own reflexivity, and that provided by peer debriefers, was useful in making me aware of these biases.

Ethics of Critical Ethnographic Research

Using a critical approach presents its own, unique anxieties that dovetail with more traditional limitations of research. The first are issues of generalizability. I do not claim that my findings are generalizable to other contexts. My goal was not to produce findings that could be used across contexts. In fact, one of my points is to highlight the countervailing force(s) of context (e.g., local politics, culture and economics) in the practice and effectiveness of community-based research. This is not to suggest that my methods are not transferable. I believe my methodology and project idea could be applied in diverse contexts. My focus here is on the lived experiences of community-based research. I address this topic ethnographically with the hopes of pointing out best practices. A similar project could occur in other settings.
A concern unique to critical theory is that I operate paternally, doling out, perhaps, unwanted advice. In such a scenario, I enter the field with liberatory goals of social change and justice. However, if conducted without an authentic connection to the participants, my research becomes evangelical. That is, I come to enlighten people who are not asking and perhaps not needing change. Lather (1991) warns of just these tendencies when she argues that critical researchers often homogenize their subjects as only capable of realizing their oppression once enlightened by critical theory. Ironically, what is silent in these discussions is an acknowledgement of agency (Lather, 1991). While liberatory paradigms present a theory of action that is supposed to empower, they often fail to account for an already-existing empowerment.

While these tensions do not curse critical theory, they can influence its practice. In many ways, they provide a certain amount of welcomed trepidation. Such anxieties could lead to a self-reflexivity of one’s motives and practices. Lather (1991) argues that this is a deconstructive process that focuses on our theoretical perspective. While self-reflection and self-critique could lead to immobility (England, 1994), it could also provide opportunities to deepen our research and connections to participants (Lather, 1991).

This leads me to a final limitation: myself. For five months, I was embedded in a context very different from what I was used to. There are difficulties with cross-cultural work, primarily issues of foisting Eurocentric assumptions onto the research. Stanfield (1994) and Morgan (2003) have described this as the tendency among Western and Western-trained researchers not to consider how issues of ethnicity shape interpretations.
My positionality and training have had an influence on the study that some might feel are both offensive and analytically questionable. I acknowledge that my race, politics and personal experiences play a role here. They filter my perceptions of the field and my analysis of the data. I do not see these issues as cursing cross-cultural work, however. In fact, they could add to it if approached both reflectively and critically. Stanfield (1994) argues that qualitative work could learn much from critical approaches, particularly as it concerns calling into question the taken-for-granted issues of power and race. He advocates, instead, for “ethnic modeling” (p. 183), in which greater sensitivity towards social and cultural differences is incorporated into social research. While he is unclear about the specifics of ethnic modeling, what he does is raise how issues of reflexivity and open dialogue are important in cross-cultural research. Where the positivist scientist hides his/her voice, and the confessional ethnographer reifies it, I chose a more transactional model (i.e., corresponding to critical approaches), where the research was as open as appropriate (i.e., without putting others at risk).

Conclusion

As I finish this chapter, I am fixed upon the image of Mapule’s embarrassment as the elderly man asked me “How will your research help us?” Was she embarrassed of his reaction or of being associated with a ‘researcher’? While both scenarios are possible, the latter is more relevant here. How can we understand her embarrassment? In this chapter, I suggest that I did so using a critical ethnographic approach and with the help of the many persons in the field who fine-tuned my thinking. Expanded upon in Chapters Four and Five, university-community relations in Greenveld were messy. Like other
relationships, the two parties co-existed, but not always happily. My goal in the next chapter is to reveal the fine-grained details that allowed me to understand Mapule’s reaction.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the diverse experiences that Facility researchers and Greenveld residents had towards community-based research. Three primary research questions guided this study:

(1) How do academic research and community development interact?;

(2) What are the particular ways that context complicates this interaction?;

(3) What meaning does reciprocity have for researchers and participants? How is reciprocity practiced? How is reciprocity experienced?

I address these questions with the stories of two population groups: first university researchers and administrators, followed by Greenveld participants. I present their stories in two main categories that emerged from analysis of data: organizational culture, and perceptions of reciprocity and participation. Within these categories and several sub-categories, I have paid special attention to participant voices and data gleaned from observation and documents to express the thick description that produced these findings.

The findings are intertwined. Therefore, rather than present all the findings from researchers and then from residents, I present them in dialogue with each other. The
central themes concern perceptions of cooperation and perceptions of reciprocity. I first present the context of community-based research: the Greenveld municipality. I base this research on my belief that research, like other social activities, exists within a context. While community-based research is used to impact a context, it is simultaneously impacted by this context. Therefore, local politics, economics and culture form a stage where academic work is performed.

Greenveld, South Africa: The stage of practice

As quasi-autonomous countries, homelands, like Greenveld, were responsible for their own development. However, given their fragile economies (i.e., largely based on migrant labor and subsistence agriculture) and significant corruption, the homelands were not viable states (Thompson, 2001). With laws that forbade Black residency in South Africa, residents were forced into migrancy, often commuting 12 hours a day by train into White areas, or living in the urban township until their work contract expired. A 1967 Department of Bantu Administration and Development circular captures the State’s perception of African labor and residency.

It is accepted Government policy that the Bantu are only temporarily residents in the European areas of the Republic for as long as they offer their labour there. As soon as they become, for one reason or another, no longer fit for work or superfluous in the labour market, they are expected to return to their country of origin or territory of the national unit where they fit ethnically if they were not born and bred in their homeland.

The result was an elaborate and exhausting pattern of labor migration that continues today in all of South Africa’s former homelands, including Greenveld.

Given the bevy of laws that constrained work and residency options for Blacks, homelands like Greenveld became home to many migrant workers. Men would move to
urban areas, while their wives would remain in the homelands to care for children and farm their small plot of land. This pattern continues today. A local NGO maintains that as of 1998, around 50% of Greenveld men were currently long-term migrant workers. Men typically lived in Johannesburg, Witbank or Polokwane 8-11 months of the year, while women, children, the ill and elderly remained in the rural areas.

Despite this push to create a ‘little Europe,’ apartheid was rarely successful in achieving its theoretical goal of racial separation (Western, 1981). Greenveld’s ethnic composition captures this well. The small, White population is primarily Afrikaans-speaking. Rural Whites tend to be Afrikaners, a result of the Great Trek when Afrikaners fled British colonization in the mid 1800s (Christopher, 1994). There are pockets of English-heritage, Coloured and Indian South Africans in Greenveld, albeit only in small numbers. Over 98% of the population is of African heritage, most being Shangaan or Tsonga. According to the 2001 census, the estimated population of the Greenveld municipality was 704,823 persons and growing. A local NGO (no date) estimated that of the permanent population, the growth rate is 2.5% per year, higher than the national average of 2.1% and the global average of 1.4% (www.undp.org/hdr2003/indicator/indic_38_1_1.html). The population is young and female, women representing more than half the population and 44% under 15 years of age.

Greenveld is densely populated. Estimates in 1998 suggested there were 160 people per square kilometer, well above the provincial level of 40 and national level of 37 (local NGO report, n.d.). The average household size is 6.2 persons with some houses having more than 10. Houses are typically cinderblock structures with thatch or tin roofs. Most dwellings have one or two bedrooms and a small kitchen. Indoor plumbing is rare,
with the majority using pit latrines. Electricity is uncommon, most using kerosene, charcoal and wood for heating and cooking.

Education services in Greenveld correspond to conditions found elsewhere in the developing world (UNESCO, 2003). While over 90% of children attend primary school, only 46% move on to high school, 6% graduate and 3% move on to some post-secondary education. Around 65% of adults are literate, slightly higher for men. From my interviews and observations, schools were under-staffed, overcrowded and minimally serviced. In speaking about the school where he worked and where we conducted our interview, Nkosi said, “Just look at this school! We have no books, no electricity, no running water!” Aside from two technical schools, no higher education institutions existed in the area. This resulted in an internal brain drain, whereby those with or wanting education, left Greenveld for urban areas, usually Johannesburg.

Of people between 15 and 64 years of age, estimated unemployment was 60% (local NGO report, n.d.). While the informal sector is a significant source of income, it is difficult to quantify. However, when informal sector activities were taken into account, the unemployment rate was closer to 50% (local NGO report, n.d.). Regardless, income levels in the area were very low, something often commented upon during interviews with residents. In most cases, residents depended upon pensions from elderly family members, disability grants from injured workers or remittances sent home from a family member who had migrated for work.

These demographics reveal sizable development challenges. Greenveld was one of the poorest regions in one of the poorest provinces in the country. The average household income was R630 per month, well below the South African minimum living
level of R970\textsuperscript{5}. The region had few successful economic activities. A local NGO argued that the area’s most significant source of revenue was its migrant labor force who sent remittances back to their families.

This poverty was given a face for me one hot afternoon in Greenveld. Mapule and I were walking in a market when she waved over a woman she said was a high school friend. I knew Mapule was 28, so I was confused. This high-school friend appeared elderly. She began speaking to the frail, diminutive woman who limped beside us for five minutes and then left to rest under the shade of a tree. Mapule and I continued our walk and I asked her, “You went to school with her? She’s so much older than you.” “Daniel,” she said, “that’s not age, that’s poverty.”

Compounding these severe socio-economic conditions are HIV/AIDS and regional violence. Public health statistics suggest that 20-25\% of South African adults (i.e., aged 15-49) are infected with HIV, much higher when children are included (United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2003). Suspicions are that Greenveld has an 18\% infection rate, which is low compared to the rest of the country, but high when compared to the rest of the world (Freeman, 2002). Public health researchers argue that in Greenveld, HIV/AIDS will kill most people between the ages of 18-35. One study quoted residents whom stated that funerals in Greenveld were so common that the frequent processions were beginning to clog up roads and hamper business (Freeman, 2002).

On top of this is a history of regional violence. Prior to the 1994 elections, there

\textsuperscript{5} While I was in South Africa, the dollar traded at R8-10. In Greenveld, bread cost an average of R2 and milk was R4.
was rampant fighting throughout South Africa. Rural areas were particularly affected where support for the dominant African National Congress (ANC) was met with violent opposition from the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (Malan, 1991). While often described as Black-on-Black violence, it was widely known that the Nationalist government, in an effort to throw the pending democratic elections into chaos, was supporting Inkatha. In numerous villages, Inkatha hit squads used South African military weapons and training against ANC supporters. When the ANC retaliated, the result was five years of bloody, civil unrest. Estimates suggest that between 1989 and 1994 around 18,000 persons were killed because of this political violence (Thompson, 2001). The town of Greenveld was particularly hard hit.

This violence intersected my research in subtle ways, sometimes by interviewing perpetrators and victims of violence. One afternoon in Greenveld, Mapule and I arrived early for an interview I had arranged with a local government official named Kamuzu, a young and vibrant leader in the regional branch of the South African Communist Party. Since we were 15 minutes early, Mapule and I chatted about the violence I heard was so widespread in the area (Ramatsindela & Simon, 1998). She said, “I tell you Daniel, this place was dangerous. Even this man here (signals man walking through the door and whispers), that man used to necklace informers.” ‘Necklacing’ was a uniquely South African form of political violence used against persons accused of being government informants, often times members of Inkatha. The ‘necklace’ was a gasoline-filled tire that was forced over a person’s head and shoulders, pinning their arms. Unable to remove the tire, the individual was then set on fire and burned alive. The ‘necklace’ became a symbol for traitors of the anti-apartheid struggle (Krog, 2000). The man
Mapule pointed out came up to me several minutes later and introduced himself as Kamuzu. I shook his hand as he told me he was ready for our interview.

With these severe development challenges, such as high unemployment, regional violence and a looming health crisis, Greenveld could be seen as a difficult place to research. For some, however, this underdeveloped context made the area ripe for action-oriented projects. In the 1980s, when the apartheid government was at its most intransigent, the University became increasingly vocal in its critique of this regime. Out of this came the Facility. In the next section, I detail the tumultuous life of the Facility, expressing its origins as a radical response to apartheid, to its current reputation as ineffective and not rigorous.

History of the Facility: “A pioneering experiment in university-community interaction.”

Led by an energetic professor from the Department of Community Health, the Facility was designed as a center for community-based research. The University chose the site for two reasons. First, it allowed researchers easy access to rural populations that were, in general, under-researched (Facility report, 1993). Second, the severe development backlog in the area lent itself to community-based research. Given a history of apartheid uneven development (e.g., limited economic opportunities, poor infrastructure, lack of adequate healthcare) local communities were excited for its arrival (Facility report, 1993). The founders of the Facility argued, however, that their purpose was not just research. Instead, they wished to offer a tangible commitment from the University in addressing the mistakes of apartheid (Internal Facility memo, no date; Facility report, 1993). In these early years, Facility projects focused on the crumbling homeland health system. About their focus, one researcher said, “These were areas
crying out for action, especially in the form of good health-systems research” (Internal Facility memo, n.d.).

Between 1988 and 1994, the Facility operated in harmony with Main campus and the homeland government. Homeland governments, in particular, were thankful for the presence of South Africa’s leading research institution, as they had felt largely ignored by White South Africa. Yet, with the founding of the Facility, Greenveld became flooded with researchers. Within three years of its creation, the Facility had organized a committed group of scholars who worked to address development through an applied research focus. These early successes helped garner a number of grants from domestic and international donors. The Anglo-American Corporation, a South African philanthropic organization, offered an initial grant that allowed the University to purchase land and establish the necessary infrastructure. This was seed money that would last for five years and then was to decrease when additional grants were awarded.

The subsequent six years were a period of relative success. Facility research received praise throughout the University and the wider South African academy. The Facility began to attract more and more researchers during this time, peaking in the early 1990s at 120 resident academics. After a series of successful grant competitions, the Facility budget grew, most substantially through a multimillion Rand grant from the Dutch Foundation\(^6\). Alongside research were several well-publicized community service programs at the Facility. In 1991, the University newspaper focused on the Engineering Department’s contribution.

The Engineering Faculty of the University...are involved in projects at the Facility which bring them face-to-face with the conditions of rural life and challenges

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\(^6\) This is a pseudonym.
A University memo similarly lauded the Facility as “a pioneering experiment in university-community interaction” (internal University memo, 1999).

In 1994, the Dutch Foundation commissioned a progress report to examine how its money was being used. Because the Foundation was interested in community development, its reviewer was asked to examine the developmental impact of the Facility. The reviewer spent two weeks in and around Greenveld, conducting interviews and collecting socio-economic data. Unlike the praise the Facility had been accustomed to, however, the reviewer was critical. He argued that the Facility contributed little to the area and had done virtually nothing as it concerned local development. The reviewer spoke with several Greenveld residents whom stated that the Facility was not delivering on its promises: namely improved services. This reviewer argued the people of Greenveld had grown to feel exploited by Facility researchers and lied to about reciprocity. In his review, he presented the Facility as wholly disembedded from Greenveld. The response from the Dutch Foundation was to withdraw its funding and deny future grants until changes had been made at the organizational and wider, institutional-level. This lack of support reverberated through each of the Facility’s other funders, all either denying future funding or reducing their commitment.

With this lack of funding, the previous image of the Facility, as an innovative community development and research organization, came into question. Like its other

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7 This is a pseudonym as the document contains the name of the University.
funders, the University also reduced its commitment to the Facility. Senior administrators began to argue that the Facility was a drain on University resources and should be closed immediately. While many departments disagreed, a majority persuaded the administration to place the Facility under severe austerity measures (internal Facility memo, 1996). The result was to make the Facility self-supporting, forcing researchers to more actively seek external grants, rather than depend on the University subsidy. Additionally, the Facility would be marketed as a vacation destination. Being located in a former game reserve, there were many amenities Main campus believed could be used to their financial advantage. In response, the University released guidelines on how to administer the Facility as a business endeavor, rather than a research station (internal Facility memo, 1996). The University senate overwhelmingly adopted these guidelines that remain in effect today.

Facility researchers argued that this institutional change affected how they worked. Before the funding withdrawal, researchers viewed their work as a collaborative process with a coordinated focus on rural development. However, with the reduction of monies and general disparagement of their work, researchers felt themselves become more insular. According to a Facility strategic planning document, “projects became answerable to individual departments rather than previous collaborative structures. The ‘ethos’ of the Facility was lost.” These and other sentiments were revealed to me in my interviews with researchers and residents. In the next sections, I present results and analysis of the practice of community-based research.
Key Categories

The purpose of this section is to present the lived realities of community-based research. I present these perceptions with generous contributions from the participants themselves. I augment their stories with observational and document data that together helps present a thick description of community-based research in Greenveld. I present the findings in several key categories and related sub-categories. I first present findings about researcher perceptions of organizational culture. Within this section, are two sub-sections including: feelings of collegiality and perceptions about academics involved with social change. In the second category, I address issues of reciprocity and participation. I present researcher impressions first, followed by resident perceptions. I use this section to express the convergence and divergence researchers and residents had over the nature and purpose of community-based research. The third category is the Facility’s relationship to Main campus. Within this, I present three sub-categories including: location, administrative disinterest, and concerns over rigor and effectiveness. In each case, the categories and sub-categories work best dialectically. That is, these data are interactive, each informing and building on the other. Taken together, they work to present a fuller picture of community-based research at the Facility.

Organizational Culture

The contexts of practice can influence actual practice. This is not to suggest a deterministic relation or the dominance of one’s context over agency (Taylor, 1927). However, social relations do not exist within a vacuum, but interplay with a context. Many contextual factors influenced the practice of research. Some of these have already been addressed: regional violence and the often-overwhelming poverty. Just as this
regional culture affected the experience of community-based research, so too did the Facility’s organizational culture. In this section, I discuss how researchers perceived the Facility’s culture, and the way this perceived culture influenced their work and beliefs about their work.

Feelings of Collegiality: “An exciting intellectual community”

Of the 18 researchers interviewed, all expressed strong feelings of collegiality. Lawrence saw this as an issue of location. Lawrence was a senior professor in the Department of Atmospheric Sciences. Although he did not have an active research project at the Facility, he was its leading advocate on Main campus. He represented and supported the Facility at University Senate meetings and had taken on the unofficial role as Research Director at the Facility. He described the collegiality as the product of shared experiences of intellectuals living in a former apartheid homeland. “The Facility represents a sense of location, of space, where a number of multidisciplinary activities are involved and brought together because of that sense of place.” This tendency towards multidisciplinarity was expressed as a binding feature, rather than a centrifugal force that would fracture the Facility. Lawrence continued:

I strongly believe that there’s a very exciting intellectual community operating at [the Facility]. And it is my experience that, as a very interactive community, they benefit and stimulate one another through their close contact with multidisciplinarity and new ideas.

Charles echoed this notion of multidisciplinarity as a positive feature of the Facility’s work culture.

The academic environment here is very stimulating. It’s the mix of disciplines. There are a lot of interdisciplinary discussions, even if it is over a beer, not in some formal seminar. So I’d say it is a really rich environment.
These diverse departments did not always agree, theoretically or practically, about how work was to be done. That is, there were many different ideas about how development occurs, or even what it was. Charles told me that at the Facility there “are as many perspectives as there are people.” The Facility had researchers from the business school that viewed development as job creation and income generation. Those from the Department of Public Health viewed development as enabling the prevention of premature mortality. Still others felt that giving voice to marginal populations such as women, the disabled and refugees was the better path to social change. For Charles, these different perspectives were not a problem but rather a useful feature of Facility culture.

I don’t think our different scholarly backgrounds are ever a problem. I think the richness of ideas and approaches are a good thing. It stimulates dialogue. We try to organize seminars where these kinds of things are discussed and debated. I don’t think these opinions ever come into conflict. There’s quite a bit of synergy between our different approaches to development.

Charles added that within this diversity of opinion is a similar commitment to Greenveld. “We’re all tackling rural development just from very different angles. We complement each other.”

Both Lawrence and Charles told me about the collegiality among Facility researchers. Lawrence argued that there was a level of camaraderie at the Facility that was not present on Main campus.

The fact that they are small enough to meet each other regularly, there is a ferment of intellectual creativity there, which is lacking on Main campus where we are so caught up in our own department affairs that you barely see other people or know what is going on in other programs.

Charles also spoke positively about the collegial nature of life and living at the Facility. He had lived at the Facility since 1994, first as a graduate student and now as the leader
of ZA-ECO, a sustainable development research project. While he had seen projects come-and-go, he reflected on the supportive culture that drove work at the Facility.

We are seeing more collaborative work. This doesn’t always mean in big research projects, although there are some. But even with helping train each other’s students, sharing resources and simple things like sharing lifts to Jo’burg. Also finding out where other programs are working, what communities they’re working in, what problems they’re tackling and what ways we can tackle our problems in similar communities so it’s a cohesive action in a particular community. The refugee program is working closely with the health program. So, for example, which refugee communities are battling access to health services?

Glenda supported this idea of a Facility community. Glenda was a junior lecturer and researcher in the COT program, an occupational therapy training and research program. She had lived in Greenveld since the late 1980s. Although she felt collaboration had decreased, she believed the programs supported each other, both professionally and personally. She regarded ‘Pub Fridays’ as particularly important. On Pub Fridays, researchers would gather at a person’s house for a potluck dinner and drinks. Meals would last deep into the night with conversations meandering around work and pleasure.

About the friendliness at the Facility, Glenda said,

While we’re more separate now, we still work together. We have meetings and regular seminars. On a social level we have Pub Fridays. And if something affecting the Facility as a whole has to be done, we do it together. We’re all very supportive of each other, in terms of friendship, emotional support, sometimes resource sharing.

William echoed Glenda’s comments. The United Nations brought William to the Facility. A Canadian physician, he was dispatched to Greenveld to provide infectious disease expertise to a local hospital. Since then, he led a well-respected HIV/AIDS intervention project. He described how the vestiges of a more collaborative Facility remain.

I mean collaboration is nice but the eyes can glaze over if there is not mutual benefit. And I think there is still mutual interest and mutual benefit. You know, a
sharing of ideas, experiences. Like, what are people’s approaches to dealing with a problem? There are very few academic institutions on the African continent where you have a number of disciplinary fields working in one rural setting. They are usually based around one project. But to have everyone here, in one geographic location is very unique.

Sylvie argued that the diverse approaches captured at the Facility are its greatest strength. Sylvie was lecturer in the Law School, but specialized in Street Law. While she was now based on Main campus, this was a recent move. Prior to this she had led a well-received law clinic in Greenveld, where law students were brought to provide assistance to legal issues in Greenveld. Describing an experience with her law students, she solidified the idea that social research is difficult when only one discipline is used.

While the University really battles with this, I think [the Facility’s] energies are focused on multidisciplinarity. Let me give you an example why. Our law students had some encounters with medical students in the area last year and they were saying that they got asked not just medical problems but pension questions. So I was thinking, why can’t law students, commerce students and medical students go out and work in the same community? You can’t do anything by yourself.

Sylvie captures here the feeling of communality that pervaded the Facility. Being far removed from the comforts of urban life in Johannesburg or Cape Town, Facility researchers depended on each other, both intellectually and emotionally. The result was a tightly-knit group of researchers who shared a similar passion for development work.

*Academics in Social Change: “A real passion for making a difference”*

In addition to their collegiality, the Facility researchers also exhibited a commitment to social change. Beliefs about the relevancy and import of their research figure prominently in interviews. Many researchers spoke to me about how their personal commitments to social change helped define the ethos of the Facility. Joseph was particularly emphatic about having research be relevant. Joseph was a human rights
lawyer who came to Greenveld from his native Argentina three years earlier. Adding to his law degree with a Masters degree in Development Studies, he brought a wealth of experience to his research on refugees. About his and his colleagues’ commitment, he said, “I don’t think any of us would be here if we were just here without any responsibility, or just doing research.” For Lawrence, this was a culture supported at the institutional level. “I believe that the [Facility] has immense potential to contribute to the central function of the university in terms of teaching, research and community service, all three of which are required for the university in the South African context.” From banks to telecommunication companies, South African institutions were being required to make active efforts in addressing the legacy of apartheid. In the private sector, this was addressed through corporate social responsibility programs. In higher education, the focus was on relevant research and community engagement. Lawrence explained how the Facility fit into this post-apartheid higher education environment:

We can no longer be an Ivory Tower institution in the sense that we do blue-skies research and say that the problems of poverty and communicable diseases and the redress of historical imbalances aren’t our business. That’s a quick way to go out of business. Almost every institution is being required to participate in this massive social transformation that resulted from the overthrow of apartheid.

