

# **Power and Reciprocity in Partnerships: Deliberative Civic Engagement and Transformative Learning in Community-Engaged Scholarship**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this work is to assist partners in identifying, naming, and facilitating dynamic relational forces and learning processes that shape the effectiveness of community engagement practice and partnerships. We offer a hypothetical case to assist in framing and discussing concepts of reciprocity and