Social transformation was not easy, Lawrence maintained. However, he believed that the Facility could help. Referring to the 1994 election of Nelson Mandela and the end of apartheid, he said:

While 1994 was a glorious moment, we are now beginning to cope with the real issues of how we transform a society so that we don’t perpetuate this model of rich Whites and poor Blacks in perpetuity. The institutions are to use their resources in a creative and intelligent way to bring about some of these alterations. The university can do this in many ways, one of which is community service, through the unique opportunities that are presented by the [Facility], which has 15 year history of constructive engagement with the community.
External reviewers argued similarly. With the University interested in the effectiveness of service and rigor of scholarship, two senior academics came to Greenveld in 1999 for two months of evaluation. After the Dutch Foundation’s negative review, the Facility was eager for a more complimentary and supportive evaluation. While Lawrence spoke about the Facility’s role in national development, the reviewers localized this to Greenveld. Recognizing the severe development backlog that epitomizes the homelands, the author’s saw the Facility serving an essential function.

So great is the need in the area surrounding the [Facility], that there is ample room for academic interest [to be used] as a strategy to address the needs of some of the most deprived population groups in the region. It is clear that if [the University] wished to maintain its image of a caring institution, which reaches out to the wider community, some of its energies will of necessity have to be directed to the rural environment. What better vehicle to choose than the already firmly established and functional [Facility], which could well become a role model for other universities to follow? (internal University memo, 1999)

The Facility seemed to fulfill, or at least have the potential to fulfill an important role in making the University adhere to these post-apartheid sensibilities.

Several researchers relayed their commitment to social change in a more personal way. Charles described this with a story about a site visit by University of Virginia researchers.

We had a delegation from UVA come here recently and one of their researchers was saying that he was so thrilled with us. He said that [the Facility] reminded him of the 60s; you know, a group of academics that really felt they could make a difference and really trying to do something at the cold face. Everybody that’s been here, when they move on to other places, always refer back to their time here as affecting their career path.

Charles spoke with some authority about the Facility as life changing. He felt like a product of the Facility. In 1994, Charles was an ecology student who had come to the Facility to collect data in the nearby game reserves. His plan was to leverage this
experience to find work in South Africa’s premier reserve, the Kruger National Park. He expressed how this changed for him after studying and working at the Facility.

I just wanted to work in a game reserve. What turned that around for me was coming to [the Facility]. I came down here as a student and was exposed to so many things. We spoke to poachers, rural communities, conservationists and so many people with different perspectives. It just fascinated me how complex the problems were but how much promise there was to make a difference. Being based here, living at [the Facility], working in rural communities, gave me a real passion for wanting to make a difference.

He maintained that his experience was not an isolated example. The Facility, he argued, imprints a commitment to social change on a person. “The same thing happens to so many different types of people who pass through here as a student. It just sparks something.” He told me about Giacomo, an Italian investment banker from Milan who had accrued a year of vacation and decided to spend it at the Facility. Charles explained that Giacomo quickly became involved in many different aspects of Facility-life, from cleaning houses to data analysis. After this year, he returned to Milan, quit his banking job and started a new position in Oxfam, the emergency relief organization.

Like Charles, William also described his experience at the Facility as life-changing.

I spent my first year here training nurses, which gave me a really nice perspective of some of the…issues [in Greenveld]. I also did a lot of clinical work and got sick and tired of seeing another 18-year-old woman come in with a cough that wasn’t going away and being diagnosed with TB and then nothing happened. TB services were grossly underdeveloped. You couldn’t even get an HIV test! There were no prevention activities at all. [My program] came out of that and led to a flurry of fundraising.

William’s view of academic work and the Facility’s culture were rooted in an explicit, social change philosophy. He described his project to me as fundamentally about social transformation. “The way I approach research is as a tool for advocacy. I’m not a
proponent of science being an objective, value-neutral entity.” William went further than his colleagues at the Facility did, by naming his theoretical influence, one that supported his social change approach.

A lot of our education projects came out of a Freierian model. Our HIV education projects have a very soft and very gentle conscientization process. So by the nature of the questions we’re choosing to ask, we’re making political decisions. We see HIV as a broader social issue and not just a virus interacting with a T cell.

Others argued their commitment was more macro-political. Sylvie told me, “With the change of the government and the new constitution, it speaks about democracy. And I think the university should reflect that.” Barbara felt similarly that the Facility should reflect the wider political ethos of post-apartheid South Africa. Barbara was a research assistant in Joseph’s refugee research program. German by birth, she came to Greenveld because of her interests in human rights and refugees. Barbara addressed her commitment to social change in a similar, macro-political context.

South Africa is not going to work unless certain sectors of society that are predominately urban, well-educated look at places that have been historically disadvantaged. [Greenveld] is an extremely disadvantaged area and there must be a transfer. A real transfer.

Barbara echoed the redistributive and collaborative logic captured in the University Mission that states the University “has a distinctive capacity to contribute to the development of South Africa through research, social criticism, partnerships with the public and private sectors and the community” (University Mission, 2001).

Sylvie argued that the University mission talks about “creating democracy. And that means getting involved with communities.” The extent of involvement, however, was a matter of debate at the Facility. Some, like the above persons, believed that their role was as active citizens in community development. Therefore, concrete deliverables,
such as microfinance projects and physical therapy, were often prominent features of their projects. In contrast to Barbara, seven other researchers expressed that the Facility neither should, nor could, be actively involved in social change. This group argued that academics should focus more on what is traditionally ‘academic’, that is, basic research. However, there were nuances within this group that pointed to how, even in a push to produce basic science, communities played a role. I attend to these different views of reciprocity next.

Relationship to Main campus

Amidst these deliberations of research, participation and reciprocity, the Facility had to struggle with acceptance on Main campus. Three hundred miles away in Johannesburg, department chairs, administrators and senior faculty held considerable influence about how the Facility would be evaluated and funded. For Charles and others, these views reflected traditional (i.e., Mertonian), academic interests in research.

My program is primarily research-based, so I’ll be judged mainly on my publications and conferences I’ll attend. It’s also judged on my contribution to teaching and raising awareness of students in the department about natural resource issues and to a lesser degree by its contribution to the community.

As the next section reveals, relations between Main campus and the Facility were unfriendly and mutually derisive. On Main campus there was an assumption that Facility research was not rigorous and community service was ineffective. At the Facility, Main campus was seen as wholly unsupportive, which affected their ability to conduct community-based research.

While researchers had their own unique views of what it meant to practice community-based work, there were also complicating, contextual factors that influenced
their work. I have addressed some of these in reference to a problematic regional context that often dissuaded researchers from working in Greenveld. The relationship between the Facility and Main campus was a further complicating, contextual factor. Researchers described the relationship as precarious and not supportive of their work. After a series of negative reviews, the Facility’s reputation on Main campus suffered. In this section, I use researcher’s stories about how this affected their work.

Location. Early in this chapter, I expressed how the context of Greenveld often dissuaded researchers from working at the Facility. Greenveld was seen as difficult place to work. For some this was due to the popular belief that the University was an urban university. Richard described this as urban bias. “The University is seen as an urban place. Rural issues are not a big thing here.” He believed that to make rural issues more of a priority would require a cultural change at the University and this would be difficult. “I think it is sort of a dream for [the University] to be involved more in both rural and urban issues. It’s going to be really difficult though.”

While the lack of interest in rural issues was one disincentive for working at the Facility, there were other, more pressing concerns. One was safety. Because of the real and perceived violence in the area, there was a palpable sense of unease in Greenveld. This affected how research was conducted at the Facility.

The Facility was on a remote road that saw little nighttime traffic. A gate had been installed and a security company hired to monitor who entered and left the Facility. One evening, Vusi, the security manager, was on duty and was surprised to see Steven’s green sedan pull up to the gate. Steven was a Facility researcher who always chatted
with Vusi before heading down to his office. Vusi did not know, however, that three miles up the road Steven had been carjacked.

As Vusi came closer he realized that this was Steven’s car, but inside were four men in masks: two with metal pipes and the other two with guns. The men got out of the car, beat Vusi, stuffed a rag in his mouth and bound him with fencing wire. When he struggled, he was pistol-whipped in the forehead. Vusi told me, “I was scared because one of the men had a gun to my head and told me he would kill me if I moved.” The men opened the gate and drove down the dark, sand road until they made it to the Facility offices. The only person awake was the office manager, Khorombi. Looking through his window, he saw Steven’s car pull up and went outside to greet his friend. He was met with a similar beating. After the men bound and gagged him, they took his keys and placed him in the trunk of the car. The four men went through the Facility and took as many computers as would fit into the car. They left the Facility and dumped Khorombi in a squatter camp five miles away.

Two years later, Vusi spoke to me about this incident while he traced the scar on his forehead with his finger. I had recently arrived at the Facility and was nervous about doing research in such a tense field site. After hearing Vusi’s story, I doubted I made a good choice. “You need to be careful my mate,” Vusi said. I realized that he told me the story for that reason: to caution me.

Charles was not deterred by the local violence but spoke about life in Greenveld somewhat cautiously.

I guess it’s dangerous. But I think it might be exaggerated by some people. I mean, look, there are some dangerous spots along the road. Right here (pointing to a road map), near this village, a White motorist was driving and hit a boy who
ran into the road. The guy pulled over to see what happened and realized he killed the child. Within no time he was surrounded by a group of men and beaten to death with stones and sticks.

Richard was worried about sending his students to the Facility because of the local violence.

Our most common problem is the ability to deliver some of the basics, such as safety. We send [students] into [Greenveld], which was a violent place. And then we ask them to walk around there and ask questions?! That’s not very wise.

Be it the history of regional violence or the severe underdevelopment, the area could feel intimidating and discouraging. Charles argued,

I think you have to be very realistic when you come to work down here because you could have very romantic ideas. You know, live in the bush; a lovely, rustic way of life; work in rural communities; help people. All very idealistic. Living and working down here is very rewarding but it’s not easy. Like this morning, we had no electricity for three hours; email connection is a nightmare; and working with rural communities is not always easy because they’re made of diverse people and there’re internal politics.

Having lived at the Facility for five years, William had experienced the difficulty of attracting people to work at the Facility. He echoed how the area can be intimidating to researchers. When I asked him about opportunities for other research projects in the area, he said,

There’re hundreds! Just choose. When you walk around the area, there’s so much needed: water, sanitation, health issues, training capacity. The list goes on and on. The trick is actually trying to get [academics] to come out here.

The Facility’s actual location was also seen to discourage more people from using it. Richard spoke how junior researchers in his department did not enjoy going out to Greenveld.

It’s very far away. For their first couple years, our youngest staff members are quite comfortable spending a week or more every year at the Facility. After a few
times, though, it begins to pale. They’re not so keen about it anymore. I imagine people just don’t want to sink themselves in [at the Facility]. There’s the danger that one gets involved and then has to go out to the Facility. Rural life is fun, but just for a short time.

The 300 miles that separated the Facility and the University discouraged people from coming out to conduct research. For Sylvie, the distance became cost-prohibitive for her small Street Law program, a modest division within the Law School. She said,

> It costs a lot to use it. I mean we used to run a law clinic out there but it cost too much. The costs of traveling out there, taking students there, you need personnel. Students are very costly. You are there for a week. You’re dealing with like a hundred people. It was a logistic nightmare.

She told me that because of the expenses and general administrative headaches associated with Facility work, she discontinued the program.

> While distance was a disincentive for researchers and students, Lawrence maintained the same was true for administrators. For him, the physical distance of the Facility from Main campus made it easy to ignore. He said, “It is some 500 kilometers away from campus, so it is relatively isolated from mainstream activities. Because of this distance from central power, it is out of sight and, largely, out of mind.” The result had been very few site visits by administrators or senior faculty. Lawrence spoke about this problem while expressing some contempt for university executives.

> Quite frankly, the senior executives of the university have not properly been out to the [Facility]. Apparently, they came down last year for half-a-day because there was some important function at the community health program. They had some important visitor from abroad, so quickly the VIPs from the university barged down there to be a part of the process.

Lawrence maintained that this lack of firsthand experience or knowledge about the Facility had led to their neglect. He continued:

> The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellors have never been down there. It’s not surprising that they don’t appreciate what is going on [at the Facility]. It’s
neither positive nor negative. They just don’t know, and, much to my annoyance, taken the trouble to actually go and see what is happening and to make a judgment for themselves. They go and sit in Senate and want a committee make a judgment based on pieces of paper, never having actually walked around.

The Facility location therefore played a significant role in the lives of researchers. For many, this was seen more personally than professionally. That is, researchers expressed feeling fearful of the violence in the area. As well, many argued that they felt isolated when based at the Facility. In that Greenveld was profoundly resource-starved, there were few amenities that characterize the larger urban or tourist areas of South Africa. This sense of isolation also was expressed as a product of Main campus indifference to the Facility. As the next section reveals, many believed that if senior administrators would take a bigger interest in Facility research, then perhaps things may improve.

*Administrative disinterest: “A dangerous disease called administratium.”*

University executives’ perceived lack of interest was met with both concern and contempt at the Facility. Lawrence expressed frustration at the manner senior university executives had treated the Facility. More so, he was shocked at how lightly administrators viewed their responsibilities.

This lack of support was endemic to the University’s administration. Lawrence maintained that while administrators performed their work with the best intentions of maintaining contact with the college community, there was a tendency to contract “a dangerous disease called *administratium.*”

They all maintained that they would do ‘walk around management’. The Vice-Chancellor promised to move his office from the 11th floor down to the ground floor to be in an open space and be accessible. But within six months he was holed up in glorious isolation! It is a universal condition that administrators tend
to become so engulfed in their own responsibilities that they lose touch, and spend less and less time outside committee meetings or going around and seeing what’s happening.

The problem, Lawrence felt, was that this lack of contact had allowed the Facility to be ignored.

They rely more on the reports of formal structures, of committees and indirect reports. I believe that if they’d only open their eyes and get down there and interact with the [Facility] they would see that there is a very exciting intellectual community operating [there].

Because of this lack of information, Lawrence believed that people on Main campus were not able to understand the value of the Facility. For him, this was something endemic on Main campus, not only with administrators, but also other academics.

There is a ferment of intellectual creativity there, which is lacking on Main campus where we are so caught up in our own departmental affairs that you barely see people and don’t know what is going on in other programs. People don’t go to each other’s seminars because of the glorious opportunity of being an intellectual! We tend to be isolationists. And that is also a problem with administration. We lose touch with the intellectual excitement, because we are so obsessed with the administrative tasks. It is a failure of the human condition. I believe that if they’d expose themselves to it for a few days they would be better off. They would be far more persuaded that [the Facility] is a really worthwhile place. It is really adding value to the intellectual community.

While the Facility had faced many obstacles to acceptance on Main campus, Charles maintained that this was not new. The Facility had never been welcomed into the wider university structure. The Facility began as the idea of one researcher in the Department of Public Health. When he proposed coming to Greenveld, he was immediately met with opposition on Main campus. Charles said,

I don’t think there was direct pressure from the University to discontinue what he was doing, but I don’t think he had much support. He really had to fight some odds. There were some people on campus that viewed [the Facility] as his own little, rural empire.” This lack of support has continued and, as Charles maintains, affects work at the Facility. “He had to fight so hard even to get recognition from
the university of the legitimacy of what he was doing here, so to get financial support. It is still an on-going headache for us here.

On Main campus, many of these funding decisions were based upon a perception that the work conducted at the Facility, both its community service and research, were ineffective and lacking rigor, respectively. The material result of this was a reduction in grant monies and its university subsidy. Lawrence spoke passionately about the lack of financial support that continued to plague the Facility. For him, the stipend was sorely inadequate but was nevertheless symbolic of Main campus’s negative opinion of the Facility. “It receives a small grant from central headquarters but the Facility is almost resented for it. It is regarded as a problem and a drain on finances by senior administration.”

The contempt felt for the Facility took shape in many debates in Faculty Senate. Lawrence took up the cause of supporting the Facility, and therefore, was able to experience the resentment firsthand. “The senate resented them because the only time [the Facility] came up was on an annual basis for financial support or appealing for its survival.” Most believed that the Facility was intended to be minimally subsidized and required to become fully self-sufficient. When land was purchased and the Facility was being organized, a contract was signed whereby the Anglo-American Corporation provided a five-year grant. This was seed money whereby within the five-year period the Facility was expected to attract enough funding that Anglo-American could begin to decrease its contribution. Lawrence agreed with this original idea. “They did not want to be continually supporting it. It is a perfectly normal thing that foundations want to give grants, but they should not create an entity that is permanently dependent on aid for its survival.”
He had suspicions on how this could have been avoided but was not.

The idea is that you ought to establish a facility, but thereafter, through bench fees and earner income, or publication credits, whatever, it should generate enough activity to justify its own existence. But, it went through a very troubled history of never quite making that level of viability.

The result was a series of missed payments, extensions and requests for further funding to both Main campus and foundations. With this came increased suspicion that the Facility was a losing venture and should be eliminated. About his experiences in Senate,

Lawrence said,

It was debated endlessly in Senate as to whether they should be given this subsidy. Many resented it. At one stage they proposed giving them a sum of money that was just sufficient to keep them going for another three years. I was on Senate then and I remember standing up and saying ‘If that is what you are going to do, rather close them down now. You are giving them just enough money to survive then fail. If you want to support what this Facility can and should be doing then give them enough money to do it properly and succeed, not just enough to fail.’ They gave them just enough to fail.

The subsidy, therefore, was seen as wholly inadequate for what was needed at the Facility. Lawrence continued:

The money has been extended to the Facility in a very judging fashion. They have been on a fixed budget for four years without an inflation-related escalation. They have been told ‘You know, you really need to pay that bill yourself.’ But there are different costs there. You need someone to grade the dirt road, someone must inspect the fence.

More so, Lawrence said it was unfair treatment.

Just because this land is some 500 kilometers from Main campus doesn’t mean that it gets to go off the budget. You know, the main fence around here is paid by the central pool. So in my opinion, the Facility is owned by the university and should be maintained by the university through central budget as long as it is contributing to the main mission of research, teaching and community service.

The lack of solvency at the Facility affected work-life. Charles felt the decrease of funds had directly impacted his life. In 2000, the Vice-Chancellor strongly urged him
to take on the role of ‘research coordinator’ with duties to bring the programs into better communication and market their work on Main campus. He was never happy about this role, however. He argued that it was so poorly funded that he felt he could not be very effective. He had been told to devote a fifth of his time to general administrative duties.

As research coordinator I am at a 20% post. That’s one day a week. There’s only so much one can get accomplished, especially when I don’t have a budget to do anything. I can’t call [Main campus] or travel there. The Facility has to subsidize all of that I guess it’s a first step from them, but it’s inadequate.

For those affiliated with the Facility, the lack of solvency created a different organization. Between 1989 and 1994, the Facility much more collaboratively with projects focused on a coordinated, rural development program. However, with the withdrawal and reduction of funds, activities and internal cohesion began to dwindle.

William spoke about this impact this funding withdrawal had on the Facility.

The [Facility] was very much founded on the premise that [the University] needed to make a serious contribution in the context of community development in a historically-disadvantaged area. So at one-point it was seen as this organized, academic, connected program that worked in the community in a collaborative way. It used to have a strong institutional structure. But around five years ago there was a major funding withdrawal and a lack of support on main campus.

Glenda spoke with some contempt about the financial relationship that had formed between Main campus and the Facility. She felt that despite the little they received from Main campus, they and other programs had to return much of that money in return for university services, services she felt were superfluous. Speaking about how her program was funded she said, “We receive no money from [the University]. We’re just administered by them. We actually pay [Main campus] 15% of our budget to do this! Most of our funding comes through the provincial government. We also get some from another foundation but they are winding that money down.” While other programs had
broken off from the University, they had chosen not to as they were considered lecturers in the Department of Occupational Therapy. More so, as they offered a certificate program to their students, they had to maintain their affiliation to the University in order to be able to offer this service. Nevertheless, Glenda doubted whether the relationship was fair.

Our own salaries come from funds raised by our director. That money goes to [Main campus] who administers the money. So that 15% we pay is for personnel stuff. Also, the diploma that we offer goes through the university. So it makes sense that we are part of it. But I have to say, that it makes me very cross that we don’t get anything from the university.

Lawrence felt that this lack of financial support from main campus impacted how work was conducted at the Facility, namely that it prevented different programs from extending themselves more into the community. Lawrence was amazed that the different programs could do as much as they could on such small budgets.

The tragedy of the whole thing is that they only receive a paltry sum of 600,000 Rand a year, which is for research budgets and all operations. The fact that they can engage intellectually with the hard issues of poverty, disease and deprivation makes you realize that there is real work being done out there and that intellectual resources can address these problems. But 600,000 Rand?! Honestly!

In recent communications with the Facility, I learned that since my departure the COT program was forced to close due to lack of funds.

Rigor and relevancy. There was a range of beliefs on Main campus about how research and community service were conducted at the Facility. Jonas explained that as the senior administrator, he knew these the conflicting views only too well.

There is a fair amount of resistance to outreach from the faculty. They ask me, ‘How is this going to be done? With what funding?’ They see it as an add-on. So, we need to find a way of integrating outreach with the blue-skies research that is so important to our university. Faculty don’t think they can co-exist, blue sky
research and the practical outreach research. For me, I think it could work, it will just be incredibly hard work. And we will work hard for it.

As Jonas implies, he and the Facility faced considerable pressure on campus. Particular criticism was aimed at concerns over the quality of research and community service. Concerns about the rigor of community-based research were a battle many Facility researchers were used to. Nevertheless, they had not proven to be especially effective in winning these arguments. Instead, the studies conducted at the Facility often faced very harsh criticism on main campus. Unfortunately, for the Facility, this criticism was often at the hands of senior academics who wielded significant decision-making power on campus.

Charles felt that the exposures to the real-world provided great intellectual rewards. For him, the result was a more grounded researcher that understood better the realities of development work. “It is not just some esoteric, academic debate,” he told me. Nevertheless, Charles maintained that this interest in the realities of development was seen as not rigorous in some sectors of the University.

Being here gives you exposure to real life situations. But, this does, in some regard, disadvantage [us] in the eyes of senior academics at main campus because then you are seen as a backyard practitioner. You’re not dealing with hardcore sciences.

The impression, therefore, was that a community-based methodology was flawed. Sylvie told me that she did not feel supported for her community-based research but continued to do it anyway. “I mean it’s what I do. And I’ll continue to do it. But is it supported? No. It’s still seen as on the fuzzy side. Fuzzy-wuzzy Sylvie.” Likewise, Audrey described the general lack of support for her service-learning program. While very popular among
students and her department chair, as evidenced by our interview, she felt that she was breaking certain academic norms.

There were only one or two people in my school that were interested. The majority of academics in my school, don’t think that service-learning has anything to do with academia. [They think] that development is not academically rigorous. A lot of them believe in their heart-of-hearts that they don’t believe in it. Some of them actively don’t support it.

Her department chair, Richard, felt very differently. Whereas many of her colleagues did not support her work at the Facility, Richard actively supported her service-learning courses as both a teaching innovation and an avenue for pedagogical research.

There is quite a lot of research output directly as a result of her projects. [Audrey] and some others have sent in articles to education journals, have presented papers at education-minded conferences. So there’s been a direct research output because we are engaged in, shall we say, a cutting edge area of education.

He did not view Audrey’s projects as just a quick-fix to social pressures for increased community engagement. Rather, he saw great academic merit to service-learning and believed that it was propelling his department into a new ‘cutting edge’ area of research.

He became excited as he told me about other potential benefits to his department.

We’d also like there to be other research opportunities in the sense that we offer courses in entrepreneurship. We’d like our staff members to find materials for research in that. That is happening right now to a small extent. But at least our people are becoming interested in small business issues, and rural small business issues. So it is filtering across our department at the moment. Not very quickly, but I wouldn’t expect that. I expect it more to happen in an osmosis way. So, yes, her works certainly has provided additional interests and experiences to our staff.

He was, however, less certain about her contribution to local development. Richard argued academics had to be careful just how far the university extended into the community. For him, there was a point where service could be mutually destructive to both the University and the community.
Whether we could run a development program from an organization such as [the Facility], I’m very doubtful. Development projects are difficult to run and success factors are very elusive. If there was a development project that was run as a [Facility] project, a road-building project out of Civil Engineering for example, I suppose they could get together and run a project. But I think this is quite pie-in-the-sky. I think our ability to run a project like that, to get the commitment, to get the various role players involved, spending time on it, dealing with the inevitable turnover of students. I think that is a tough one. I would be very reluctant to take any of that on.

Sylvie believed that the reason the University did not contribute more to direct service was a timid administration.

It’s very difficult to teach people that have been involved in universities for years and years to now change their focus. I mean, because there’s a difference. It used to be all about experts in research and now suddenly we want to work in the community?! That makes them think we are becoming a parastatal. Which we are not!

She went on to say that the University’s recalcitrance was outmoded. As a Law lecturer, she appealed to the constitution to make her point.

With the change of government and the new [post-apartheid] constitution, it speaks about democracy. The university should reflect that all around. I believe the university must live with the times. You can’t do what you used to do.

She ended by expressing disdain for a common theme among University administrators: excellence. Sylvie felt that Main campus operated under a shallow understanding of excellence. She believed that the tacit definition of excellence was basic research. She believed that the definition should be broadened and if that was done, then the Facility could be seen differently. More so, she believed Main campus needed to think critically about what was considered ‘excellent,’ because for her, this did not just include basic research. “[Administrators] talk about excellence, but excellence should encompass everything. It needs to expand. Because gone are the days when you could sit and study the life cycle of the snail!”
Despite Sylvie and others, Facility research was scrutinized by two, competing critiques. One argued that Facility research was not rigorous. As Charles said, they were seen as “backyard practitioners.” Sylvie suggested that she was seen as “fuzzy-wuzzy Sylvie” because of her community-based methods. The second critique suggested that the services they offered were ineffective. This resulted in a certain amount of reciprocated contempt among Facility researchers, aimed back at the University. As Glenda expressed, she felt “cross” with Main campus. While some continued their work amid mutual resentment and icy relations, others chose to sever ties with the University altogether. Doing so, they believed, would free them from University scrutiny of their scholarship, service and budgets. In return, they could focus on what they or the community deemed valuable. The SA-H2O program had done just that: reorganizing themselves in 1995 as a community-based NGO.

Among its diverse projects, SA-H2O’s primary focus was the management of water resources in the drought-stricken Greenveld municipality. A major focus was in the education of the newly formed, regional Water Boards. Consisting of elected officials from around the area, the Water Boards were working to develop a post-apartheid water policy. During apartheid, the homelands were responsible for providing their own services, including potable water. Given the state of underdevelopment in which most homelands found themselves, rivers and watersheds typically ran dry. Complicating this was the geography of Greenveld. With the post-apartheid change of borders, Greenveld became an amalgam of two former homelands and thus two separate water infrastructures. The result was a disconnected system, in terms of policy and pipes, which could not deliver potable water. A five-year drought made the water problems
even more dramatic. The SA-H2O project focused on coordinating the systems and creating effective and sustainable water delivery.

Its Principal Investigator, Claire, originally started the project as a university-affiliated project out of the Department of Natural Resource Management. During her time as the PI, however, she grew exceedingly frustrated with Main campus directing her work and project deliverables. About Claire’s growing animosity to Main campus, Charles said,

We’re always walking this tightrope here of academics and development. That’s why [SA-H2O] decided to cut its ties with the university and gets its own funding. They became a development NGO and they don’t do any student training. They do research, but only on the development work they are doing.

As Charles mentioned, the outcomes of the SA-H2O project were both research and service. The program had a division of labor whereby certain people focused on service and others on research. Sharon and two assistants were primarily research-focused, yet research on the local watershed. The service portion of the project was Jaco and Jabulani’s responsibility.

Jaco and Jabulani were in SA-H2O’s education office. The education division came out of a two-year feasibility study that SA-H2O conducted in Greenveld. Jaco explained to me that the study ended with several recommendations for further action. One of these was an education office. Jaco said,

It was a public awareness campaign about water use. That was one of the recommendations. And training in water allocation. So my job when I got here was to put this campaign into action. But, that being said, we have a very responsive approach. People have very specific needs. You just don’t land in and tell them ‘Here is the starting point!’ So we check and see, like, ‘where are you really having problems?’ And then we develop some education and training around those issues.
SA-H2O used a participatory model, working with local water boards to develop a sustainable water management system. As they revealed to me, their project was very focused on local participation. Jabulani defined their level of participation as “working with community structures like ward councilors, water affairs committees and local communities around the area. We’re looking, eventually, to expand it to even more communities.” Jaco described this as an effort to “tease out new and novel ways of managing water” and to “improve competence and capacity-building to implement an integrated natural resource, specifically water, management facility.”

They had organized teams of local people into what Jaco described as a “multi-stakeholder platform.” When I pressed Jaco about the specific communities where their project focused, he stopped me to emphasize how their work crossed communities. “Look, this is water! It’s more than just the [immediate] community. It’s absolutely everybody that lives in the catchment. It’s about 400,000 people.” He went on to question the very notion of ‘community’ and how they worked across a variety of scales.

We don’t work with, what you may call the *(uses air quotes)* community anymore. We’ve been trying to think about what that even is. Community hides so many different things. It’s really difficult to use as a concept. It’s been bandied about for too many years. It’s been used to encompass everybody and everything. We actually work with social structures. So in the different villages, the structures in the villages, which are very clear. There area water committees in the villages. There are development committees.

While SA-H2O had severed its relationship with the Facility several years before, there was no animosity. Claire, Jaco and Jabulani had both personal and professional relationships with the other researchers. Jabulani believed that the Facility as a whole offered a substantial contribution to the area. “Something like this doesn’t exist in other
areas. I think it really helps with policy formulation.” Jaco added to this saying that the Facility is context-specific, and thus wholly relevant.

I think it has made a tremendous contribution. There is a real impact of this research because it is grounded in an African context. You won’t find this in Eurocentric, academic-based institutions. This is really where things are being tested on the ground. Loads of things that are really African based. If you ignore this context you end up with stuff that is flawed, without relevance. If you look at what is being look at here, it is all about this area. And this is where the majority of South Africans live, the rural areas. You have some people that have an urban bias. That is where some people want to focus. But [the University] represents a lot more than that.

Jaco’s words complement what others said about the Facility and its researchers being focused on reciprocity and participation. For Sylvie, William, Joseph, Barbara, Glenda and Sarah, this took the form of direct service to Greenveld’s villages and towns. Other researchers, such as Charles, Lawrence, Richard, and Audrey, viewed this type of service as less a priority, and more an important spin-off of their research. For this group, reciprocity occupied a more secondary role, under research. SA-H2O, in contrast, represented an alternative to Facility projects. By severing its relationship with the University, Claire, Jaco and Jabulani were able to limit one side of the pressure placed on Facility researchers, that coming from Main campus. While they still strived for relevancy, they were able to devote significant energies here and had, as many Greenveld residents expressed, become seen as very important and respected.

*Perceptions of Reciprocity and Participation*

Towards the end of my fieldwork, I organized a meeting to present preliminary findings to the Facility. I had spent the previous three months speaking with Greenveld residents, so Facility researchers were eager to hear community reactions to their projects. I struggled about what to include in the presentation, as there was as much
negative response as positive. I decided to present the full scope of the data. When
detailing the many positive comments, researchers appeared comfortable, many smiling,
laughing and seeming quite relaxed. When the discussion turned to negative comments,
the audience became tense and less friendly towards each other and me. I was interrupted
three times and asked about my methods, research questions and sampling techniques,
something that did not occur when detailing the positive comments.

At the end of the presentation, the floor was opened for questions. It became
obvious that there were differences of opinion concerning reciprocity. At one extreme
were those who viewed the Facility as a research station, an outpost of the University and
thus in the business of knowledge creation first, and community service second. Of the
15 persons at the meeting, eight expressed some agreement with this view. During my
presentation, I expressed how many residents expressed to me that they wanted more
concrete deliverables from the Facility. To this, Sugata, the Facility Manager raised his
voice to say, “Listen, what they are asking for is just not possible or what a university
does! We’re a research institution.” Others, more interested in direct service, spoke up,
saying that pure research was not appropriate. For Effa, it was an issue of obligation and
courtesy.

Look, we get this valuable information that some us, not me anyway, but some of
us get recognized for. Some get a lot of money from it; attract funding; go on
with their studies. People come and get their Ph.Ds. They collect data and then
go. What do we give to communities as a token of thanks?! We don’t get
anything.

While Effa grew up in Johannesburg and graduated from the University, she expressed
solidarity with Greenveld. Her use of the unifying pronoun ‘We’ in her final sentence
captured this well. She ended, saying, “We’re using the people for information. We’re
taking and not giving. The relationship is not reciprocal!”

I felt the tension increase as the debate about the appropriate roles of the Facility
continued into the evening. Joseph’s comments added to the tension. He agreed with the
local critique of their work and told me that this was common knowledge.

Daniel, your presentation was really interesting, but I have to admit, this is
something I’ve known for a long while. We’re constantly taking from these
communities and giving nothing back. It’s just wrong. It’s actually exploitative.
No wonder they hate us!

Barbara agreed with Joseph, but had a more productive interpretation of the critical
community response.

I think we can’t just keep taking from these communities to beef up our CVs. I
really think, actually, this is an exciting, albeit hard, thing to hear. You know, we
are all researchers, but we can make moves to make it more inclusive, make it
more relevant to the area. If we don’t do something, pretty soon we’re not going
to be welcomed in the area and it’ll be our own faults.

Sylvie could not attend the meeting so I relayed its content to her and the different
views expressed. For her, these differences were based on disciplinary cultures. Sylvie
was a lecturer in the Law School and very committed to university service. She felt that
to not do so was both professionally negligent and in violation of the South African
constitution. Speaking about those who opposed extensive community inclusion and
reciprocity she said,

It’s where they come from, you know, the hard sciences. And it is really, really
difficult to change their minds. Scientists would say that their research has
nothing to do with democracy and development, whereas I think very differently.

She continued in reference to the difficulty of changing University culture.

It’s very difficult to change people who have been involved in universities for
years and years to now change their research. There are large differences here. I
mean for some it is all about experts in research. And now, if we want to work with the community that makes them think we’re becoming a parastatal.

In the next section, I build upon Sylvie’s comments by presenting the different perceptions that researchers and residents had towards of reciprocity and participation.

For some researchers, there were very clear ideas of ‘giving back’ to communities, with several projects having concrete ideas of what this looks like and how it should be delivered. Other researchers felt differently, arguing that knowledge propagation was their bigger concern, followed by realistic and appropriate deliverables. Amidst each view were residents who expected tangible deliverables from research. These different practices and views of practice beg the question, what are reciprocity and participation?

*Researcher Perceptions of Reciprocity*

As they expressed in my presentation, Barbara and Joseph felt strongly that reciprocity, in the sense of direct service, was essential. I followed up with each of them during an interview later that week. Joseph reiterated his feeling that there was an unequal relationship between research and service that left service disregarded. He said,

> I see the [Facility] as a bunch of people who build their careers, to do their Ph.D.s, to get published. [The University] is definitely focused on research. And we have defended very strongly our point that if we have a program out here we have to have service-delivery. We have to have community responsibility. Now, on main campus you might get a different [view].

While Joseph was less hopeful about what could be done to produce relevant deliverables, Barbara saw an opportunity to improve Facility outreach. She argued this could be achieved by creating a unique Facility methodology.

> I think we should start to brain-storm about how we can formalize community engagement a bit more. This can really benefit us all and actually be a scholarly venture. What I see is writing a paper where we speak about a [Facility] methodology where reciprocity is central. We can design our own methodology
and require that anyone that comes here to conduct research sign off on these methods.

Barbara spoke here of codifying a set of ethical guidelines for research. Charles agreed and told me that such an understanding, albeit tacit, already existed at the Facility.

If you’re interacting with the local community, researchers are expected both by us and the local community, to follow certain guidelines and protocols about how you interact with the community, feeding information back. I think maybe a hard-pressed policy should be developed and they sign an agreement to adhere to it. This is usually just addressed by each program that works in a certain area. But there is no over-arching thing that you are obliged to follow.

Sylvie argued service was an imperative of academic work in Greenveld. She argued that if one chooses to go out to the Facility, they should commit to some type of deliverable. If this could not be ensured, she argued, then they should not be there.

It’s possible to do both, you know, research and service. But if they are [doing basic research], then I say they mustn’t go there. They must actually stay on Main campus to do their research. Because, obviously, the community doesn’t need that type of project. If they are going to work in the community, then they have to give something back. Gone are the days when you can choose guinea pigs and work on them. Research and the emphasis of the university have changed. The White Paper on Education is more leaning towards ‘you give back what you use.’ And that takes you back to the constitution. If you aren’t gong to work under the ambit of the constitution, then don’t pretend you are.

While Sylvie emphasized that this link of research and service was not embraced by all academics, it was embraced in the University mission. When I asked her how she would define the Facility’s mission she answered:

Their mission is to carryout the ambit of what they university is here for. [The Facility] is a satellite project of the university. So the mission would be the University’s mission. But at the same time, they must recognize that [the Facility] is not the University and it actually does have a responsibility to the community. You know, we’re here. We’re doing research. We’re using your community to do our research. In return we’re going to develop some policy or some kind of upliftment. You know, reciprocation.
Whereas Sylvie described reciprocity in the abstract, others’ projects had tangible, service-delivery programs. The most clearly service-oriented was the COT program. Established in the early days of the Facility, the project trained and certified community-based rehabilitation workers (CRWs). After a pilot study suggested the incidence of functional disability in the area was 5%, Gwen, the Principal Investigator, developed a project to train local residents as community-based physical therapists. The World Health Organization suggested that CRWs helped to improve access to general healthcare. More so, by using local residents to provide that care, the fear of an impersonal hospital or clinic decrease and further improved access. Sarah, a COT lecturer, argued that the program’s ultimate goal was to improve quality of life. “We try to improve the lives of people with disabilities. To empower people.” Glenda, her fellow lecturer, interrupted to emphasize the capacity-building nature of their service. “But we don’t do that ourselves Sarah. Our way of doing that is by teaching people from communities to go back into their village and deliver services. We don’t deliver services. We train.” The COT program, therefore, offered two examples of community service. First, they trained local persons to be CRWs, leading to their employment and increased incomes. In that these persons tended to be women made Glenda, Sarah and Gwen even more convinced that they offered an important service to Greenveld. Second, because CRWs needed extensive field-training, they were brought into the field to offer rehabilitation to the disabled population. Both of these activities were central to COT’s local commitments.

For Glenda and Sarah, their commitment to reciprocity came from the glaring poverty in the region. Describing her motivation for working at the Facility, Glenda said,
There are many reasons for doing it. Poverty is a big one. It prevents people from actually driving or catching a taxi to hospital. Many disabled people don’t even have access to hospital facilities. Families sometimes have to carry the child there!

They also felt committed to cultural change in the area. This commitment concerned social norming campaigns that sought to challenge culturally-held beliefs that did not value the worth of disabled persons.

People here have a very different belief about disability. Many people in a rural area would go visit a traditional healer before they would go to a hospital. Many people also think differently about what causes disability. So if you had a car accident and broke your leg, it is not because of the accident that you broke your leg, but because someone bewitched you, someone put a curse on you. So there is a big stigma attached to disability. [The result is that] children with disabilities are being hidden inside the house. Parents are ashamed to have a child like that. But if people realized that [disabled persons] can do things, that they can learn things, that they are just like other people, then that really empowers these disabled persons and can change lives.

Glenda and Sarah hoped to expand the project beyond Greenveld. They had some recent success in attracting students from Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana. Sarah hoped for even more. “We want to train more CRWs. We would like to expand to other provinces, to other countries. We’ve done a bit of each.” Connecting their service to research, Glenda added, “We would also like these CRWs to be recognized as a needed profession in this country. We’ve got a whole lot more to do to prove that they are worthy. There is much more research needed. Much more.”

Glenda and Sarah maintained that their commitment to Greenveld came largely from what they, and other researchers, had gained from the community. Gwen summed this up saying, ‘We’ve gotten a hell of a lot of these communities and we need not hold back from them. We make sure we don’t just go in there and ask people questions. We return something.’ Sarah supported this with an example from her work as a CRW
trainer. “A lot of our training is in the villages. We do home visits and the CRWs get to immediately practice what they learn. We have some families that are very supportive and keep on allowing us to visit them.” Be it the training or the local rehabilitation work, Glenda believed that the community appreciated both. She said,

We had a TV crew down here last year that focused on our program and they asked one client, ‘What difference has COT made?’ and he said, ‘[COT’s] made me feel like a human being, like a person.’ Something changes in these [disabled] peoples’ lives. Something makes them happier. There is something that has them saying ‘Come again.’ There is some special relationship that we have with the community and it is very special. One of the hardest things would be if we had to leave here and develop another relationship with a community.

Where service-delivery was central to COT, in William’s project it had ‘equal billing’ to research. William told me that he did not see research and service as dichotomous. Describing this in reference to his project, he said:

Our broad mission is intervention research on HIV/AIDS that looks at both the clinical consequences of the epidemic and the social determinants. We’re trying to develop intervention models that are both appropriate and relevant to the local context.

For William, structured intervention models were the unique contribution his project offered the community.

HIV is not so much the product of the interaction between the virus and T cells, but is far more the result of structural realities, including poverty, mobility and gender issues. Those are the three big determinants that underscore the rapid escalation of HIV that we have seen here. Very few programs meaningfully engage with these issues through a programmatic standpoint.

William’s group had begun a number of programs he described as ‘action research.’ The one he was most proud of was a microfinance/sexual health program that had begun a year earlier. With support from an external, microfinance agency, his group had been funneling small loans to poor women in the area. Describing the participatory nature of the project, William explained that the local community first identified women whom
were most in need of loans. These women were then organized into a collective. The group then applied together for small loans to support income generation projects. Because they were poor and without collateral, the women would guarantee each other’s loans. If one defaulted on repayment, all defaulted. William’s group then organized a series of short courses that connected various business lessons with sex education and gender-based awareness. The hypothesis was that sexual health was inextricably linked to a women’s confidence. He believed this confidence could be improved by successful personal finance decisions.

We are taking women who have never left their village, and all of a sudden they are bringing in an income, they are contributing more meaningfully to the household, and, we believe, the business skills they get, help them negotiate at a variety of other levels. So we’re taking these loans and integrating into that concepts of gender-based awareness and HIV education a gentle conscientization process.

William’s project was not just service. He had established linkages with other research institutions throughout South Africa and the United Kingdom. Their project team consisted of anthropologists, statisticians and epidemiologists. This provided for a wealth of diverse perspectives and interests that had been well-received in many scholarly outlets.

We have a massive push to disseminate our work across the fields: development journals, microfinance journals, gender journals, public health journals. We’re also trying to establish some good North/South research collaborations with some colleagues in London. This phase of the work is really focused on getting out publications.

Coupled with publications, however, was community engagement. William argued this was central to the project’s mission.

Community service is integral. To what extent is that an explicit part of the work we do? We have no choice. There’s a lot of research being done in Africa that is very extractive. Just run into a community, ask questions about sexual behavior
and then leave. Intervention research, we’re trying to gather descriptive information in the context of trying to change, which is different than a lot of research programs. So the link of research and service is definitely there.

Joseph echoed these same sentiments. For him, the concern was making research relevant to a locale. “I think that if research is not action-oriented, if you suggest recommendations and don’t do something about it or help things happen, then it’s a waste of time.” Joseph viewed action-research as the linking of purposes: research, advocacy and service-delivery. Unlike other programs, his refugee research program had decided to make a concerted effort at service-delivery. Recognizing the difficulty of accessing certain communities due to language barriers and trust, they hired a local paralegal named Nomsa to lead their community-service efforts.

Nomsa operated a legal clinic in refugee settlements. About her work, she said, “My job here is to let the refugees know they have rights. Most of them are really unsure about their rights. So when something happens to them they don’t know what to do.” This outreach legal clinic operated in nine villages. Nomsa visited each village once a month and those that were unable to see her at those times were invited to meet her at the refugee program’s office. The refugee program decided to locate themselves directly in town so to ensure people could access their services. If they had located at the Facility, Greenveld residents would have difficulty finding affordable transport there. More so, given the tight security that had been set-up after several burglaries and attacks, those wanting services would more than likely not be let in.

The problems that people brought to Nomsa were diverse. As their constituency was refugees, many issues concerned land rights and documentation, such as applying for residency and work permits, birth certificates and drivers’ licenses. Joseph argued that
Nomsa’s unique contribution, however, was that she approached service delivery through dialogue. That is, rather than determining for a population what they needed, Nomsa focused on what she was told. “More than anything it involves listening. You know, just listening to what the people tell her. She sits down and listens to them. That’s the best way to approach the situation.”

Like William, Joseph and Barbara believed that they had twin goals of service-delivery and research. For them, these were not mutually exclusive practices. Rather, as Barbara explained, they often supported each other. She described how Nomsa’s work with the legal clinic fed directly into their research on refugees.

Most of the villages that we are working in now, the refugees there did not have land rights. But now, [the new government] recognizes that they’re there. They’re legally on that land now. This is something that the legal unit has been working on. [Nomsa] has done a lot of that work. What we want to look at, in terms of research, is what exactly is the impact of this integration. What does this change of land status have on people’s livelihoods? That’s just one example how the research comes out of things that people suggest to [Nomsa].

While the refugee program, William’s project and COT had fully-integrated reciprocity into their programs, other researchers viewed their role in Greenveld as less direct. This other approach understood reciprocity as less important to the central mission of knowledge creation. In these projects, reciprocity still occurred, but it looked quite different than what Joseph or William practiced. For this group, deliverables were often quite modest, disconnected from the research or focused at scales that may not include the proximal community.

*Alternative Researcher Views of Reciprocity*

There was not consensus among researchers over their proper role in Greenveld. Much of this was due to the equivocal definition of reciprocity. While many felt that
researchers had a duty to give something back to participants, the extent that this was a priority varied a great deal. In my 18 interviews with local researchers and administrators, no one expressed that their focus was solely basic research. Even among those more concerned with practicing and producing basic research, in our interviews, they still expressed an interest in community involvement and local relevancy. It was the nature and degree of the involvement that was less clear.

Effa equated reciprocity with direct service and social development. She believed that Greenveld residents expected services that would make their lives easier, from better healthcare to better education. However, she viewed this type of reciprocity as in conflict with research ethics. “The problem with social development projects is that this can conflict with research ethics. There is no way we could deliver [services] because it would change our information. People would give us information because they appreciated what we are doing there.” Others extended this saying that not only did reciprocity conflict with research ethics but that reciprocity cum service-delivery was neither the mission of the Facility nor the strength of academics.

Whereas Joseph and Barbara viewed reciprocity as direct service, other researchers viewed service as a spin-off or gesture to communities. Charles placed reciprocity in a lower list of priorities. “My project is not purely research but primarily. The first priority is research, but it is applied, community-based research. The second is training [University] students. The third is community support or outreach.” He continued, saying that while his project was research-focused, he did offer some value to the area.

Because [my project] is an academic program, there is no explicit assessment criteria of how we assess [community engagement]. But, I just submitted a report
about how I interacted with the community, what things I’ve done over the year. That would involve ensuring that students give a report back to the traditional authority when they finish a research project. It means that if a community wants to initiate an environmental project, I helped them access funding. For example, I helped a group of school kids write a proposal to start an agricultural project in their village. So, those kinds of things.

Charles seemed self-conscious about his interaction with the community. He spoke to me about how it would be difficult for him to do more.

You know, this is the smallest program of all. It has one permanent staff member, me. And I’m supervising students, doing research, etcetera, etcetera. We’re trying to get funding for a community liaison officer to be more involved with the community, to increase that dimension of the program. But at the moment it is only a very small dimension.

Dumisai argued he practiced reciprocity by employing local fieldworkers. Just as I hired Mapule as a field assistant, residents were often paid to be translators and guides for Facility researchers. About this, Dumisai said, “A unique contribution that we make to the area is that we use local people as our field workers. So that is an advantage to the community. We contribute by providing employment to those people.” Effa complemented this by describing the PHP’s work in more detail. The PHP project was focused on various public health issues throughout Greenveld, but particularly the increasing incidence of cardiovascular disease among rural people. While she worked with Dumisai, she had more interaction with the local communities where they researched. An aspect of her job was to lead community forums where research findings were presented to the communities. Concerning community participation and job creation, she said:

What we do is employ local people. We work in 21 villages and we ensure that we employ people from these 21 villages. That is my job here. I look at community representation. If there is a village that is not represented then we only advertise in that village.
Likewise, Charles recognized that this local employment was an important contribution.

There’s local job creation. Some of it is just temporary and informal. But some projects, especially the ones that take censuses, employ large numbers of people and in some cases…they employ skilled people, occupational therapists, business managers, administrators from the local area where there are few other jobs.

Most often, I was told that extensive reciprocity, as Joseph and William practiced, was outside the ambit of university duties or skills. During my interview with Lawrence, I expressed that many residents told me they wanted the Facility more involved in service provision, from bridge construction to skills development. Seeming annoyed, he sighed and said:

Those roles are not appropriate. The university is not a service-delivery agency. It is not an NGO! I’m sure it’s very confusing in the community, to understand what the function of academics is. They see academics as possibly another form of NGO that should be delivering broad-scale service. Clearly the university is not in such business. The university is in the business of generating knowledge, of propagating knowledge to students and providing some service to communities from a privileged academic position.

Nevertheless, he recognized the problematic stance of researchers in the area. Echoing Effa’s concern over the ethics of research, he said:

I know it is an extremely delicate balance in terms of the ethics of working with, or doing research on, humans. There is that [danger] of being exploitative, going in there and using people for our own purposes without leaving them with at least something of reciprocal value. But can we turn them into wealthy people? No. We can’t unless we set up permanent jobs, run a welfare agency or persuade [government] to give them higher welfare payments. These are very difficult, judgmental and ethical questions…and certainly poor folk living in a community are not going to be able to appreciate the subtlety. Instead, they say, ‘They researched us. Where are our benefits?’

For Lawrence, the outcomes of research need not only be concrete deliverables. For him, there were important, albeit less tangible, results that occurred from basic research. “We can influence the government, mostly by publishing and by participating in the policy process. So, in that sense, by influencing the government and finding new modes of
delivery they ultimately benefit. But the communities are, in a sense, an experimental test-bed.” The difficulty, however, was in convincing the community that these contributions were useful.

There are intangibles to research that we just ask them to believe this is not for our own personal wealth or benefit, well perhaps a little for our fame and fortune, but ultimately we are doing these things as part of a service career. There is no easy answer and no easy way of communicating that to people who are not from an academic community.

Like Lawrence, Audrey believed that the purpose of the Facility was first research. Audrey led a service-learning program out of the Business School. She brought students to Greenveld as consultants in small, rural businesses. Her research concerned the impact of this approach to both student learning and local economic health. Describing her opinion of the Facility, she said:

It is an outpost of the university in terms of research, however research based on rural areas. That is the key purpose. So I think all the other stuff, the development projects need to focus around that. You know, those things are also important, but I do think it is a research station based in a rural area. The priority should be on research.

Like Lawrence, she recognized the ethical dilemma that this created. However, Audrey saw reciprocity as a secondary role, after research.

I think the ethics of doing research in this area should include community development. But I think that is not the university’s core strength. I don’t think it should be a priority. But, yeah, I think development should go along with it.

Lawrence and Audrey’s comments reflected the growing rift that had occurred at the Facility over the role of researchers in the area. They were not alone for there were others who also felt that the primary role of the Facility was in research.

The PHP program was one place where the focus on basic research was very strong. The largest and most funded of all Facility projects, during my stay they were
mid-way through a longitudinal study of rural health in Greenveld. For the previous five years, they had collected demographic and health data in 21 villages around Greenveld. With a team of fieldworkers, they went village-to-village asking questions about a family’s demographics and health. Led by a team of well-respected public health faculty, they had published widely and received national and international attention for their studies. Dumisai, a program manager, told me, however, that this did not come without local critique. He spoke of how many Greenveld residents saw their work as disconnected from their lives. Dumisai supported his focus on knowledge creation, but recognized that more could be done.

Research is research. I don’t think it is the duty of the researcher to implement development. The involvement of the university here should be to educate the community, making them aware of their situation. That’s how I see things. A lot of people challenge us. They say things like, ‘We are quite aware of our situations. So, what are you going to do for us?’ I think the important thing is to make some kind of link so development is initiated. But I’m not sure if there is a direct link to our research in terms of service-providing or whatever.”

While researchers like Audrey, Dumisai and Lawrence maintained ‘research was research,’ each hinted that reciprocity was possible, albeit in a limited form.

Richard argued that academics could link with the community even within the ambit of a focus on research and teaching. For him, this could occur through service-learning. Richard was a department chair in the Business School and felt there were many lessons to learn in the community. The Business School had sent students into local businesses in both Greenveld and Johannesburg’s townships. For him, this was an issue of improved teaching and learning with limited community development.

We thought community engagement was a good idea. We had thought about this before it was a university initiative and how this could benefit our students to be engaged in real-world issues. Some of the issues of ordinary people. And being exposed to various social conditions that they don’t normally encounter, say in the
townships. These kinds of exposures are good for our students and in addition to actually putting their skills to work to assist someone, there is, we think, a pretty good educational benefit.

While the University could gain something from Greenveld, he was less sure if the reverse could happen. That is, could the University offer anything to Greenveld?

Richard told me that the University was not in the business of development, making extensive reciprocity difficult.

We don’t engage in service-delivery. Even facilitating meetings in a community might be a bit too close. See, our students come in for a very short period of time. They don’t want to get too embroiled. So I am, personally, quite modest about what our students can do. They can help. But people should not view this as any panacea. When it comes to implementing plans, our students are told to stop. There have been times when they have wanted to get more involved, but we told them ‘Look, at this point, now that the people know what to do, they must go do it!’ And there have been times our students have wanted to use their own money for their projects, to see it happen. But this isn’t allowed. We don’t allow them do that because it isn’t appropriate.

While Richard saw service commitments as beneficial to the University and his students, he was skeptical about what the University could actually accomplish in Greenveld. He re-emphasized that development projects were not possible or appropriate for a higher education institution.

We can try to offer communities something valuable. But honestly, I’m skeptical about that. From my point of view, I don’t think [we can offer] massive amounts of value. What I expect is that a relationship will be formed so the community has a better understanding of our students and our students have a better understanding of the community. So it is a relationship with a community, not one where we say ‘We have this great Facility and we’ll give some of it to you.’ If our objective was to make communities better we’d simply give them some money. We’d be a funder. But that’s not our objective. It’s not an appropriate one for a university. Our projects are not donor projects. Our projects are relationship projects.

While the preceding discussion suggests that Facility academics felt that they had to choose between activist and researcher roles, the issue was more about the degree of
involvement. Each researcher at the Facility believed that some type of relationship was necessary. How this would look was, however, less certain. Researchers such as William, Joseph and Sylvie argued for a high level of involvement. Sylvie emphatically said, “If you are going out into a community, you have to stop being so stupid about how you interact with them. You’re never just researching. You just aren’t!”

Even among more traditional researchers, references were made to myriad ways that research contributes to the public good. For them, however, reciprocity occurred at multiple scales, not just the local. That is, while their focus was Greenveld, this local attention was not the only way they believed an academic could contribute to local change. Charles said,

> You see, when I think about benefits, when you talk about benefiting local communities you can’t only think about [Greenveld]. You’ve got to realize that benefits occur at a number of levels. There is a local level, the most immediate level. That’s [Greenveld]. There’s also the provincial level where the benefits are also important. Programs have also played an important role at the national level. The Refugee Program, for example, has lobbied for changing national policy. And it worked! National policy changed!

William also spoke about the impact on policy. While his project addressed the local impact of HIV/AIDS, he was not solely concerned about Greenveld. For him, a wider focus was important.

> The way we approach research is that it is a tool for advocacy. As a tool to try to influence policy about changing the nature of the debate, about the questions we are choosing to ask. There area a lot of programs that are doing good community work but they aren’t going anywhere because there is not a link to the policy process. So I guess we are trying to strike that balance, between actually doing stuff in the community but doing it in a way that allows you to generate interest from policymakers.

Barbara and Joseph, like William, had a similar, multi-scaled view of reciprocity. Their refugee project consisted of many local initiatives including legal clinics and social work
interventions. Connected to these activities, however, was an effort to inform both national and international policy concerning refugees. Much of this was focused on Mozambiquan refugees, who, during apartheid, had fewer rights than South African Blacks (e.g., access to welfare programs). The post-apartheid result was a large population of persons who, despite having lived in South Africa for 20-30 years had very few protections. To these ends, Joseph and Barbara were working on different policy analyses that addressed the integration of refugee populations in South Africa. Speaking about the purpose of their program, Barbara said it was,

"to try and find what is going on out there first. And then to be able to inform policy at the national level about what to do with 100,000 refugees. So we work to gather descriptive information about the lives of a particular group of people in order to influence policy."

More recently, Joseph and Barbara had completed a study commissioned by National Consortium for Refugee Affairs and the European Union Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa about how South Africa could cope with the potential influx of Zimbabwean refugees secondary to the political and economic collapse of its northern neighbor.

While Dumisai’s work at the PHP did not directly serve the local community, for him, their contribution was through using knowledge for policy change. Echoing Charles’ notion of the different scales of reciprocity he said:

"While we do interact with the local communities, our directors also communicate with the provincial government. Even national level. Our information goes to the national government. So, it influences policy. The information we collect is important to the government, in terms of formulating policies. Because you need to know exactly what the main causes of death are in rural areas. [The way we contribute] is by writing reports."
Sometimes research had no, or very little, impact at all on local communities.

Effa, provided more specifics about the actual projects the PHP was conducting in Greenveld.

What we do are basically statistical analyses. For example, we are doing a study on deaths in the [Greenveld]. So the census taker goes to a house as soon as there is a death. They collect the death information and give it to our team. They ask the family the history of the death. Because so many deaths are not registered. People often don’t have a diagnosis. So we analyze what these deaths are caused by. Most of this information is used to influence policy. government health policy. There is nothing physically given to the communities. Not much other than information. We give them information.

Effa expressed some doubt whether her work helped the local community at all, by the very meager deliverables they offered. Charles did not view this as a problem. However, he did stress that one must be honest with the community.

Sometimes when you go to get permission and go in front of the tribal council about doing research, they always ask you the question. Sometimes you’d like to say that this student’s work will not benefit the community at all. But we promise the student will come back and give a full report about what they find. They will employ someone locally as an interpreter.

While Charles and Effa expressed some sense of an obligation to give something in return, there was a realization that there would be times when research would not help or would offer very little. Charles argued that being honest about these realities was important, but to realized that even that might not assuage resident’s animosity for research.

Just a sign of respect to the community, [like] feeding back information, even if it is not directly applicable to them or not, makes a difference in their relationship to you. They think we are doing really esoteric and absurd stuff. You know, I have students down here clipping grasses and counting trees. A lot of times they think we’re crazy. But sometimes the information provided is useful to…the community’s development committees who have used that information in funding proposals. But, there are people who say that [we] are not doing enough. These are really unrealistic expectations that have been created mainly by misunderstanding.
Effa echoed the idea that researchers needed to be realistic about what they could actually achieve in the field. She argued that her research, while important, was often times not relevant to the community. “I think our research could help, but only in a very meager extent.” She offered an example of an information-sharing meeting she had with a local village. In it she presented data they had collected about health issues affecting the village. Much of this focused on the prevalence of contagious diseases in the area. She said the report received a lukewarm response from the audience. “People wonder what can they do with that information? Sometimes, in rural areas they can’t make sense of it. HIV/AIDS? I mean, they think, ‘If I have it, I don’t even want to know about it because I’m going to die from it anyways. It goes on and on like that.”

*Resident Perceptions of Participation*

Residents, like researchers, had clear ideas about the purposes of Facility. Whereas researchers tended to have diverse opinions regarding how they practice research, residents were more unified in both their opinion about purpose and their experience with research. In this section, I present findings to suggest the differences and similarities that exist between researchers and residents. I first present resident perceptions of participation. Within this were several sub-themes that include: ‘feelings of exclusion,’ ‘feelings of inclusion’ and ‘means for remediation.’ Second, I address perceptions of reciprocity. This too had several sub-themes that included: ‘perceptions of passive reciprocity,’ ‘perceptions of active reciprocity’ and ‘moving from passive to active.’ I address these categories and sub-themes below with details of my observations of key events, policy documents and generous quotes from Greenveld residents.
Of the many things apartheid policy sought, one was to limit Black solidarity (Lapping, 1990). This was largely addressed through layers of racially-based legislation (e.g., Suppression of Communism Act, Unlawful Congregation Act, Group Areas Act, Natives (Urban) Areas Act) that effectively worked to prevent communication. When attempts to organize occurred, these were dealt with harshly, often ending in imprisonment, torture and death. In one of the more publicized cases, when Steve Biko established the well-organized Black Consciousness Movement, he was imprisoned and tortured. His imprisonment ended with him being thrown from an eighth story window, his death labeled a suicide. Blacks were not allowed to vote in South African elections and forbidden to speak in groups larger than three persons. In the end apartheid prevented Blacks from being able to make decisions about things that directly impacted their lives.

The lasting legacy of the apartheid government’s attempt to dilute Black resistance is a new, national rhetoric of cooperation and inclusion. Having faced 300 years of exclusion, in 1994 South Africans passed a progressive constitution in which the ideals of inclusion and cooperation were writ-large. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the ANC’s guiding policy document captures this, stating:

The RDP requires fundamental change in the way that policy is made and programmes are implemented. Above all, the people affected must participate in decision-making. Democracy is not confined to periodic elections. It is, rather, an active process enabling everyone to contribute to reconstruction and development (1994, p. 7).

This cooperative sentiment is also captured in the University’s mission. It states, the University “has a distinctive capacity to contribute to the development of South Africa through research, social criticism, partnerships with the public and private sectors and the
community.” My interviews with Greenveld residents helped to flesh out the post-apartheid experience with inclusion and cooperation in reference to community-based research.

*Feelings of exclusion: “A community of a few.”* Despite his young age, Kamuzu was well accomplished, especially rising high in the local government. This success did not come without cost. In the violence that took over Greenveld following local government elections of 1998, Kamuzu was a visible target. This continued well after the elections, with his house being firebombed two months before my arrival. He arrived to our interview with a bodyguard.

Kamuzu had a tired tone when I asked him about the Facility, often sighing and rolling his eyes. He expressed annoyance at the Facility and what he perceived as their lack of interest in cooperation and consultation. He used SA-EDU, an education and training program that Facility researchers led, as an example. The project offered tutoring for persons who had not finished their high school (Standard 10) matriculation courses as well as training in a variety of skills, the more popular being computer literacy. This project was tremendously popular, with 13 residents interviewed mentioning it. Without warning, however, the project closed. In interviews with Facility researchers, I was told the reason was corruption. The Principal Investigator was caught embezzling project monies. Greenveld residents, however, expressed that this closure occurred without community consultation or an attempt to work together to salvage the project. Kamuzu argued that the Facility should have come back to the people because it was very important to the community. He said,
The problem there was with the administration. They never came back to the stakeholders to say ‘There are problems with the project. What do you think we can do? What do you think we can do to revive it?’ Because our feeling was really that the project should be revived. Maybe if they had contacted the local municipality…to say ‘What are your feelings about us reviving it? How can we combine our efforts?’ In fact, one of the programs that we were running was for the management of all collapsed NGOs, to check out the problems and see what the municipality could do.

Mpho echoed this in saying: “There was a project by the name [SA-EDU]. It was a [Facility] project. That project was useful to the community. It was helping the children who failed their classes. Now, I’m just not sure about it. They just closed it.”

This desire to connect and cooperate with researchers was extended to me. When I asked Kamuzu if he sensed that the level of research cooperation had changed over the past few years, he replied,

To me I don’t see any difference at all. Maybe today I can see a difference because we’re having this interview. I think this is the first time I’ve been interviewed about the material conditions in our area. Just this Saturday we’re having a stakeholders meeting and if there was a relationship, I would remember that [the University] must also be invited. I think it is imperative that [the University] be a part of this process so that they can say, ‘We think we can play a role here, specifically in locating funders, gauging community problems.’ But I don’t think it’s too late. That’s why I am inviting you to our meeting.

After making it clear to him that I did not work for the University or the Facility, he repeated the offer, saying that it was important to have researcher presence in the meeting. I present my observations of this day with some detail as this underscores how the region is steeped in a culture of cooperation and the practice of inclusive governance, from which the Facility has largely not participated.

That next morning I drove to the town of Greenveld and found a meeting hall packed with over 200 men and women. The local government convened the meeting to offer a progress report on service delivery in Greenveld, a long-standing and hotly
debated issue. As I entered the hall, a man from the ANC youth league welcomed me and led me to a seat near the front of the hall. The meeting began, as all meetings do in post-apartheid South Africa, with the singing of *Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika* (‘God Bless Africa’), the once illegal protest song and current national anthem. Everyone sang with his or her right arm raised and fist clenched, the Black power salute popularized during the struggle. After the song, Kamuzu opened the meeting saying,

Comrades, we are here today to fulfill the basic principles of democracy: consultation, accountability and responsibility. An elected government must, on a constant basis, consult with the people [and] give reports back to the people in order to be a responsible government.

He then detailed project specifics and timelines for service delivery including water and electricity provision, education, and housing. After 45 minutes, he ended saying,

I have identified all the projects that have been budgeted. This is indeed a mirror for those who would criticize that we are not working in the spirit of cooperative governance and partnership or in the name of historical materialism. People of different nations, let us come together for a better life for all!

After this, the floor was opened. Kamuzu stressed that all be allowed to speak and that no one be interrupted or shout down. Fifteen people raised questions and comments to the panel of municipal officers. Responses were long, often more than 20 minutes, and conversational, allowing for follow-up questions. I left feeling this was a public sphere unlike any that I had experienced. More so, it underscored Kamuzu’s frustration with the Facility; that is, while researchers had opportunities to cooperate with the community, they chose not to.

My interview with Nkosi reinforced this idea. Nkosi was a stern man who was a ward councilor for several villages around Greenveld, in addition to his role as a Civics teacher at a local high school. He spoke to me about how the structure of the local
government made communication much easier. He explained that the local government, therefore, would be an ideal vehicle to convey research findings and include other voices.

You know it would be better if they communicated more with people. It’d be very easy because we have ward councilors. The councilor is elected by the community, by the people. So if you wanted to communicate with the people, you could come to the councilor or the municipality and they could direct you to the best people to speak with.

My presence at the community forum did not go unnoticed. On the Monday after the meeting, I had an interview with Themba, a local government official and Kamuzu’s superior. He brought me into his office saying that he saw me at the meeting. My thoughts first went to race. I had felt conspicuous at the meeting because I was the only White person in the audience. During our interview, however, I realized that it was not just my race that made me stand out. I realized that researcher participation, like White participation, in local affairs was also infrequent. Like Kamuzu, Themba spoke to me about researcher indifference to local conditions and actors. “I don’t want to say negative things but I am just saying that they have not been able to make an impact on community lives. Peoples’ lives have not changed much as a result of their activities.”

He expressed frustration at what he described as a disconnect between Facility projects and the lived realities of Greenveld residents. When I asked him to comment on the outcomes of specific projects, he described them as only offering “small vegetable patches” and not really asking them what they actually wanted or needed. Facility researchers occasionally set up agricultural schemes in the area, sometimes to study the farming practices, other times as a gesture of thanks. For Themba, these were ‘small’ and disconnected projects. He said:

When they first came, in 1992 or ‘93, they only spoke to a few people in the villages and maybe to some chiefs. But by the time we knew about them, they
were known only for their small projects. And people would complain about these, especially our people that were learned. They would complain that [the University] was pumping lots of money into the region but unfortunately, the bigger chunk was going into [jeeps] and not actually uplifting peoples’ lives.

Themba articulated that the region contains important sources of information, mainly its people. Like many others involved in local development, Themba had ideas and things to say, but sensed that the Facility was not interested in that knowledge. Instead, researchers tended to be top-down and focused on their own comfort and self-aggrandizement. In subsequent sections, I discuss this as an issue of reciprocity.

Like Kamuzu, Themba argued that the Facility did not seem interested in speaking with the community, even over matters that directly impacted lives in the area. Referring to SA-EDU, he said,

> The community does not even know what is happening with [SA-EDU]. One can pick up from the street that it was mismanagement or the people decided to scatter and stop all the programs. The buildings have just become useless.

He continued with reference to the lack of consultation or inclusion.

> If they consulted from the word go…I think it would be different. Because it’d be a situation where they’re doing these things with the local government….There’s no way an NGO or whatever can come and just operate at the exclusion of the [state]. So I think the way they missed it is that they didn’t even consider that…So what I’m saying is that it is a situation where a few, a community of a few, knows about [the Facility]. But the majority of our people don’t understand what’s going on.

For Kamuzu, the Facility and the locale were only tenuously linked. More so, the Facility was beginning to appear exclusionary: a community of a few.

Themba used the Facility’s location as a symbol of its disconnect from the community. While the Facility is located in Greenveld municipality, it is not near the markets, villages and towns that form the fabric of the community. Three miles from the nearest town, the Facility lies outside the old, homeland borders. Vusimuzi expressed
similar feelings about the physical and emotional distance of the Facility from the community. He said:

> Only the well-informed know about what is happening at [the Facility]. But they have to go out there and find out. The [Facility] people don’t come to tell them. And you can see, that place is very remote. Like now, half of my day I don’t do anything but I don’t have a car to go and ask them information. It’s very far.

Before the relaxation of apartheid, race-based residency laws, Black South Africans were not allowed to live outside the homeland borders without employment in White South Africa. With the abandonment of apartheid policy, populations largely stayed in place, most poor Blacks unable to move due to land prices in White areas. Themba was suspicious about the Facility’s location, saying:

> Look at the set-up! Their offices and accommodation are located in the so-called White area. That was a farming area for Whites! It was not part of the former homeland. That’s why they chose to stay there, I suspect. If they were coming to assist communities, I would have expected them to identify a place right in the villages, so they could mix with the people, learn the culture. There is much you can share with communities. It starts with identifying yourself. But the majority of [Facility researchers] just go around and do their research. After that they go back to their swimming pools. They go back to swim and enjoy their food! That is how I see them.

Themba’s reference to the swimming pool functions as an interesting symbol of Facility disembeededness from its locale. When the University was looking for land to establish the Facility, they settled on a former game lodge that had come up for sale. The facilities reflected the comfortable, tourist nature of game reserves: multiple thatched-roofed cabins, maid service, electricity, indoor plumbing, running water, telephone access, satellite television, high-speed internet access and two swimming pools. Of all these amenities, the swimming pools caught Themba’s notice. At the time of this study, Greenveld was in the midst of a three-year drought that had left rivers and watersheds dry or drying. Residents and local government officials consistently stated their fear about
water shortages. Nkosi, a local ward councilor expressed this dramatically. “Our people are having to drink water, raw from the streams. They are drinking water next to animals!” While the Facility had an explicit water conservation policy discouraging negligent use, as Themba’s statements indicate, swimming pools seemed ironic luxuries in this water-starved region.

This sense that the Facility was not interested in cooperating or including the community was not limited to government officials. Non-government employees expressed similar sentiments. These persons expressed that while they knew of the Facility, they had lately become doubtful of its existence or purpose. Ayize was a garrulous youth activist in Greenveld. He was 19 and exuded a confidence far beyond these years. While he was aware of the Facility, I asked him to consider if other people in Greenveld knew about it. He replied, “People know [the Facility] is there, but they don’t know exactly what is going on there whatsoever, or how they can help them.”

Sipho was another youth activist in Greenveld. He echoed both Ayize’s comments, but also Themba and Kamuzu’s about how the Facility fails to consult both the people and the local government.

I know [the Facility] by name, as an institution. I’m told of their activities, but I don’t think they are professional because they don’t communicate with the legitimate structures…My understanding is that when you want to deal with people, you should clearly communicate with the major structures in a particular area, so you then gain access to the rest of the community.

Dikeledi provided more nuanced details about inclusion and cooperation. As a leader in a stroke rehabilitation project, she had several opportunities to speak with both public health and occupational therapy researchers. To her, Facility researchers were very interested in including and cooperating with the local community. When our
conversation began, she spoke warmly about the Facility and their work, arguing that it was very connected to the community. She said, “I'm telling you there is nothing bad with [Facility] projects or [the Facility]. I only see very good things.” She saw Facility researchers being involved with the local community. Even the failed SA-EDU project was spun in a more positive image.

One should always think of the help that [the Facility] is doing, [because it] is helping us. [The Facility] is helping people who are disabled. It is really good….They teach, for example, people who are disabled, take for example the [SA-EDU], they were teaching them so many other things: life orientation, how to cope with their marriages, how to do one, two, three things. Now with people with strokes, they help them cope in the family.

While Dikeledi expressed a high level of satisfaction with certain projects, she had ideas for improvement. This was particularly apparent when pressed about issues of inclusion. After being told about the many positives of the Facility, I reiterated her words, “So, you feel pretty included in these projects it sounds like. Or at least, the community is considered in them it seems?” She paused and then said, “Well, if we were included more I would be pleased. I'm telling you, if [the Facility] could work together with local government it would be much better. If [the Facility] would come in, we could really work together.” She captures the conflicted nature of perceptions of inclusion and communication among local residents. While she felt included and considered by researchers, these sentiments were lined with a desire for more.

Feelings of inclusion: “They liberated us.” As Dikeledi’s words reveal, cooperation and inclusion were experienced differently in Greenveld. Even among the more critical participants, several said that researchers made important attempts in cooperating with others. Men like Kamuzu, Themba and Daniel spoke of a better time
when the Facility was interested in their opinions. Kamuzu said, “They used to have a
board where by we were all included. We sent people to represent us. All our people!
They asked people their needs.”

Others expressed a similar notion of the ‘good old times.’ Sigidi was a local
community activist in Greenveld. I met him in his office, a small, unlit backroom in a
larger building. He had a picture of President Thabo Mbeki on his wall in a frame, next
to one of Charles Nqakulathe, National Chairperson of the South African Communist
Party. He was a serious and professional-looking man. He owned a consulting firm in
Greenveld and worked with the local government in social welfare projects, primarily
those dealing with HIV/AIDS. He had lived in Greenveld his whole life, and had
interacted with several Facility researchers. We began our interview by talking about the
history of the Facility in relation to community inclusion and cooperation. He said, “Yes,
the community was included. For example, sometimes [researchers] would call
community meetings with the community structure. They’d call them and get some
input.” As our interview progressed, he expressed that this had changed. “I think
initially [the Facility], to be honest with you, they were wonderful. They were treating
people quite well. But at the moment, I don’t know what they do.” He suggested that the
operation and mission of the Facility had become lost.

I used to know what [the Facility] was doing, but it seems some years, one or two
back, they lost their focus. We couldn’t get information about their projects.
Even now, we don’t know. I understood that the Facility was gone. But then I
hear that there are still Facility things going on. I don’t know. Maybe they’re just
not funded now. I don’t know. Some years ago, you would see their cars going

Rather than paint the Facility as wholly uninterested in collaborating with local
residents, Sigidi and others argue the contrary; that is, this disinterested stance is a more
recent pattern. Themba explained this with an example of a more inclusive research project carried out by a Facility researcher several years earlier.

I remember this one guy. This guy came straight to the communities. He helped establish a resource center right in [a village]….This guy was able to live in the community, share food, share whatever experiences he had. They even discussed politics with the chap! And he came to our houses and so on. He would attend our meetings, sometimes underground operations! Like you, I mean, the work you are doing, I mean trying to register [our] feelings and sympathizing with communities on issues affecting them.

Vusimuzi, an unemployed resident of Greenveld, echoed this idea that while the Facility was removed from the locale, this was not always the case.

I think something went wrong [at the Facility]. For the past three to four years, the relationship is no longer like before. Before!? I can tell you things were very good. And the relationship between the community and [the Facility] was very good. People used to know what they were doing. They [the researchers] were mingling with people. We used to get a lot of information. It’s less now.”

Daniel, Themba and Sigidi each point to changes in organizational culture. In speaking with both residents and researchers, there is not one specific cause of this change.

However, the Dutch Foundation’s review was pivotal. The negative evaluation of its service to Greenveld confirmed the suspicions on Main campus, leading to a flurry of funding withdrawals. These funding withdrawals, in turn, results in the substantial curtailment of activities, something residents easily sensed.

Although everyone I spoke to was not directly involved or impacted by the Facility, some felt included simply by their knowledge of inclusive activity. Noceba was a 60 year old, retired teacher and described inclusion as also possible indirectly. He had not personally been included in projects or even spoken to by Facility researchers, saying, “So far I have not been included, but if the need arises I am always willing to help. I will always help because [what they are doing] is also in my heart, helping other people.
That's what matters most.” Instead of personalizing inclusion, he looked to those that were. “We are all included because those people that are being helped are part of us. As Africans, we have a sense of unity. I feel included because when they help others, they have helped me as well, though indirectly.” Sphiwe echoed this same idea. The University, he said, “has not yet included me directly. But what can I say? I cannot say that people must come to me so I can just say I am involved. I see it happening in other areas around me, so, to me, that means I’m involved.”

Means for remediation: “Come nearer the people.” Several residents suggested different ways that cooperation could be improved. For Vusimuzi, the issue was using the Facility to link the community to the local government. He explained this with some history of the Facility:

The structure of our [local] government is quite complicated. Some of the tasks that [the Facility] used to do in the area, the government took over. Now there’s not much participation from organizations because when the government runs things, not everybody will attend their seminars and forums. But before, [researchers] used to hold forums [at the Facility] where everybody was invited and you could go, because it was a neutral place to express views and opinions. I wonder whether [this could happen now,] with community meetings or forums for their projects.

Dikeledi reiterated this issue. With special reference to the immaturity of the local government within post-apartheid South Africa she said, “I think that if [the Facility] comes together with local government and helps them, that would be good. There are still some problems with the local government [system]. If different projects could come in and help them, we may even see some improvement.” Nonceba, whom earlier expressed his appreciation for the Facility, also noted that there were ways that the Facility could become more integrated into the community. He said,
We need the people to feel and part and parcel of [the Facility]. [The Facility] should come nearer to the people, calling community meetings, addressing the people, telling the people about this project, going to the traditional leaders, informing about these things. The people should tell them [Facility researchers] about their problems. There are many problems that many people don't know [about]. They are near enough, but we want them more near and more accessible than now, and place the offices nearer the people. And they should try to market themselves to make themselves more known.

Therefore, many residents did not think all was lost. In fact, in most of the interviews conducted with Greenveld residents, comments were made with an eye to improving practice. As expressed above, some were content with the Facility’s current level of commitment. Others, while less so, typically suggested means for remediation. Despite these diverse opinions, there was consistency regarding the need for both improved or continued cooperation and inclusion.

*Resident Perceptions of Reciprocity*

While the Facility promotes itself as a hub of community-based research, as my interviews with researchers revealed, there is not one model of community-based research or one view of reciprocity. Reciprocity, for example, varies in quality and quantity, from a project’s central focus to more of a secondary role. As mentioned earlier, different researchers had different relationships to the community. While researchers expressed this as different beliefs about academic practice, residents were unitary in understanding reciprocity as direct intervention, be that service delivery, job training or infrastructural improvements. In this section, I discuss the differing resident opinions towards researcher reciprocity. Many argued that researchers had a responsibility to ‘give back’ but had failed to do so, taking more than they gave. Others felt well-provided for and provided concrete examples of reciprocity.
Negative perceptions of reciprocity. Expressed earlier, researchers had different views of reciprocity. While all argued that their projects offered deliverables to the community, these could range from small vegetable patches to direct service. That is, there was a relationship to the community, however the relationship varied a great deal depending on the specific researcher and research project. Residents had a less differentiated view. Instead of a more flexible understanding of reciprocity, most residents argued for direct service and/or intervention. That is, the community’s feeling about reciprocity was that it should offer, sometimes literally as in the case of bridges and roads, concrete deliverables. Suggestions ranged from the construction of dams and bridges to education and capacity-building programs. In that most Facility projects neither offered nor practiced active reciprocity many residents expressed feelings of dissatisfaction and academic exploitation.

Fiona had participated in a number of Facility projects, first as an interpreter and most recently as a student in the COT program. She graduated from the program and had taken a job as an occupational therapist in the local hospital. She had directly benefited from active reciprocity. Nevertheless, she expressed to me the differentiated practice of reciprocity at the Facility. “From some of them, we get things afterwards. It’s not just research. But the others, we don’t know what they’re doing. Or why they aren’t coming back to talk to us. Or if they’ll come back next time. Those guys are just for their own research. After they finish, they go back [to Johannesburg] to give presentations. But nothing happens here!”

Themba expressed a similar suspicion of Facility intentions. Given the relationship that he had witnessed, he wondered whether researchers were data-mining in
Greenveld. Like Fiona, he mentioned his experience with active and passive reciprocity and his preference for the former. He said,

> We get troupes of students coming here year after year. And after three years, they get Ph.D.s back in Johannesburg. There has always been this complaint. Some of us didn’t care. They enjoyed these small projects. Sometimes you’d see a White man and a Black person interpreting for him. But what I’m trying to say is that this isn’t a good venture. This has always been our complaint; that most of the money was spent on management or to empower their own students. And they leave us with a small garden (*loud laughter*)! When they would get their budget they would divide it into salaries. A director here and a director there. So this money was more for their own job-creation than to help local people.

The picture Themba paints is of a Black man in service to a White man. Constructing it this way, Themba presents the Black man more in service to the White researcher than in partnership or receiving important benefits from the relationship. His ascribing race to these characters is interesting because it strikes to the heart of apartheid and colonial subjectivities. That is, White South Africa takes from the Black South Africa and offers very little in return. For Themba, this was not the type of reciprocity he felt was useful or appropriate. This stands in contrast to the statements that several researchers argued were examples of how they gave back to the community, often through short-term translation jobs.

> Others spoke about the changing nature of reciprocity, going from active to passive. Sigidi did so in reference to a law clinic in the area saying,

> You know, things have gotten worse over there. I’ll give you an example. People that used to work around here on farms used to get advice from [the Facility]. They used to offer legal advice as part of their work. But now, at this moment, it’s gone.

Sigidi described a legal clinic that used to operate out of the Facility in the late 1980s. Charles, a Facility researcher, spoke of the project as quite radical. “Certainly in the
White community we faced some nasty incidents. People viewed [the Facility] as a communist enclave against apartheid. There was a lot of antagonism by the white community, especially the farmers.” This antagonism was because the Facility provided free legal advice to farm workers, particularly about labor practices. Local farmers were outraged and began to put pressure on the Facility to stop the program. Charles said, “People were complaining about abuse by the farmers and then the farmer was having to go into court because some bloody (laughter) academic was meddling in affairs down here.” The clinic eventually closed. However, it was the University’s belief that it was ineffective and a drain on resources, rather than White pressure, which forced the closure.

Of the many things that Nkosi spoke about, he stressed to me the severe development challenges in Greenveld. Of great importance to him was the failed SA-EDU project. For him, it was an ideal project as it focused on education, something dear to him as a teacher. He was able to personalize this, saying,

There was that school [SA-EDU] where one could learn how to use a computer. Even myself, I’m a teacher and I don’t know how to use a computer. [The Facility] was trying that at [SA-EDU], but they were not concentrating on the people, just themselves. They were just doing research.

For Nkosi, the Facility needed to function similar to other NGOs and the local government. This was clear in our interview when he spoke to me about outcomes.

They don’t deliver. I think that’s very important. You know, they’re good at research but they don’t give anything. They just keep that information for their own benefit. They keep that information for themselves. Wouldn’t it be good to do the research and then afterwards you deliver something?

Sigidi felt that the Facility had some level of responsibility to the people of Greenveld.

They really owe us a lot. Even though this is heresy, some [researchers] get funds. They go out and request money and at the end of the day they enrich
themselves, as individuals until the money is gone. They don’t think of the community.

Sigidi echoes the ideas that Joseph and Barbara raised concerning the practice of research at the Facility. To reiterate, Barbara argued that the Facility had a unique relationship to the community, one where basic research is out-of-place. She suggested remediation in two forms: first, a written code of researcher conduct requiring reciprocity in the form of concrete deliverables; second, that when requesting funds, Facility researchers should include a final section on reciprocity that detailed the nature of the deliverable that was accounted for in its budget.

Themba also argued that researchers should include the community when they applied for monies based on local development. Facility projects were typically funded by a combination of small university seed grants and somewhat larger external grants. In two cases, projects received no money other than the researcher’s salary and modest departmental support.

My understanding is that this budget of their’s is arranged from donors somewhere. I know you’ve heard of the Kellogg Foundation. My impression is that they’re fundraising on the basis that they’ve targeted this community. And rightly so, because the area is poverty-stricken! Now I’m saying, if indeed they’re fundraising and their objective is to assist, then maybe they owe it to communities to at least put up an access road or a bridge in three years. So when they go back, yes, of course, they’ll have their degrees, but they would be able to leave something that you can point to and say, ‘This is the result of that guy’s studies.’ At least we’ll benefit. Because I’m convinced they have funds that can assist in that way. But they don’t allow that. Like I’ve said, they just fund small projects.

In addition to tangible projects, Themba argued that researchers could also use their experience with grants to help the community apply for community improvement funds, called ‘business plans’ in South Africa. “Once they’ve completed their studies in the
area, they could help communities by writing business plans. These plans could be used to find funding from different agencies.” However, he ended with a more pointed commentary about his feelings of grant funding that echoed Barbara’s feelings. “I thought that somehow, [the University] was supposed to set aside a particular amount to assist us. Whether that is a borehole, a reservoir or a small bridge, like I was saying. I think that’s very important.”

*Positive perceptions of reciprocity.* Others expressed this sense of reciprocity differently than Themba. Nine of the people I spoke with expressed some level of appreciation for the Facility, arguing that researchers had helped them quite a bit. While Themba described these as ‘small’ projects, many conceptualized reciprocity much more broadly: improved healthcare, better education and general improvement in the community.

Sphiwe was a local ward councilor for the Greenveld region. Despite the problems and stresses the Facility had faced over the years, he had a positive opinion of their work and how it contributed to life in Greenveld. He spoke to me about the Facility’s various attempts to cooperate with the wider community and participate in various development efforts.

The University? What can I say? In short, they liberated us before liberation came here. They’ve been involved with Blacks. There’s nothing that they did that was outside the scope of people’s understanding or of asking the people. They never do things without consulting the people. They ask, ‘What must we do?’ They don’t decide for them.

Sphiwe also offered important insight into issues of cooperation, by way of his own personal history.
Let me just take you back because everything must have history. If we can look at all the development that we have here… the first wave [was] done by [the Facility]. From the ground to the top! [The Facility] was even there even when it came to negotiate things like services to the community [such as] electricity. They even tried to make some cheaper services to help people, like taking cattle dung to make gas. I can still remember, but I was so young then. But [the Facility] was involved in so many ways. [The Facility] was there! You see, those [researchers] came here and [gave] people information, putting it into development in the community.

I was in Greenveld in 1992 on a different research project and was able to observe the gas project in action. An engineering researcher had designed a composter into which dung was placed and out of which was harnessed methane gas. The gas was piped into several houses and, despite an unpleasant odor, provided a fire source for cooking. It had a secondary mission to curb the search for firewood, and thus, deforestation. During my most recent fieldwork, Charles told me that the gas project closed in 1993 and the researcher moved back to Main campus.

The fact that projects closed, however, did not seem to bother Sphiwe. Instead, he thought of the long-line of contributions that the Facility had made to the region. He said,

[The researchers are] very, very, very involved. Let me just first mention this, because I was born here. It’s not just now that I know [about the Facility]. [They have] been with us for a long time. Since the beginning, they were concentrating on us, this northern part of [Greenveld]. I believe that all the NGOs that are here and all the development that’s here, its all a product of [the Facility].

Sphiwe, in particular, had been working very closely with Jaco and Jabulani in the SA-H2O project and referred to the project often and fondly. It is important to note, however, that SA-H2O was not a University project, but an independent NGO. Addressed below, this project, in particular, provides exemplars of the limits of
university-led civic engagement and how more was often accomplished and local satisfaction heightened once University ties were severed.

Vusimuzi spoke to me about education and job training while we stood on the side of the busy road in Greenveld. Although he was unemployed, over the years he had worked along several Facility researchers, especially those focused on water issues, his favorite topic. While he was not happy with the current level of reciprocity, he recalled fondly the early 1990s saying,

The community really improved then. In the late 80s and early 90s, quite a number of young people used their services to acquire skills, you know get information and improve their skills. Most of those same people who started at [the Facility] now have good positions in NGOs and some in the government.

Fiona echoed Vusimuzi’s sentiments about training. “It is not just research. After their research we usually have something. When research is done we have something. There are people in the community that have been trained by [the Facility]. It has really improved things.” Fiona is a case in point. Her relationship with the Facility started as an interpreter for an Occupational Rehabilitation research project. When this project expanded into a Rehabilitation Worker training program, Fiona enrolled and became a certified Occupational Therapist. “I was not working for more than five years. I was just sitting at home, not doing anything. But after their research they started to train us.” She is now employed at the local hospital.

Nonceba echoed similar sentiments about reciprocity. Nonceba was an older, man who held a civil service position in the municipal government. He had lived in Greenveld his whole life and felt positive about Facility cooperation. He did not express the same frustration with the Facility as others did. Instead, he had a more sympathetic
view. He argued that Facility research had made significant improvements to the region. “I would say life has become easier for us because [Facility researchers] solve some of the problems within the communities.” From our interview, it became clearer that he had given some thought to the Facility, and he had knowledge about specific projects. He expressed the projects as being very relevant to the needs of the community. “Their work deals with the issue of poverty and community development…and some of the problems that we face as community.” The refugee program came up as both relevant and offering something tangible to the community. He mentioned it proudly.

When you take the refugee assistance program, it helps the refugees from other African countries that have fled to our country illegally and didn't have the chance to go through the right channels. It helps them go through these channels. But, it also helps with xenophobia. Because you have a problem with people placing their frustrations on these illegal people. So, I think the Facility, in terms of attending to these community issues, is good.

Discussed earlier, the refugee program had hired someone that focused on active reciprocity, one of two projects to do so. Nomsa was hired as a paralegal research assistant and service provider. It was very difficult to arrange our interview as she was usually in remote and difficult to find villages for most of the day. While there, she offered free legal advice to anyone. She explained that questions typically concerned how to apply for certain government grants, finding lost family members and mediating disputes. For Joseph, Barbara and Nomsa, this was important for they knew that the populations that they researched, Mozambiquan and Zimbabwean refugees, were a vulnerable group as they were not accepted by the state or local community. While many had lived in Greenveld their whole life, the apartheid and homeland governments refused
to recognize them, and denied them access to services such as disability grants, childcare, education or pension programs.

Like education or refugee assistance, other Facility projects focused on healthcare. Ten years after the first democratic elections, Greenveld was still operated under apartheid-style healthcare: poorly funded hospitals, few doctors and looming health crises (e.g., HIV/AIDS). With only two hospitals for nearly 1 million persons, patients typically queued up at 5am with the line often being 500 persons long (Lukhele, 2004). At the time of my fieldwork, the hospital was always busy and very crowded. Nevertheless, Mpumelele expressed that this was an improvement. This improvement, he maintained, was because of Facility projects.

Right there in that hospital, [the researchers] are really focusing on issues of health and welfare. We feel so grateful for their involvement. I can see improvement. That hospital there, the thing is improved. It was dirty and the patients were not eating good foods that helped them keep healthy. But [researchers] came in and now things are a lot better.

While he could not mention any specifics about what was happening at the hospital, he knew that ‘something’ was happening and attributed it to the Facility.

Kamuzu expressed the same sentiment. Although previous quotes expressed that he was generally dissatisfied with the Facility, he made an exception when it concerned the public health researchers. For him, these projects were important.

There’s a project called [PHP]. Its dealing mainly with health issues. I think they’re very proactive because they came up with the concept of a district health system. They’ve played a leading role in terms of helping health issues in our district. They’re grappling with issues of HIV and so on. Now that unit, to me, they really tried to make and impact. That one is very good and active.

He ends by referring to many research deliverables as irrelevant. “Save for this one and only project, the [PHP], others are only offering small projects.” This captures the
complications of reciprocity in community-based work: some researchers seemed to actively contribute in local efforts while others offered few concrete deliverables.

Mpumelele offered other examples of irrelevancy, in terms of local educational improvements. Referring to SA-EDU, he argued that although the project had collapsed, it still offered a contribution to the area. This contribution resonated with him two years following its demise.

Even at the schools, [researchers] promoted development. Our young people, those who were did complete their Standard 10, they used to go to that place. They helped our children stay as busy as they could. It was not just with computers. They were educating them in so many things. [The University] came down here and built that project there. And because of that, a lot people are now working because they gained experience at [SA-EDU].

Daniel had been personally involved with the Facility while a member of a local water committee. He stated that the Facility had given him and others a number of skills that he felt were useful. “I was in a local water committee and they helped us with skills development. They helped us identify water problems and ways of solving the problems. They helped us build capacities regarding how to handle water issues around the area. So that was really good.” He added that others, not affiliated with water issues, also gained important skills.

Quite a lot of young people were volunteering for their services. They helped young people, disadvantaged people actually, acquire and improve their skills. Because when they were volunteering, they would get information and skills. So most of those young men and women, even though they weren’t getting paid, most of them now occupy recognized positions in different NGOs and in the government.

Reflecting Mpumelele’s earlier statement, the projects had left a lasting impression on the area, particularly as it concerned education and job training.
Means for remediation. While there were diverse opinions about the quality of reciprocity, residents operated from the same view that research should contribute in a tangible way to Greenfeld. Greenfeld residents envisioned diverse projects and deliverables, some quite large, others the ‘small projects’ that Themba disparaged. Vusimuzi believed that researchers could contribute in a social norming campaign around the payment of services and democratic governance.

I think they need to educate our people about water as a commodity. People need to be educated about paying for water. I think it must be a community-based effort. See, people have a real negative attitude about politicians making decisions for them, so they won’t pay for something they haven’t been a part of. I think they need to formulate it themselves. The [Facility] could have them participate in the processes so they, we, know we are bound up with this because we came up with it. So there really needs to be cooperation between the local government and policy formulators, like the researchers.

Vusimuzi comments point directly to the history of the anti-apartheid struggle. The apartheid government spent significantly less on social services and infrastructure in Black areas. The result was stark inequalities between White and Black areas. Blacks protested by refusing to pay for services. The same tactics continue today, with the post-apartheid government struggling to end a culture of non-payment. For Vusimuzi, the Facility could help with this; preparing the community for development through their inclusion in decision-making.

This sense of research and education priming the area for development was echoed by others. Kagiso argued that the Facility should link research and development programs, allowing them to support each other.

I would really like [the Facility] to be involved in more social development areas and doing more social research. They could help the local government because there is a real backlog in service delivery. So [researchers] could help the local government see where they need to deliver. They could also analyze the local government to see what sectors are failing the people and to see if politicians are
serving the people accordingly, checking to see if they following the principles that the government passed.”

Mpumelele and Sigidi argued that the most logical product that the university could offer is higher education. For Mpumelele, this could be achieved by establishing a branch campus in the area, limiting the migration of higher education seekers out of Greenveld.

The problem really is at the tertiary level. People are moving to Cape Town, Jo’burg, all these places. So if [the University] could establish technikons or technical schools that would be great.

He added that poor students needed to be given the opportunity to study in Greenveld, as it is often too difficult to pay expenses in the major urban areas. “A person may want to take certain courses but are told that they have to go to Pretoria for that. But if their family finances are lacking, then it frustrates the students because they can’t go. So it must be local.” Sigidi argued for a similar injection of higher education in the area.

Of all the organizations in the area, we really need institutions such as [the University]. In this whole region, the closest higher education institution is some 250 kilometers away. And that is a problem. How are we going to have our people educated here? You know we have this technical college but no one uses it. If [the University] could come and make a branch campus in our area, then people could stay here and get educated.

The technical colleges in the area had garnered a bad reputation as being both very expensive and not able to give one skills that could be marketable after graduation.

While often referred to as technical colleges, these were more accurately Teacher Colleges. Teaching in the area, however, was not a desired profession as pay was low and school conditions were very poor. Given this general dissatisfaction with this profession, the Greenveld technical college had closed. The Greenveld campus struggled to attract and retain its students. As Mpumelele explained, if the student was smart
enough and had means, s/he would generally leave the area for one of the former, Blacksonly ‘bush’ colleges (e.g., the University of Zululand, the University of Venda), aegional technikon (e.g., similar in mission to American community colleges), or one of
the flagship universities in the major cities (e.g., the University of the Witwatersrand,
University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria).

Others made more concrete suggestions for reciprocity. Reflecting their positions
in local government, Themba and Kamuzu had very tangible ideas how researchers could
contribute to local development. Themba argued first that researchers must devote more
attention to the dangerous water shortage in the area.

If one of them gets money then we say they should dedicate some of it to water
provision. People actually have to queue for water here. Some places people buy
water from guys that drive in with bakkies [pick-up trucks] who carry 25 liters or
so. This is a really serious situation and we expect them to assist us with this
water backlog. Whether they set up a borehole or whatever, it is really important
that they do something.

In order to battle a 60% unemployment rate, Kamuzu suggested that a project should be
designed to teach job skills and capacity building. He made the sharp distinction between
job provision and job creation, however. “People need to be taught how to create jobs,
not seek jobs. We are not saying that [the Facility] must create employment, otherwise
we would be beggars. We need skills development for job creation.” Kamuzu had spent
some time thinking about what particular skills the Facility could provide as evidenced
by the details of his suggestion. “When you talk of skills development you need to
consider local resources. For example, there are many people building houses around
here but you have to go to big companies to purchase the materials. We are interested in
training people to produce these materials locally. We’d like to organize them as a one
unit rather than sole traders who just concentrate on themselves. “[The Facility] could have a big impact here in training.”

Sphiwe echoed Kamuzu’s idea about skills development. Sphiwe thought reinvigorating the tourist industry, would be a good venture. “[The Facility] could improve our people as it concerns tourism. You know, they could teach people different art skills. Teach them in a way that they could be self-sufficient. Now people just depend on the government. They say, ‘It’s the government that must give us a job.’ So if [the Facility] could come here and improve us that way then Greenveld would be a good place to live.”

The issue of skills development resurfaced in many of my interviews with Greenveld residents. As the leader in many community development projects in the area, Sigidi was particularly close to this issue. He argued that they could offer direct services but also mentioned how the Facility could collaborate with the multitude of struggling NGOs already in the area, forming a partnership that would increase their ability to provide for the area.

We need a project focused on poverty alleviation. We are very poor here. There are no jobs. There’s nothing. They could come in with a project that could educate our people and train them. They could also work to help sustain the NGOs we already have in the area. Because the problem is that most of our NGOs cannot sustain their own projects. They usually collapse because of funding.

He continued by stressing the fact that the Facility had a responsibility to help the community. “I want to emphasize that [the Facility] needs to take care of our people. They need to make sure they deliver good services.”

As Sigidi reveals, the Facility and the University were often viewed, erroneously in the eyes of researchers and administrators, as a service provider or developer. Some
voiced this very concretely. Dingane said, “We want [the Facility] to help us build community halls so that the people can assemble. We have one, but it is at the market and too far. We want one closer.” Mthuthuzeli suggested that the Facility focus some energy on recreational facilities to combat juvenile delinquency. “I’d like them to erect a sports field so that the youth are off the street, keeping them away from drugs, alcohol, sex and a bunch of mischievous things. I think a sports field would help. And it would really be a benefit in our community.” Finally, Nkosi made the most extensive request of the Facility, extending their focus to industrial development.

We have lots of fruits in our area. For example, then, if the Facility could come in here with a project to make juice, then we could take it over and it would great. You know people are doing a lot of small farming here of tomatoes, sugar cane, maize. So if the Facility could come here we could make ‘The Facility Factory’ where we make a few things and employ 500 people. You know, we are talking about 75% unemployment here.”

Discussed earlier, these expectations worried and frustrated university administrators and Facility researchers who felt they were not able to provide these things, nor was it their responsibility.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented findings from the data collected through intensive interviews, observation and document analysis. These data paint a picture of academic practice that is far more complicated than typically expressed in the methodological and theoretical literatures about community-based research and development. Facility-participants in this study described their practice of community-based research in nuanced ways. Various factors led to this diverse practice. Among these complicating factors was first a local context. The Greenveld municipality presented sizable obstacles to conducting research, including violence and severe resource deprivation. Further
complicating this picture was a derisive attitude of the Facility back on Main campus. Among Facility researchers, there was a sense of institutional isolation at the Facility, with researchers feeling disempowered and unable to prove their worth on Main campus. The practice of community-based research was further complicated by more personal impressions of their role in Greenveld. For some, a commitment to social change was captured in their research designs. For others, reciprocity was seen as a welcomed spin-off of their research, but not their priority. Taken together, these beliefs about their work and role in the wider institutional setting created unique community-based practices.

In some cases, this diverse community-based practice came into conflict with community beliefs and expectations. Among Greenveld residents, the predominant view was that research should benefit the locale in concrete ways. While some felt that such benefits had occurred, others believed that more could and should be done. In addition to concrete deliverables, many community members also wanted to be included in Facility deliberations. In that research directly impacted their lives, they felt that they should be included into germane conversations. More so, many researchers and residents believed that with the post-apartheid political system geared to creating a more inclusive dialogue, it did not seem to make sense that more researchers were not communicating with the populations they were studying. In the next chapter, I address these findings in more detail as I relate them to my original research questions and the wider literature on community development.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The findings presented in Chapter 4 suggest that community-based research is subject to a great deal of internal variability. Participants revealed this variability in two key areas: organizational culture, and perceptions of reciprocity and participation. The purpose of this chapter is to initiate a discussion of these findings. I do this first in relation to my original research questions. Following this, I address these findings in relation to the literature that framed this study. Then discuss the implications these findings have for practice of community-based research. In a concluding section, I examine the study in relation to its limitations and strengths.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the practice of community-based research at one South African university. Three research questions framed this study:

1) How do academic research and community service interact?;

2) What are the particular ways that context complicates this interaction?;

3) What meaning does reciprocity have for researchers and residents? How is reciprocity practiced? How is reciprocity experienced?
How do Academic Research and Community Service Interact?

Exploring the ways research interacts with people was at the heart of this study. The 18 researcher-participants involved in this study possessed an array of opinions about their relationship with and objections to the local community. All researchers believed that interacting with local residents was important. The nature of interaction, however, was the subject of much debate. That is, interaction did always mean service in the sense that is captured in the community-based literature. For researchers such as William and Joseph, interacting with the community through service was integral to their personal and professional lives. They expressed these commitments in very tangible, service-based projects such as legal clinics and public health interventions.

Researcher-community interaction was not clearly defined or stipulated in Facility or University policy. This ambiguity provided a space to carve out one’s own service identity. In that no one method was proscribed, researchers were able to define service for themselves. For some, this was too much flexibility. While many felt there were different ways to connect with the community, others struggled with how to go about doing it. These struggles became particularly acute when a researcher’s personal beliefs about poverty and development came into conflict with his/her identity as a scientist.

The result was a large degree of variability as it concerned the interaction of research, service and science. Dispassionate research often became difficult when confronted with the extreme poverty of Greenfeld. Feelings of empathy and caring often called into question the very idea of what it meant to be a scientist. In these cases, science became something that served communities through applications-driven research (Gibbons et al, 1994). In other cases, the community served as, in Lawrence’s words “an
experimental test-bed” for research questions. Still others, like Effa, were uneasy about either position. She, in particular, struggled with wanting to help but felt constrained by professional norms of bias reduction and distanced observation.

Working at the Facility was not always so morally-conflicted. While some resented those who did not provide service, and others internalized their anxiety when they felt they did not cooperate enough, there were others who were comfortable with their level of interaction. When participants, such as Audrey, Richard and Lawrence, saw themselves as researchers and teachers first, tangible service was offered at their convenience. That is, when community service was either impossible or inappropriate, there was little angst associated with not giving. For many researchers, then, service was always extra. While it was unclear what influenced this attitude, what remains important is that the nature of community interaction was diverse and often depended on personal beliefs about research and community service.

Residents revealed less variability in their perceptions about academic service. In all cases, residents advocated for high interactivity and relevant research. This being said, there were significant differences of opinions regarding the relative success and failure of these interactions. Some residents were quite content with the level of interaction. Some expressed gratitude that the Facility was located in Greenveld. In that the area had been culturally, if not legally, off-limits to White South Africans, researcher presence in the area was appreciated.

Researching in Greenveld catalyzed significant community expectations, however. Some of the expectations were very tangible, from water taps, to jobs, to soccer fields. There were less tangible expectations as well. Among these were
demands for participatory and reciprocal research projects. Some residents were currently involved in research projects; others used to be and wondered why this had changed. The majority, however, had never been included and had developed a view of academic research as self-serving. There was a sense of discomfort and frustration with researchers and the broader purpose of research. Researchers were seen as greedy, interested in completing their degrees and advancing their careers. Resident expectations were continually dashed. Amid this despondency, there was hopefulness. Despite several years of ignoring the community, many believed the Facility had the potential to help the region. This hope for improvement, however, was predicated on meeting the community’s increasing expectations. Improvement could occur, yet only through increased delivery of services.

These increased expectations often presented real fears about appropriateness at the Facility and on Main campus. The construction of soccer fields may improve community relations, but was the University or the Facility in a position to make this investment? At the same time, resident expectations largely mirrored what was written in the Facility and the University’s mission statements. These documents reflected post-apartheid culture that required all persons and organizations work to address national development goals. Given a Facility whose stated mission was community development through applied research, can one expect residents to assume something other than this would result? Requests such as community halls and soccer pitches, therefore, occupied unclear territory in the post-apartheid university. While charged with civic engagement, the university was to do so only as it concerned national development goals. Researchers doubted soccer fields and job provision were appropriate. How then is appropriate
engagement and service defined? Who determines appropriateness? In this determination, who is ignored? To what extent can community-based research create unreasonable expectations or inappropriate demands? These questions will be addressed later in this chapter as it concerns the limits to reciprocity and participation.

What are the Particular Ways that Context Complicates this Interaction?

A variety of contexts came together at the Facility and affected how research was conducted. At the broadest level, researchers and residents operated within the context of post-apartheid South Africa. The costs of apartheid were large and continued to affect daily life long after the election of Mandela. Apartheid was advanced as a program to preserve cultures. Maintaining that different races could not coexist peacefully, South Africans were separated based on physical and cultural attributes (Christopher, 1994). This separation had political and economic costs. Politically, Blacks were disenfranchised and denied the right to vote. Economically, they were forced out of White South Africa (i.e., cities and farms) and into the poor, rural homelands. The result was engrained mistrust between the races: Blacks fearing political violence, Whites fearing reprisals (Malan, 1991). These social costs are captured in the stories Black South Africans tell of torture, murder and exclusion occurring during apartheid (Krog, 2000; Tutu, 2000).

This history intersected the Facility, literally, at its foundation. Greenveld straddled the borders of two of the poorest and most violent homelands in South Africa. The population was some of the poorest in the country and, as a result, faced many more challenges than those in other provinces. There were pressing needs in the area at the most basic levels of food, water and shelter. Add to this, concerns about disease, gender-
based violence and unemployment and a picture emerges of profound underdevelopment. Residents and researchers agreed that the Facility had the potential to address these problems.

Living in Greenveld presented both practical and philosophical challenges to work, however. Greenveld provided many opportunities for service-based work and research. However, the depth of poverty in the area often prevented effective interaction. Mentioned earlier, many researchers struggled with ethical issues of wanting to contribute to the local community while ensuring rigorous research. Rigor was largely understood, however, as something that excessive community interaction could compromise.

Research was also practically difficult. Apartheid policies worked to create a highly uneven distribution of wealth and resources. The homelands were most drastically affected. Greenveld residents had learned to survive without paved roads, reliable telephone service, adequate health care services, potable water or electricity. Researchers from Johannesburg and Cape Town struggled without these amenities. Adding to this was a history of regional violence. Given the poverty of the area, the relative wealth of researchers and the comfort of the Facility were visible reminders of apartheid. Researchers were often targets of violent crime. The impact this had on researcher-community interaction was to limit the sheer number of researchers in the area. Many were unwilling to attempt a professional life in an area with so many obstacles.

Greenveld residents were aware of the economic and political power afforded academics. As such, residents had significant expectations that researchers would use their position to help. However, the quantity and quality of these expectations prevented
interaction. Ranging from the most basic goods such as water, to more complex products such as jobs, residents had high expectations for Facility researchers. Researchers had grown used to these requests and had learned to be careful about how far they extended themselves, knowing that expectations were easily raised. In many cases, researchers turned inward, interacting with the community only when necessary. To these ends, service was often kept in a secondary position.

In addition to historical and regional contexts, is the institutional context of Main campus. As revealed in Chapter 4, Facility work existed between two opposing discourses. On one side were those who pushed for more and better research. Opposing this were those whom supported the ethos of engagement as captured in the University mission and national constitution. This left researchers in a difficult position of having to meet the demands of viewpoints that were presented as antagonistic. That is, one had to pick between service or research. There was no discussion how each could serve the other. Unable to succeed under such divergent mandates, Facility work was discredited.

The lack of professional and financial support filtered out into the Greenveld community. Residents had noticed that researcher interaction and service had grown more infrequent over the past five years. Programs that had seemed vital to the community (e.g., legal clinics, education services, occupational therapy) had ended without any local consultation. Therefore, the tense relationship between the Facility and Main campus impacted how well researchers were able to conduct the very work senior faculty, administrators, Greenveld residents and the constitution expected of them.
What Meaning Does Reciprocity Have for Researchers And Residents? How is Reciprocity Practiced? How is Reciprocity Experienced?

Reciprocity was a complex practice at the Facility. While researchers had different beliefs about how and what one should ‘give back,’ all maintained that it was beneficial to return something. What it was, and how it was returned, however, were the matter of much debate.

Reciprocity was practiced in three different ways. The first was active reciprocity. I define this as the funneling of tangibles from one’s research to the local population being studied. Five researchers practiced this method. Examples at the Facility included Nomsa’s legal clinic work in the refugee program, or Glenda’s work training community rehabilitation workers. The second was passive reciprocity. This was a more modest and/or indirect form of reciprocity whereby the researcher returned product back to the local population, however it was typically not a central feature of the research. Seven researchers practiced this method. Passive reciprocity often took the form of hiring translators, planting vegetable patches or delivering raw data to a chief or village committee.

Reciprocity was further complicated when researchers used a third method, a multi-scaled reciprocity. Multi-scaled reciprocity refers to an approach to community service that focused on a diverse number of scales (e.g., local, regional, national global) but also on the interaction of these scales (i.e., the local affecting the global and vice versa). Six researchers practiced this method. Among the more adamant advocates of direct service, like Barbara, Joseph and William, reciprocity did not necessarily occur only in Greenveld. For example, Barbara and Joseph’s work on refugees had a clear local application, namely in the legal advice that Nomsa offered in various villages and
towans. However, they also produced a number of policy documents that were currently being used in provincial and national policy circles. Likewise, Glenda’s work with community rehabilitation workers was not limited to Greenveld. She, Sarah and Gwen researched the effectiveness of these village-based therapists in order to influence provincial and national policy about their value to rural healthcare systems. Such reciprocity practices were not only focused locally, but had a more integrative view of scale and social action.

While different reciprocity practices existed at the Facility, there was little agreement about which was more appropriate. In particular, active and passive reciprocity were seen as discordant activities, rather than related or even mutually-supportive. The most vocal critique came from those whom viewed active reciprocity as more appropriate. Critique of passive reciprocity came in two forms. First, it was argued that with basic research as a primary focus, local residents (i.e., participants) were exploited. Gwen, Sylvie and Joseph maintained that if one ignored serving local people, the result could be academic exploitation. While exploitation was undesirable, there was also concern that this maltreatment could translate into strained community relations.

There was a growing fear that if ‘data mining’ continued, Greenveld would turn inward, and not allow subsequent researchers to go into its many villages. The belief was that when reciprocity was used, it was used symbolically, as when Effa described it as “a token of thanks.”

Second, in addition to being exploitative, others felt that the detached scientist model was archaic. Sylvie and Barbara felt community service and social research could be linked. The marriage of the two was often a motivation to come to the Facility,

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believing one could ‘make a difference’ with his/her scholarship. There were, however, important institutional obstacles to reciprocity. Sylvie maintained that the main pressure to ‘stay the course’ (i.e., focusing on basic research), came from senior academics who had built their careers on this research model. Research and service could not be wed, they argued. Not only was this seen as sacrificing objectivity, but it was a drain on University resources. Researchers such as Sylvie and Barbara however turned to the constitution and the University mission as evidence that such a belief was old-fashioned. Research and service could be intertwined and they were proof.

This notion of a university committed to local people resonated with Greenveld residents. While Facility researchers and University administrators debated over where to focus one’s energies, research, service, or the integration of the two, among resident-participants there was no debate. As William said, there was no choice but service.

Unlike researcher-participants, residents exhibited less variation over reciprocity. Every resident maintained that anyone coming to study Greenveld must return something tangible to him or her. In that researchers often did not do so, many residents felt the Facility was negligent. Passive reciprocity was, therefore, seen as an unacceptable means of collaborating with the community.

In many ways, such opinions came out of the profound poverty of Greenveld. The point of what was perceived as esoteric research was lost on resident-participants. Several researchers maintained that residents did not understand what it meant to do research. Charles maintained residents thought he was crazy for clipping strands of grass and calling it research. There was, therefore, a lack of transparency about what research
was, who benefited and how residents could contribute if they wanted. Research, was therefore, something mysterious to residents.

**Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Literature**

**Community-Based Research and Civic Engagement**

Community-based research is a common strategy of university engagement. As captured in the literature and policy documents (Government of South Africa, 1997; Kellogg Commission, 1999), such a methodological approach was meant to contribute to local development. Yet, defining ‘development’ can be a complicated and frustrating project. What does it mean ‘to develop?’ Equally contentious, what does it mean to be developed, developing, or underdeveloped? The post-foundationalists suggest that our difficulty in defining development comes from a crisis of representation (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995; Sachs, 1993; Said, 1979). Although dominant discourses exist, simply put, development is not the same in every time and every place. Nor does it serve the same purpose. For some, development is largely a linear, economic process with stable beginning and ending points (Rostow, 1960). Still others view development as an issue of power, better yet, of uneven power (Frank, 1967). These are but two stories of development, within and beyond which are myriad others (Escobar, 1995).

These same concerns and debates about development occurred in the University and the Facility vis-à-vis civic engagement. Community-based research is one of the more common methods universities use to gain social relevance and meaningfully engage with local communities (Strand et al, 2003). Writing about the South African experience, Subotzky (1999b) argues that university civic engagement reflects a global concern for the “social purpose of higher education” (p. 518). Under this new social contract
between higher education and the community, Subotzky (1999b) writes, “the institution becomes an advocate for social justice” (p. 522). Such a view was supported constitutionally in South Africa. Working to overcome the divisiveness and uneven spread of resources that apartheid wrought, the post-apartheid Bill of Rights stipulated that educational institutions work to “redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices” (Government of South Africa, 1996, p. 14). This has translated into a University mission that places civic engagement in support of national development goals (University Mission, 2000).

The South African experience with university engagement borrows liberally from both European and American scholars (Kraak, 2000; Subotzky, 2000). The ideas of Ernest Boyer (1990, 1996) and Michael Gibbons (1998), in particular, are implied in much of the South African literature and experience with university engagement (Kraak, 1998). Boyer (1990) and later Gibbons et al (1994) advocated for a higher education system where research and teaching addressed pressing social problems. This was achieved through internal (e.g., transdisciplinary) and external connections (e.g., civic engagement). Intellectual pursuits, they argued, did not exist in a social vacuum despite attempts to make them so (Boyer, 1996). Understood this way, university-community interaction moved beyond narrow self- and disciplinary- interests, towards the redress of complex social problems (Gibbons, 1998; Nowotony et al, 2003). Subotzky (1999a, 1999b, 2000) and others (Maybach, 1996; Saltmarsh, 1998) have described this as paradigm shift in higher education, one that supports initiatives focused on justice.

Maybach (1996) wrote that a focus on justice is a minority view within the dominance of charity-based views of university engagement. In reference to service-
learning programs, she argues that the focus tends to not be on the recipients of service, and rather on those offering service. The effect, then, is to downplay the importance of what is offered in preference to the experience of service (Jones, 2003). The service providers remain unaccountable to the results of the service. Rhoads (1997) argued that a charity view of service simplifies the server-recipient relationship whereby each is defined by their relative possession, or lack, of certain resources. “Charity does not encourage the intimate connections and personal relationships that result from service built on mutuality” (Rhoads, 1997, p. 128). Thus, mutuality supports caring relationships, where both parties stand to gain something, rather than one giving and one taking.

At the Facility, many researchers aligned themselves with this move towards justice. They expressed that a necessary, if not essential factor, of research was its relevancy to local problems. Among those who felt a deep connection to Greenveld, there was a sincere expression that researchers had no place working in Greenveld if something relevant was not returned to the local community. Lawrence and Sylvie made it clear that this was more than something coming from benevolent researchers or ‘do-gooder’ academics. The University had translated this into a campaign for civic engagement. As Lawrence said, “We can no longer be an Ivory Tower institution,” expressing the cultural change that the end of apartheid created in South African universities.

Lawrence’s idea of civic engagement places the university in service to the community, rather than with the community. Gilley (1990) wrote that this is a difference of focus. He argued that higher education institutions should actively work to change the power dynamic that often sours university-community relations. In that the university is
traditionally seen as a collection of experts, deference is often paid to the opinions and information produced in the university. This can result in the university telling communities what they need, rather than having a conversation with local actors about what they want. Gelman et al (1998) write, “Some universities attend to their own needs...without taking into consideration the specific needs or assets of community partners” (p. 102). One unintended consequence of this is that community views can be sidelined. To solve this, Gilley (1990) recommends that the community be allowed to set the terms of the service, rather than the other way around. Such a view moves away from a more disembedded model of service and towards one that is locally-relevant.

The practice of community-based research at the Facility offers an important commentary on this literature. All researchers held the belief that civic engagement was a worthwhile initiative. Everyone interviewed at the Facility had some basic interest in development, albeit from various schools of thought and/or disciplines. As Charles said to me, “We’re all tackling rural development, just from very different angles.” While all researchers were interested in making a difference in Greenveld, the practice of this varied in significant ways. Some believed they could make a difference through their research, others maintained that direct service was a better tool. Some were very interested in creating caring, mutual relationships, whereas others felt this corrupted scientific discovery.

Therefore, the truth that everyone “was tackling rural development,” was not something everyone agreed on. That is, not everyone thought their scholarship affected local people in concrete ways. Many viewed the local application of their research as coming from higher levels, such as changes in provincial and national policy. While they
felt connected to Greenveld, they maintained the benefits of their work were not ‘locally-focused,’ in the immediate sense of the term. That is, for some researchers (e.g., Joseph, Barbara, William, Charles), localities were nested within national and global scales (Swyngedouw, 1997). Therefore, to focus at the provincial, national or global scale was seen to address local issues, although less immediately.

A lack of immediate local application was the cause for much debate. There were very different opinions about which researchers were relevant and which were not. Researchers involved in direct service (e.g., William, Joseph, Barbara, Glenda) argued that the more traditional researchers (e.g., Audrey, Dumisai, Effa, Lawrence, Richard) were not interested in engagement. This more traditional cadre of researchers often gave small products to the community, such as garden plots or short-term employment. Approached this way, service was offered to a population with little participation of the group in question. As such, the impact of the service lacks accountability (Maybach, 1996). That is, it is not examined for relevance or effectiveness.

Discussed more below in reference to reciprocity, Facility researchers worked to broaden the definition of ‘service’ beyond the duality of charity versus justice. Charles spoke how his research on sustainable development was very much rooted in conventional science practices, such as hypothesis testing, bias reduction and generalizability. However, he used his research in affecting policy change. Similarly, while William was interested in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS, he viewed this as an issue of local and national action. Therefore he connected local interventions to broader policy research. Quite often, however, if there were not immediate deliverables from community-based research, the researcher was seen as not acting in good faith with the
community. In not being locally-focused, their research was seen as disembedded and therefore irrelevant.

Many residents spoke about the practice of service in ways that mirrored the literature. While not articulated as the difference between charity and justice, residents made distinctions between irrelevant and relevant service. Small garden plots built by researchers or the hiring of day laborers were seen as irrelevant, reflective of charity models that do not address local needs or immediate local change. These projects were symbolic of researcher ignorance of what was actually needed in the community. More so, it indicated that researchers did not care enough about the residents to ask them what they needed or how they could help, or it did not occur to them to do so.

Community-based research and civic engagement are intertwined. Community-based research is, generally, an engagement strategy. However, as captured in participant responses, the manner in which community-based research is practiced can simultaneously further and impede the ends of engagement. In many ways, this represents ambiguity regarding what the ‘ends of engagement’ actually are. Reflecting wider debates in development and higher education, for some these ends are better science and knowledge, for others it involves justice. These ends have been discussed a great deal in the engagement literature, particularly in reference to the social role of the university and Mode 2 knowledge production (Gibbons, 1998; Gibbons et al, 1994; Nowotony et al, 2003). In the next section, I return to the Mode 2 thesis and discuss it in reference to the findings.
Charles’ suggestion that all Facility researchers were tackling development “from different angles” points to other overlaps with the literature, particularly the Mode 2 thesis suggested in Gibbons (1998), Gibbons et al (1994) and Nowotony et al (1998). The authors maintain that higher education has undergone a cultural shift. This shift is characterized by a changed mode of knowledge production, from Mode 1 to Mode 2. Mode 1 knowledge is the traditional, academic posture: focused on peer reviewed, basic research that addresses issues of disciplinary interest. In contrast is Mode 2 knowledge, which is transdisciplinary and “embedded in application in the social or market context” (Subotzky, 2000, p. 65). Rather than focused on a fundamental disciplinary question, Mode 2 research is characterized by the convergence of disciplines focused on a specific problem (Nowotony et al, 2003). The aim of research in Mode 2 is no longer knowledge for knowledge’s sake but rather for relevant problem-solving.

The Mode 2 thesis has resonated in South Africa (Government of South Africa, 1997; Jansen 2000; Kraak, 2000; Subotzky, 2000). With the government’s push for relevant research, universities have begun to focus on national development goals. Research is seen as an important tool in redressing apartheid injustices. This is captured most visibly in the section on ‘research’ in the Education White Paper 3 (Government of South Africa, 1997) were it states that academic researchers must:

Keep abreast with the emerging global trends, especially, the development of participatory and applications-driven research addressing critical national needs, which requires collaboration between knowledge producers, knowledge interpreters and knowledge managers and implementers. (pp. 31-31)

The Mode 2 thesis, therefore, holds particular relevance in the South African context and is something that most academics address in spirit, if not actual practice.
Harloe and Perry (2004) describe a Mode 2 university that mirrors the qualities of the Mode 2 thesis. This hypothetical institution has four qualities: 1) “it is closer to the government and market and responsive to national and regional needs” (Harloe & Perry, 2004, p. 217); 2) research is interdisciplinary and emphasizes relevance; 3) it is a key player in local governance (Harloe & Perry, 2004); 4) this institutional re-focusing usually occurs with significant internal turmoil.

The Facility reflects Harloe and Perry’s description of a Mode 2 university. Facility researchers worked closely with local, provincial and national governmental structures. Research was often funded through government grants with the expectation that it would address a specific problem or concern. Glenda’s work with community rehabilitation, for instance, was funded primarily through the provincial government whom was concerned about disability in rural areas. Research projects borrowed liberally and learned from the many disciplines that were represented at the Facility. While there was often internal disagreement about development processes, there was a high level of camaraderie that many felt contributed to their work. As Chapter 4 detailed, projects were less disciplinary-based, and more focused on specific problems such as deforestation, HIV/AIDS prevention and sustainable development.

While the Facility captures many of the qualities of Mode 2 organizations, it also points to important silences in Gibbons’ thesis. First, there is an assumption of discreteness in knowledge production. Mode 2 knowledge is presented as a rupture, producing a very different product through a very different process. That is, Mode 2 is seen as an innovation in knowledge production that supplants Mode 1 (Harloe & Perry, 2004). Yet, to what extent can the two modes coexist?
Much earlier, Kuhn (1962) described a similar process as ‘scientific revolutions,’ where paradigms change due to ontological and epistemological crises. When one paradigm seems inadequate, it is changed iteratively until the inadequacy is eliminated, remediated or ignorable. That being said, Kuhn stopped short of arguing that crisis-stricken paradigms disappear. Rather, they ‘stick around,’ often remaining unchanged by the crisis (Kuhn, 1962).

Gibbons et al (1994), however, speak about the emergence of Mode 2 with allusions to an overthrow or coup. Yet in practice, Mode 1 and Mode 2 are often co-located, as it were, within an institution, a research program or even a researcher. This was visible at the Facility. Researchers often conducted both ‘normal’ science and more ‘application-driven’ science simultaneously. William, for example, had very complex HIV/AIDS interventions that worked in conjunction with broader and more theoretical public health research. Jaco and Jabulani worked tirelessly on improving the local water management system, yet did so through both local action and sustainable development research.

While there could be a lack of reciprocity, local participation or transdisciplinarity, for Facility researchers this was flexible. Researchers were not opposed to making elements of their research very applied and other parts very theoretical. While a project may begin very empirically or theoretically (e.g., Mode 1), over time there was often a transition towards local application. In most cases, however, it was less linear than this. Researchers often went back and forth, between applied, service-oriented work, and highly theoretical and experimental research. In that different
forms of knowledge production can occur over the life of a given research program, it seems more useful to talk about research as a diverse social practice.

Finally, Gibbons is silent as it concerns the institutionalization of Mode 2. There is an assumption of harmony implied in Mode 2 discussions. Gibbons operates from the presumption that a collaborative-friendly environment is necessary for collaborative and problem-based research to exist. In actual practice, this is not always the case. Harloe and Perry (2004) note this in their example of the Mode 2 university, describing periods of internal turmoil as common. However, this too lacks depth as they do not address how this turmoil affects research and service. What does institutional turmoil mean for the practice of community-based scholarship?

As it concerned the Facility, disharmony did not prevent the practice of community-based research. A lack of institutional harmony precluded neither collaborative research nor community service. Certainly each was hampered by the hostile institutional culture. Main campus was unsupportive of the Facility’s applied, community-based focus and had worked to make each program more self-sufficient and less collaborative. However, to assume that community-based research could not occur ignores researcher agency and makes deterministic conclusions.

The lack of support did not extinguish what Gibbons would call Mode 2 knowledge production, that is, transdisciplinary, problem-based research. For instance, William’s work on HIV/AIDS intervention consistently pulled researchers from a variety of disciplines including public health, epidemiology, demography and anthropology. Together with academics throughout Southern Africa, Europe, the Facility and wider Greenveld, he had been able to produce well-respected publications and public health
interventions. Joseph and Barbara’s work with refugee research was problem-, rather than discipline-, based. More so, it was rooted in direct application to a local problem, namely, refugee empowerment. Like William, their work had been well-received outside the University (e.g., particularly multilateral organizations). While other examples existed at the Facility, these two indicate how institutional support, or lack thereof, is not a necessary condition for the practice of community-based research. While supportive environments may make for happier researchers and as a result, better research, the derision of their work also gave Facility researchers a sense of solidarity that provided much of the emotional support and validation they did not receive from Main campus.

Community-Based Research and Participation

Discussions of community-based research and civic engagement eventually turn to an analysis of participation. Chambers (1994) describes participatory approaches as a family of “methods to enable rural people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act” (p. 953). The popularity of participation has extended beyond the academy, reaching many professional arenas (Kane et al, 1998; Robb, 1998). The United Nations Development Programme (1993) writes “People today have an urge – an impatient urge – to participate in the events and processes that shape their lives” (p. 1).

At the intersection of participation and scholarly research are two assumptions. First, local people are empowered through their participation in research projects (Chambers, 1994; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Lather, 1991; Rahema, 1991). Describing this empowerment, Chambers (1998) writes, “local people have the
knowledge and ability to be the subjects of their own development” (p. 4). Through deep participation, that is participation rooted in caring relationships, the participant teaches the researcher what is needed. Researchers, in turn, configure project deliverables based on this information, tying their work to the locale.

Second, through participation data trustworthiness improves (Hermes, 1998; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Lather, 1991). The understanding is that with participation comes more precise data. In more hierarchical and top-down, approaches, a common critique is that decisions are made externally and then laid over a context (Fals-Borda, 1991). In that there is often little consultation, research and service tend to be unrelated to what is needed on-the-ground. As the participatory argument goes, with better communication, one understands pressing and culturally-relevant needs (Chambers, 1994). Such grassroots assessments, often called Participatory Rural Appraisals (Chambers, 1994, 1998), are believed to be more accurate than those conducted without participation.

The practice of participation at the Facility was more diverse than these assumptions allow. There were many projects that had participation prominently in their design in an effort to empower local people. William went as far as to quote Freire when he described his project as a conscientization process. For him, and many others, research was about local change, be that social, political or environmental, with local people intimately involved in the project.

In many ways, residents agreed that their participation led to better information about their social conditions and local empowerment. Residents often expressed feeling
excluded from the projects. Local government officials were particularly concerned about the information researchers gathered. As elected representatives of Greenveld, men such as Kamuzu and Themba believed it made sense for the Facility to speak with them. The hope for participation and inclusion was not, however, to ask for assistance. As Kamuzu stressed, “We are not saying that [the Facility] must create employment, otherwise we would be beggars.” Rather, echoing Chambers (1994), residents believed they had important information and skills to share with researchers that were going unused. In that this knowledge was going untapped, projects were seen as disconnected from local needs and thus not contributing to the general welfare of Greenveld.

While residents largely mirrored the literature in their preferences for participation (e.g., leading towards empowerment and better information) there was a minority view that presented an important counterpoint. As Chapter 4 detailed, there were many residents who felt that local participation was adequate. However, those who had this opinion were not involved with any Facility projects. Their point of view came from a different understanding of participation that did not require their direct inclusion. Nonceba captured this well when he described his inclusion as bound up with the inclusion of others. While the Facility may not have directly consulted him, he knew they had done so with his peers and felt comforted by that. The Facility was trusted as a group of persons who cared for local people. Participation was taken on faith rather than direct experience.

Researchers also used participation in ways that did not always correspond to the dominant view that Chambers (1994, 1998) described. That is, it was not always used to make projects relevant. In many cases, participation was used as currency, buying the
acceptance of local residents through small, often perfunctory acts. That is, participation was often used as a token of appreciation. The most common example was when researchers spoke to the *induna*, headman, before starting his/her project. Researchers were encouraged to ask his permission to conduct research on communal lands. During these meetings, the researcher was also expected to explain their project and to detail how the project would benefit the community, if at all. In many cases, communication with local people began and ended here. Do such courtesies represent the intent of participation, in the sense of forging caring relationships towards social change? That is, are there limits to participation?

This dewy-eyed view of participation has been critiqued from a variety of angles. Brownlee-Greaves (1999) writes “Participation…is often presented as a normative principal to which to aspire.” (p. 1). While participation has become popular in a variety of disciplines, there is growing concern about the way it is used. Haywood et al (2004) argue that within mainstream development literatures (i.e., Rietbergen-McCracken & Narayan, 1998, and UNDP, 1993) the role of participation has been accepted with little scrutiny. In thinking of the capricious ways that participation was practiced at the Facility, questions about its use and purpose remain unanswered.

Young (1993) captured this uneasiness with blanket provisions of participation in her analysis of deliberative forms of democracy. Deliberative democracy operates from the premise that communication between people is good and should be encouraged. However, in doing so, a certain mode of communication is proscribed (i.e., rational and dispassionate) that has the tendency to reduce the quantity and quality of the conversation. Thus, as Young (1993) argued, deliberation tends to ignore difference.
The result is often minority opinions and groups tend to be ignored. Rahema (1991) pointed to this ambiguity when he wrote, “participation could be either transitive or intransitive; either moral, amoral or immoral; either forced or free; either manipulative or spontaneous.” This ambiguity results in several practical and philosophical problems.

An initial problem with participation is tokenism (Mohan, 2002). This refers to the ability to use participation only in name. Tokenism was visible at the Facility when researchers used participation symbolically. Speaking with the induna and then not communicating or including the community for the remainder of the project begins to look less like participation and more a strategy to ensure access. Other examples included the hiring of guides, translators and housekeeping staff and describing this is a participatory process. Such approaches lack any real commitment to structuring a conversation where all affected groups speak to one another, a conversation Young (1993) argued led to “social wisdom” (p. 131). Such forms of participation were not lost on residents who saw these small attempts at inclusion as inadequate and wholly disconnected from what they wanted or needed.

A second problem is that participation tends to look at communities as homogenous (Goebel, 1998; Mohan, 2002). As such, the responses of a few represent the broader needs of the rest of the community. As Chambers (1994) instructed, one benefit of participatory research was it provided local-level information, in that it came directly from the people. The assumption here is that the information shared by local people is the most accurate and representative of ‘true’ needs. However, this ignores the powerful affect that social mores have in decision-making (Scott, 2000). Young (2000) has described this in both her account of aggregative and deliberative democracy.
former, decisions are made based on the aggregation of group preferences. That is, the
decision is based on majoritarian principles, whereby the policy that pleases the most is
the winning policy. The latter advocates a more open dialogue, but it is one that is highly
structured. In each case, minority opinions and groups can easily be overlooked. In
aggregative models, minority views do not win votes, and are thus ignored. In
deliberative models, minority views can be ignored as they do not fit in to a rational,
rhetorical style. Therefore, participation in democratic decision-making does not always
lead to the most just decision. Goebel (1998) writes that the problem as it concerns
community-based research is that if one collects information, but from an elite group,
then only elite interests may be attended to. This is not solved simply by having a more
diverse sample. Marginal groups are often under social pressure to support the dominant
values, even when this does not support individual or group benefit (Scott, 2000).

While it was unclear whether Facility research was prone to this problem,
resident-participants exhibited the tendency to defer to local elites. In many cases, lay
residents expressed confusion about why the Facility did not collaborate more with local
government. Local government officials agreed and strongly advocated for their
inclusion as “the legitimate structure” in Greenveld. These officers, it was widely held,
possessed a wealth of information that researchers needed if they were interested in
making a meaningful impact. In that researchers did not collaborate or seek participation
with many local persons or groups, it is difficult to comment on the nature of who was
included in participatory programs. What remains clear, however, is that Greenveld was
prone to elite dominance in university-community discussions.
The third problem is the reification of the local (Mohan, 1999, 2000, 2002; Mohan & Stokke, 2000). Chambers (1994) wrote that participatory and community-based research “have proved powerful means of enabling local people….to appraise, analyze and act” (p. xvi). Kretzman and McKnight (1993) echoed this when they wrote “Historic evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort” (p. 5). This has the result of privileging the local scale and constructing it as distinct from other scales. Yet as Swyngedouw (1997) and Mohan (2002) have written, social life is not locally autonomous, but rather subject to national and global dimensions.

The manner in which Facility research was practiced does not support this critique. In contrast, researchers had a sophisticated understanding of scale and participatory work. In many cases, research was practiced at a number of different scales simultaneously. For instance, while the refugee research program operated a legal clinic that addressed local problems and included local people, both Joseph and Barbara were involved in policy deliberations as national and global levels. Similarly, while William’s HIV/AIDS microfinance program worked with local women, he placed this research within broader national policy discussions.

The Rhetoric of Reciprocity

Differences of opinion existed concerning what and how to ‘give back’ to the community. That is, what constituted reciprocity and how was it experienced? While the idea of reciprocity has gained increased acceptance in academic circles, it tends to be addressed without critical scrutiny. This results in two problems. First, reciprocity, like
participation, tends to be presented as wholly positive (Boyer, 1990; Saltmarsh, 1997; Rhoads, 1997). There tends to be little discussion of the limits to reciprocity or the obstacles to achieving it. Jones (2003) emphasized the need, then, to more deeply explore reciprocal relationships, for, as she writes, “little in the research and literature…provides evidence that the accomplishment of…reciprocity is actually achieved” (p. 153). Second, reciprocity is often homogenized into simple feedback loops. That is, the community gives something to the researcher and the researcher, in turn, gives something back. However, what is taken, what is returned, and how this is experienced are rarely explored.

Reciprocity is a symbol of a changed academic culture that stands in contrast to a more paternal posture (Rhoads, 1997). Indeed, reciprocity is used to rout out paternalism through the creation of caring relationships (Folbre, 2001). Kendall (1990) argues that research relationships constructed this way alter the power relations between researcher and the researched. Working this way avoids the traditionally paternalistic, one-way approach to service in which one person or group has the resources which they share ‘charitably’ or ‘voluntarily’ with a person or group that lack resources....The needs of the community determine what the service tasks will be. (Kendall, 1990, p. 22)

Others have written of this as an issue of fostering an ‘ethic of care’ through mutuality (Folbre, 2001; Noddings, 1984; Tronto, 1993). Caring for one’s research participants was seen as revolutionary as it re-worked the traditional boundaries of scientific research. With prescriptions to avoid bias through distanced observation, research was often a solitary task that involved little interaction with one’s participants. However, as Palmer (1983) argues, this tended to ignore the mutuality in the background of all knowledge creation. The thrust here is that one becomes invested in the other, in an
emotional sense, and ceases to understand research in a less objectified way. Reflecting a subjectivist epistemology, what is known is possible only though dialogue with people; constructing participants less as data but as individuals with agency and a wealth of already-existing knowledge. (Gibson-Graham, 1997). Knowledge is created, therefore, through dialogue with others, placing each set of perceptions, opinions and ideas in tension with our own for the purposes of gaining a deeper understanding of a given phenomenon. This is a mutuality about which Palmer (1983) writes “to know something is to have a living relationship with it) (p. xv).

This conception of reciprocity contains important silences, particularly as it concerns the limits of reciprocity. Folbre (2001) writes of these as the dangers of trusting caring relationships. Drawing an analogy to the economist’s Prisoner’s Dilemma, she describes the “Nice Person’s Dilemma” (Folbre, 2001, pp. 28-29), a situation where a person or group does something to help another person or group. If the other reciprocates, then both will be better off, as they can share in their joint effort and the social support that comes from caring relations. Yet, as I have shown in Chapter 4, the quality and quantity of reciprocity can vary. Therefore, if reciprocity is not commensurate to what was offered, then the ‘Nice Person’ could feel used or tricked into a usurious relationship.

Kamuzu and Themba expressed a similar apprehension with Facility reciprocity. For many residents, the service provided Greenveld often seemed disingenuous. That is, it was offered when researchers needed something, but when that need was finished, so was the service. Fiona and others expressed confusion over the change in Facility postures as it concerned reciprocity. At times, researchers seemed very involved and at
other times, nonexistent. Sigidi did not trust the inconsistency of Facility reciprocity, and did not believe researchers had Greenveld’s best interests at heart. Residents, therefore, were locked in the Nice Person’s Dilemma. Would helping researchers result in a mutually beneficial relationship, or would they be used for their information? The point in painting this pessimistic scenario is not to doubt the possibilities of reciprocation. Rather, it is to suggest that reciprocation is negotiated. As such, its definition depends on who offers it and who receives it.

Resident’s mistrust was due in part to researchers’ inconsistent use of reciprocity. As stated earlier, there were three general modes of reciprocity: active, passive and multi-scaled. In most cases, researchers used each mode interchangeably depending on the specific project or the stage of the research. Therefore, at early stages a researcher might operate in a more passive way, collecting information that was simply fed back into village structures. Gwen’s work with occupational therapy began this way. Her project began as a survey of disability in Greenveld. From there she used her analysis to lobby provincial and national government structures that disabled people in Greenveld were a marginalized group that was in need of clinical interventions. Out of this came her current project that served local communities with job training and physical therapy.

Gwen’s research practices offer new insight into the practice of reciprocity. As with participation, the Facility is an example of reciprocity existing beyond local scales. The literature often describes service relationships as those taking place between proximal people. Typically spoken about in relation to service-learning, the focus is on connecting students to local communities through service experiences. Similar relationships are described in the community-based research literature, where researchers
are connected to local people or organizations that require some form of assistance. Kretzman and McKnight (1991) describe ‘asset mapping’ whereby researchers work with local communities to plot out the opportunities and obstacles to solving local problems. Similarly, Saltmarsh (1998) argues that the purpose of engagement is to create “viable communities” in the sense of strengthening “the overall prosperity of local people.” (p. 6) In this light, then, ‘community’ is local. How then can we understand the multi-scaled practice of reciprocity that many researchers practiced? That is, is non-local reciprocity an oxymoron?

There are literatures that cast community and scale in a different light. Swyngedouw (1997) speaks about ‘scale jumping’ to refer to the notion that action can exist at a number of different scales. Scales, he wrote, operate “not hierarchically, but simultaneously, and the relationship between different scales are ‘nested’” (p. 169). While action may start at the local level, it may involve the national or global. Social movements, for example, can be largely local efforts aimed at local problems. However, as the Zapatistas or WTO riots reveal, local issues are often connected and fought out at higher scales. The reverse is also true. The agenda of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are often tied to changing domestic policy (Pugh, 1994). In this case, then, global interests affect local livelihoods through loan conditionality.

Mohan (1999) writes that the local level is often reified in community-based development and research. With development discussions moving away from metatheoretical discussions in preference for more localized, indigenous knowledge, he argues the result has been a reification of the local. The tendency, he argues, is to view the local as the best receptor of relevant research and therefore, the best target of development.
energies, including reciprocity. The problem, Mohan (2002) argues, is that the processes that may be affecting local people may not be easily addressed locally. In considering the Facility, one could ask to what extent can the many social problems facing refugees be addressed through Nomsa’s legal clinic (e.g., active reciprocity)? Barbara and Joseph understood this point, and in turn, chose to wed these local interventions with scholarly publications and national policy consultancies. Accepting reciprocity in its diversity, active, passive and multi-scaled, opens space for different community-based research practices.

Summary

The previous discussion underscores the idea that community-based research is rarely as neat as the literature would make it sound. In myriad articles and texts, one is led to believe that by sticking to certain guidelines about community interaction and reciprocity, one can conduct community-based research. However, as I learned in Greenveld, how one understands and experiences these guidelines is subject to a host of personal and contextual contingencies.

Implications for practice

As evident throughout this study, the line separating research and service is permeable. While several researchers emphasized real differences between the two positions, there were clear overlaps. I address these convergences and divergences in this section with an eye to what this study suggests for the practice of community-based research.
Many researchers expressed there were instances where academic and development work did not intersect. More trenchantly, there were places where they should not intersect. In general, this was an issue of reciprocity and participation. Greenveld residents overwhelmingly felt that research needed to offer tangible benefits to the community. These benefits acted as symbolic payment to residents in exchange for their information. Grantors largely agreed with residents and had a history of withholding funds if such commitments were not made. Complicating this were University administrators who operated from the opposing positions of supporting both community engagement and basic research, yet with both sides disagreeing about which takes precedence.

One mean of remediation of these opposing discourses would be to think about research and service in more integrative and nuanced ways. There were a wide variety of Facility practices that addressed both research and service. Facility research was diverse, both service-oriented and collaborative but also empirical and cloistered. However, given the glaring poverty of Greenveld, residents often defined academic service narrowly (i.e., direct, local service). This definition made success elusive for those focused more broadly than Greenveld, oftentimes at the national if not global sphere of policy. A more open dialogue within the community and the university about what community-based research is and what is expected from it could, therefore, be useful. Discussed more below, this recognition could occur by different means (e.g., forums, seminars, online discussions). Nevertheless, what is important is that diverse constituencies are brought together on an on-going basis so that all parties involved
and/or affected by community-based research are able to participate in a conversation about actions that affect their daily lives.

Open dialogue is a chaotic concept, however. What does it mean to have open dialogue and communication between groups? What can this look like? There is not one model of open dialogue, however an ideal is imaginable. Taking from Young’s (2000) view of communicative democracy and differentiated solidarity, dialogue could take the form of regular meetings among researchers and the community, if not the participants in the study themselves. In these forums, all sides should have equal footing. That is, the traditional authority that is often afforded academics should either be reduced or shared among all those participating in the meeting. Constructed this way, those traditionally with less power (i.e., marginal groups) should be able to express their worries, frustrations and desires without fear of retribution or denigration. While this sounds difficult, and likely would be, Greenveld already has a reporting structure that the Facility could take part in. Described in Chapter 4, Kamuzu and Themba convened regular sessions with interested community members to report on the actions of local government and to hear their constituents’ opinions. The Facility could easily attend these town meetings, something that both Themba and Kamuzu suggested would be useful.

Researcher opinions and preferences also need to be recognized and heard. While researchers typically have more social and economic resources at their disposal, giving them an uneven advantage, they are also morally considerable subjects, with needs, anxieties and preferences. Participants must be informed about the professional requirements demanded of researchers, requirements to produce publications and garner grants, without which they would not be able to work in Greenveld or other communities.
Therefore, just as researchers must be open to what participants and residents expect of them, researchers also have expectations that need to be heard. However, given the uneven privilege that academics have in Greenveld, and their potential to benefit more from research than participants do, researchers must be sensitive to the realities of the environment in which they work. That is, while it is untenable that researchers relinquish professional obligations, each party must work towards mutual benefit. This mutuality is at the heart of community-based research and should not be forgotten in the pursuit to appease elites, be that administrators or local politicians.

This relates to a second implication for practice: community-based researchers must be transparent about the purpose of their research. Transparency concerns making one’s purposes apparent to all interested parties. Including transparency into the practice of community-based research can work to undermine corruption and questionable ethics while supporting accountability (Allee, 2004). From my interviews with Greenveld residents, there was a lack of knowledge about what was happening at the Facility. In that residents had little knowledge about the Facility’s purpose, they were left to make assumptions about its purpose. Expressed in the findings, these assumptions were fueled by suspicions that researchers used the community to their own benefit. This begs the question of why researchers were not transparent in the first place. Was there something they were hiding? One can guess that researchers did not speak to the community more openly for fear of not being accepted more widely in Greenveld, the result likely being a reduction in access to populations or areas of academic interest. While this was not an issue I dealt with specifically in this study, it makes one realize that there was not open
communication between researchers and the community. These suspicions could be dealt with by making transparency an aspect of community-based research ethics.

In recent communication with the Facility, I have been told they have made significant progress in this regard. They have received funding to support a community liaison officer. This person will hold monthly forums where the community is invited to listen to and comment on the Facility’s work. Moves such as this could help demystify research practices while also providing all parties, academic and lay, a space to reflect upon, support and critique actions that affect their lives.

While the community-based literature often speaks of improving dialogue between researchers and participants, it fails to address these same practices within the university. University administrations often lack, however, a coordinated conversation about the place of service or community-based scholarship within the rewards structure. The relationship of the Facility to Main campus was emblematic of this, with Main campus often unaware of what was happening at the Facility. Similar to the forums that should be conducted in the field, forums with other academics and administrators would also help the practice of community-based research. In these forums, community-based researchers could bring their many struggles to administrators: feelings of Main campus exclusion, lack of financial support, denigration of their methods. By discussing their work and concerns more openly, administrators would likely gain better insight into what it is like to conduct research in very difficult personal and professional settings such as Greenveld.

Likewise, researchers must also listen to the concerns that administrators have about community-based research. Such methodologies are new to the academy and it is
quixotic to expect the wholesale acceptance of community-based research. Researchers must learn the fears that administrators have about such forms of scholarship and the implications that community-based projects may have on the institution’s reputation and/or finances. Administrators must be sensitive to the precarious position of many academics. Administrators must work not to exert or force their positions in these forums, and instead listen respectfully to what researchers have to say. The purpose of the forum is not to allow one side to bully the other or to convince the other side of the moral rightness of a position. Rather, the purpose is to make each side known to the other. In this knowing, a more reasoned and compassionate problem-solving may result. This is the differentiated solidarity that Young (2000) argues is central to communicative democracy and inclusive notions of justice. While each side (researcher/administrator, researcher/participant) is distinct, through coordinated and respectful communication with these differing positions, a degree of social wisdom and mutuality may result. This does not mean agreement, but reasoned decisions with which both sides can live.

In this study, researchers suggested the tenuous relationship with Main campus hampered their work. Main campus, in return, often argued that this lack of support was due to the poor job being done at the Facility. Returning to Young (2000) and her idea of communicative democracy, if each side could be placed in conversation with each other, made to listen to each other’s preferences, opinions and perceptions, it is likely that the debate could be deepened. As it stood at the University and the Facility, each side of this debate struggled to understand each other, listen to each other, or see instances where mutual benefit could occur. With a deeper investment of each party into the other’s position, there is hope that support could be realized for all parties.
While open dialogue and a Youngian view of democracy is ultimately a problem-solving technique, as anyone who has been in an argument or debate knows, communication does not always lead to mutually-acceptable decisions. Achieving decisions that everyone can live with is often not easy. Irreconcilable differences are real features of social life. Even in the best cases, where there is a very horizontal power arrangement and all sides respect each other, there will be times when agreement does not happen. Dialogue, however, does not have to be viewed in such a pragmatic way. Dialogue is also a means to link people together. That is, communication forms bonds between people. Therefore, while a problem may not be resolved, given more inclusive communication, each opinion is heard and given the respect as something worthy of consideration. This, as much as problem-solving, is also something to fight for and may be an important initial step to any problem-solving venture.

This discussion of communicative democracy should be considered in light of contextual contingencies. While open dialogue is viewed as a normative ideal, one should also take into account how local contexts may hamper communication. While South Africa is not inherently prone to unequal power relations, there are certain features of the context that could make open communication more difficult than elsewhere. The history of apartheid contributed to a level of distrust that I alluded to in Chapter 3. Given the power afforded Whites and the manner that this power was often used to benefit Whites, open and unencumbered dialogue may be too idealistic in the South African context. That is, levels of trust may be too low to create the caring environments that radical democrats argue are essential for justice. In that Whites are often the gatekeepers, both of important information and knowledge, dialogue may be awkward at best or non-
existent at worst. Similar cases of historical prejudices may hamper communication in other contexts, Western and non-Western. Researchers and administrators must be cognizant of and sensitive to these conditions prior to entering into a field site.

A further implication is that there must be more thinking around the practice of reciprocity. The literature often presents reciprocity as a tool used to breakdown academic-society power differentials and the seeming indifference of science. It is a more complicated practice, however. Facility researchers offered several lessons about the practice of reciprocity. As captured in the interviews with Facility researchers, reciprocity can be thought of and practiced in different ways, not just local service provision. Researchers like Charles, Joseph and William focused their service at multiple scales. Often, however, residents and grantors regarded anything but local service as disembedded and irrelevant. Such a view reifies the local scale as the only meaningful scale and disregards the significance that national and global policies have in our lives. The result is to view reciprocity monolithically and therefore to dismiss those practices that do not fit this model. Yet, with a more open and inclusive dialogue (i.e., inclusive of persons who practice different forms of reciprocity), it is likely that an understanding, if not appreciation and tolerance, of difference may result.

There are also lessons to be learned about reciprocity from what researchers did not do. In many cases, the researcher determined what was given back to the community, with little consultation with the participant or the recipient of the service. In the community, the view was often that such service was disconnected from what was actually needed or wanted. Reciprocity, therefore, could be strengthened through improving the dialogue between researchers and participants. It is likely that this could
put researchers in difficult positions, especially when nothing is being returned to the community. However, as Sylvie argued, if a researcher is in Greenveld with no plan of returning something to the people, then it is doubtful that their presence at the Facility is necessary. That is, it may be best that the researcher be based on Main campus and not affiliated with the community-service mission of the Facility. If, however, the researcher needed to interact with the local community, a type of service agreement could be entered into whereby the researcher is obligated to offer some type of community deliverable. The nature of this deliverable should occur through communication with the community. Therefore, communication could work to improve reciprocity.

In addition to service agreements, professional development seminars could be used to ensure that reciprocity is thought about and integrated more fully into academic work. Prior to conducting research in Greenveld, researchers could be required to attend several seminars about community-based research. In these seminars, researchers could be confronted with the difficulties of conducting research with/in a community such as Greenveld. More so, they would be allowed to explore different ideas of communication and reciprocity. Residents could be included in these same seminars, especially helpful if they are either participants or co-researchers. These seminars, then, could work to both share knowledge about the promise and pitfalls of community-based research, while also functioning as a tool for opening up the research process and making it more transparent to the community.

A final implication for the practice of community-based research is a rethinking of the rewards structure in colleges and universities. With promotion and tenure often tied to publications and grants, academic service is often placed on a much lower list of
priorities. However, if the rewards structure was reworked to place service much higher, it is likely that methodologies such as community-based research would become far more accepted. This is a tall order for an organization rooted to traditional measures of success such as grant monies and citations. However, while granting equal weight to service is unlikely in the near future, the situation could be improved by placing the success and outcomes of service into the language of promotion and tenure committees. Initially, while service goes through a period of tenuous acceptance in the academy, community-based scholars may need to work doubly hard, perhaps harder than their more traditional colleagues, to produce sound empirical and theoretical studies and effective teaching, all while fulfilling their service agreements. The scholar who plans to embark on a service project must recognize, therefore, the importance of producing high-quality community-based scholarship and also the time that this could entail. A lack of quality could have deleterious effects on both the community where service occurs, but also on the wider reputation of service in the academy.

Implications for future research

In the midst of data analysis, I had a dizzying array of research topics from which to choose. In this study, I have concentrated on what I felt most germane to my research questions and gaps in the literature. In this winnowing process, however, I have had to let go of ideas I felt were important and interesting. Among these are the place of community-based research within state-society relations and spatial/historical comparisons.
The role of the university within state-society relations has gained increased interest in higher education policy research. For many, this has meant a focus on a university governance structure having to deal with increased public scrutiny of academic labor, decreased state funds and the turn towards the private sector monies to fill this void. The community-based research literature, however, has largely avoided the manner in which civic engagement fits into the state-society dialectic. This seems ironic in that community-based research and engagement are rooted in desires to affect social change. As many local residents and government officials expressed, research and development were inseparable. The literature, however, is relatively silent on how community-based research serves to constrain and enable local development. Future research could examine the extent to which community-based research supports, opposes or collaborates with broader national development policy.

Comparative research also presents itself as another avenue for future research. In the original prospectus for this study, I suggested a multi-site case study involving the Facility and a similar organization in the United States. My hope was to analyze each organization, much as I did in this study, yet looking more closely at the influence of regional context on practice. This study represents the first part of this larger idea. Future researchers could investigate similar community-based research organizations, inter- and intra-nationally, to explore these contextual issues.

There are many lessons to be learned from the case of the Facility and Greenveld that could be useful elsewhere. In particular, future research could examine those aspects of the Facility and Greenveld that can be abstracted outside this context. In particular, the manner and style of communication that occurs within community-based research
could be examined in diverse contexts. How does participation vary in different settings? How do different leadership styles and organizational structures support inclusive and open dialogues? The experience of reciprocity could be similarly examined. While the response to Facility-based service may be specific to Greenveld and South Africa, it could prove fruitful to community-based scholarship to examine these experiences in different contexts in the hopes of uncovering examples of best practices.

In addition to examining community-based research over space, an examination over time would further expand this study. Having visited the Facility first in 1992 and again in 2002 leads me to believe this would be useful. My first visit mirrored what was revealed during interviews with researchers and residents. In its infancy, the Facility was admired for its innovative research and service to Greenveld. A decade later, however, this reputation deteriorated. Given the government’s advocacy of institutional support for national development, it will be interesting to see if the Facility will be viewed as an asset or liability in the University’s contribution to a post-apartheid South Africa.

Future research could also build upon the results of this study. In particular, future research could re-focus the sample on more specific populations. While my sampling strategy resulted in a diverse mix of participants (i.e., by gender, age, income and occupation), other researchers may find it more useful to focus on just local government actors, or just NGO workers.

Limitations of study

Research limitations are handled differently by different researchers and research designs. Empirical studies based on inferential statistics view limitations as an inevitable, but surmountable, feature of research. In that limitations hinder predictive ability,
extraordinary measures are used to control them. Many qualitative researchers agree that limitations are inevitable. Yet especially among qualitative inquiry’s more poststructural adherents, the view is that knowledge is inherently partial and to pretend it is anything else could produce even greater problems of credibility and trustworthiness (Haraway, 1991; Lather, 1991). To not address this could lead one to assume that what is presented is the ‘full picture’ rather than subject to my own biases and interpretation. So let me ask, and then answer, the question: what has worked to make these findings and conclusions partial?

Issue of race/ethnicity and class affected this research in fundamental ways. Social relations in South Africa are steeped in assumptions of race/ethnicity and class. Given colonial and apartheid histories, these identities figured into every conversation, interview and focus group. When speaking with Whites, I tended to be viewed as a peer. In that these were usually middle class, English-speaking, academics, we had many perceived similarities that made bonding quite easy.

Much of this comfort disappeared when speaking with Black South Africans. As I stated in Chapter 3, I initially conducted my interviews without any assistance. I conducted three initial interviews I would describe as failures. Both the participant and I seemed uncomfortable, answers were terse and we both appeared happy when I finished. I was most aware of the language barrier. I would ask questions only to be told my ‘thick’ American accent was incomprehensible. Mapule helped a great deal in this regard. While all interviews were conducted in English, if the participant seemed to not understand what I asked, Mapule would ask the question. This produced a greater level of understanding. Nevertheless, these interviews were often not as detailed as those
conducted with fluent English speakers. To compensate for this, I spent more time with Black participants to make sure we both understood the questions being asked and the answers be given.

During interviews with Blacks I also initially felt a level of reticence. Answers were very brief, typically one or two sentences, often one word. Little came from probing except looks of confusion. When I spoke with Facility researchers about this, they warned me that being White would invariably affect the interview, making it feel more like an inquisition. They suggested I hire a local guide to help assuage people’s suspicions of me.

I hired Mapule and this immediately changed. Being a member of Greenveld’s larger ethnic group, she provided a level of access that would have been impossible otherwise. While she occasionally needed to rephrase my words during the interview, this was uncommon. More often, she greeted the participant, introduced me and then bid them farewell, usually in the participant’s language. With her presence, the interviews changed immeasurably. Participants became more verbose, even humorous. While I always sensed apprehension among Black participants, Mapule helped to dramatically reduced this.

There were other limitations of this study. My sample size was relatively small, although large compared with most qualitative studies. Nevertheless, the 36 participants did not represent the full diversity of Greenveld. The area contains two primary ethnic groups. However, I was only able to access one of these groups. This was due first to this group being the larger population in the area. Second, Mapule belonged to this ethnic group, and was more comfortable using her language than that of the other. More
invidious, however, the two groups had a long history of animosity and violence towards each other. The groups rarely mixed professionally and, I was told, never romantically. In that I was visibly associated with Mapule around town, members of this other ethnic group often refused to speak with us.

Another limitation to my study was the apparent confusion associated with studying, yet not practicing, community-based research. There are overlaps with critical and community-based research. In both cases there is an interest in social change and upsetting uneven flows of power. While I was certainly interested in these normative ideals, I realized that the time I had in the field did not allow me to begin the elaborate projects often associated with community-based research. Equally, community-based research often involves deep relationships with the local community. I realized that while I would likely gain many great contacts and colleagues while in South Africa, I felt it unrealistic that I would develop the type of network needed to create bold, social change projects. This caused confusion, especially among Greenveld residents. As captured in the preface, I was often asked how my research was going to help the community. Given my time and research interests, I stand by my methodological choices. However, it is likely that I alienated some participants upon realizing I offered no tangible services. In many ways, this highlights the tenuous position of academic research in developing areas.

A final methodological limitation concerns my actual interview protocol. While my questions were semi-structured and largely open-ended, I wrote them. Contained in them were ideas I was interested in, rather than the participant. Therefore, there were likely ideas and meanings that the protocol did not allow me to capture. To ameliorate this, I provided three development workers in Greenveld copies of my protocol and asked
them to comment on their local relevancy and general readability. They provided useful
points on how to gear each more specifically to the audience in question.

Strengths of study

There were several strengths to the study as well. The participants were the
greatest strength. It took tremendous trust and patience to endure my probing about
issues that could place them at significant risk. Researchers, in particular, risked having
their displeasure with Main campus exposed. Facility researchers had been ‘burned’ by
earlier attempts at assessment, so I took great effort to ensure confidentiality.
Researchers welcomed me to the Facility and were eager to speak about their lives and
their work. Greenveld residents also exercised significant amounts of trust by agreeing to
speak with me. I was continually amazed and humbled by the degree of openness and
interest that participants took in my study and the amount of detail they shared. The
apartheid regime did little to support Blacks’ trust of Whites. Therefore, I took it as a gift
that I was welcomed so warmly and spoken to so frankly. The interest that both
researchers and residents took in this study allowed me to feel more comfortable around
them, which I feel certain contributed to the tenor of our conversations.

As the previous section alludes, my relationship with Black participants did not
occur immediately. Indeed, after several initial interviews I was worried about the
quality of data I would collect. Mapule’s presence assuaged these concerns. Her
intelligence, confidence and intimate knowledge of Greenveld eased me into interviews
that would have been exceedingly difficult without her. The quality of the interviews
improved immeasurably with her around.
While I earlier cast my positionality as a limitation to this study, it was also a strength. Racial dynamics, being what they are in South Africa, set Whites researching Blacks in an uncomfortable position. I have earlier said that Blacks were reticent when speaking to me alone and that Mapule alleviated much of this. Added to this was my being American. While it was often assumed I was a White South African, participants seemed to become more comfortable with me upon learning I was American. Invariably, the conversation would turn to some aspect of American pop culture, providing some levity to the interview and putting us both at ease. When our interviews ended, I was often told they felt honored that an American was interested in their lives.

This study also benefited by the help of several reviewers who included peers and the participants themselves. Among the more helpful were three development workers in Greenveld who agreed to read my interview protocols for appropriateness and readability. Equally, a graduate student in geography who also conducted research in Greenveld has read and commented upon much of my analysis. Reviews such as this have helped to ensure the accuracy and the inclusion of different perspectives.

My choice of methodologies was an additional strength of this study. Using an ethnographic approach allowed me to collect information about meanings and perceptions. Consistent with this, I designed my interview protocols using semi-structured questions. The open-endedness of these questions allowed participants to navigate the conversation in such a way that they often revealed information or lines-of-thinking that I had not anticipated. That being said, there was structure to the protocol, which ensured that regardless of the tangential information participants offered, certain baseline data were always collected. Consistent with ethnography, I was able to analyze
and present these data in such a manner that conveyed the rich detail of researcher and resident’s experience with community-based research.

Summary

The results of this study suggest that community-based research is a social act that is subject to internal variability. This variability was captured in participant testimonies regarding their experiences with this methodology. For researcher-participants, this was expressed in relation to organizational culture, views of reciprocity and their relationship to Main campus. For resident-participants, this complexity was revealed in their experience with reciprocity and participation. These experiences revealed that community-based research is as much about relationships formed in the field as it is about the collection and analysis of data.

The nature of the field, however, meant different things to different people. For researchers, the field consisted of Greenveld, but also a wider academic field. As such, a variety of contexts influence research. Greenveld was a challenging place to conduct research. The chronic development problems that plague the area presented researchers with many possible projects, but also high community expectations. In that these expectations went frequently unacknowledged, residents grew increasingly frustrated with research. On Main campus, senior faculty and administrators had conflicting expectations for the Facility, some pushing for community service and others for more rigorous research. The impact of each of these relationships, Main campus and residents, points to the negotiated nature of research. That is, the topic that one researched, and the manner in which one conducted the research were subject to a variety of pressures and personal preferences. This created a degree of plurality unaccounted for in the literature.
Additionally, just as contexts (e.g., local, institutional) were shown to affect the content of research, contexts also affect practice. In particular, this concerned the practice of reciprocity and participation. While the literature presents both as integral parts of community-based research, little work has been done on how reciprocity and participation are practiced. As my study revealed, the practice of each is highly contingent on the actors involved. That is, researchers had different opinions about what inclusion and service meant. These different approaches to reciprocity and participation revealed a diversity of possible community-based practices. This diversity, however, often conflicted with what residents expected of research, largely viewing it as a means towards direct service and local interventions.

In the end, this study presents community-based research as a social practice. Like other social acts, its practice is subject to a high degree of variability. It is not practiced the same by every person in every place. There is a level of plurality in its practice that serves to create convergences and contradictions from theory. The examination and assessment of these contradictions should occur as part of a broader conversation among all agents involved. Through respectful and open communication, the hope is that community needs are made clearer, research objectives are stated, and mutual benefit is realized.

In ending this study, I am left thinking about the old man on the taxi bus who asked “How’s your research going to help us?” I have wrestled with this question and often felt unsure whether or not I actually did help. The easy answer would be to say that the purpose of my research was not to offer anything to Greenveld, the Facility or the University. This would be a posture similar to many Facility researchers who maintained
that their goal was knowledge creation first, service second. My purpose was more normative, however. In this study, and especially this chapter, I have suggested strategies that academics, administrators and residents can use to ensure effective participation and dialogue in community-based research. Underlying these strategies is a belief that through open and inclusive dialogue, all those involved with or impacted by the research will gain greater understanding of the process, but also have their fears and hopes heard. Some might argue that this is a very meager contribution to the practice of community-based research. I feel differently and believe that only through an extended engagement with what reciprocity and service are and how they are experienced can we work to better link the academy to society.
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APPENDIX A

List of interview questions for Greenveld residents

This interview is being conducted as part of a research program on community-based research. You were selected for this interview because of your or your community’s involvement with Facility projects. I am interested in your understanding of the Facility and its impact on your village.

I want to assure you that what you that every effort will be made to safeguard your identity throughout this study and that what you say will be treated confidentially. Your identity will be changed as to not reveal any details about who you are. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to discontinue at any time.

1. Do you know of any Facility projects in your village?

2. Is your daily life affected by the projects?
   a. How so? (income, food, water, health, community support), OR
   b. How not?

3. Has your life become easier or more difficult because of the Facility?
   a. How so? (income, food, water, health, community support), OR
   b. How not?

4. Do you feel included in these projects?
   a. How so?
   b. How not?

5. What is good about the project(s)?

6. What is bad about the project(s)?

7. Why are you involved with this project?

8. How would you describe the relationship between the Facility and your village?
9. How do the Facility staff treat you?

10. Does the Facility have a responsibility to your village?
   a. Why so?
   b. Why not?

11. Are Facility projects important to your community?
    a. How so?
    b. How not?

12. Do you have interests, skills and knowledge that could help improve your village? (If no, skip to #14)
    a. If yes, please describe these.

13. Do Facility people ask you to help in projects?

14. Would you like the Facility to be involved in any other projects in your village?
    a. If yes, give examples.
    b. Why are these important to you?

15. In your opinion, has the Facility’s involvement become better, worse or stayed the same over the years?
    a. Why?

16. Some people criticize government for not listening to the people. Do you feel this is accurate?
    a. How so?
    b. How not?

17. Do Facility projects make this better, worse or neither?

18. Is there something you would like the Facility to do in your village?
    a. If yes, what?
       i. Why is this important?

19. Is there anything else you would like to add?
APPENDIX B

List of interview questions for Faculty and Staff

This interview is being conducted as part of a research program on community-based research. You were selected for this interview because of your involvement with Facility projects. I am interested in your understanding of the Facility and your work there.

I want to assure you that what you say will be made to safeguard your identity throughout this study and that what you say will be treated confidentially. Your identity will be changed as to not reveal any details about who you are. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to discontinue at any time.

1. Please describe your role at the Facility.
2. Please describe your research program.
3. How did you become involved in community-based research?
4. Why are you involved in community-based research?
5. What do you see as the impact/outcomes (value or benefit) of your involvement to the University? Your discipline? Students? The community?
6. What did community-based research look like during apartheid?
7. How has this changed since the 1994 elections?
8. What do you see as the purpose of the Facility in [specific village] and in wider South Africa?
9. How do you define development?
   a. How does the Facility contribute and/or complicate this?
10. If you were speaking with a faculty member, how would you describe the environment/culture of the Facility?
11. Do you think the University has a responsibility to [specific village]?

12. Are the University and the Facility meeting this?

13. How would you describe the relationship between the Facility and the local community?

14. If you could imagine an ideal community-based research project, what would it look like?

15. What is the mission of the Facility in your view?

16. How are decisions made at the Facility concerning the nature of projects, outcomes and research practices?

17. How is the community involved?

18. What unique contribution does the Facility make in [specific village]?

19. Is there anything else you would like to add?
APPENDIX C

Statement of informed consent

I agree to participate in the research project entitled Research, Relevancy and Local Development: Community-Based Research in the Post-Apartheid University conducted by Daniel G. Oliver, Ph.D. student in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership, The Ohio State University. The purpose of the research is to study faculty and resident’s perceptions of community-based research in South Africa.

I understand that my participation will involve an interview, lasting approximately one hour. If the researcher requires clarification, a second interview may be necessary. The interview will be recorded on audiotape and transcribed verbatim. I understand that I will also be asked to review a summary of the interviews and help think about what can be learned from them.

I am aware that some people are uncomfortable talking about themselves, and that any discomfort I might experience should be no more than that normally experienced during a small group discussion. I understand that I do not have to discuss anything that I am not comfortable discussing. If I wish to discontinue participation in this study, I will be free to leave without penalty. All audio tapes and transcripts created during this study will be destroyed if I withdraw from the study.

I understand that my participation in this project is strictly voluntary and that information will be treated confidentially. My name will not be connected with any materials produced for this study. Only Daniel Oliver, Dr. Susan Jones (a professor in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership and Daniel’s adviser), and an inquiry auditor to be named at a later date will have access to individual data. Tapes will be kept in a locked file at Daniel’s residence.

I am aware that if I have any question about my participation in the project I may contact Daniel Oliver (082-391-1137; danielgoliver@webmail.co.za) or Dr. Susan Jones (jones.1302@osu.edu). I may also contact the Chair, Behavioral and Social Science Institutional Review Board, The Ohio State University, United Stated (01-1-614-292-6950), if question or problems arise during the course of this study.

Participant Name (please print)

________________________________________________    ______________
Signature                  Date

Principal Investigator Signature

_________________________________________________    ______________
Date

Co-Investigator Signature

________________________________________________    ______________
Date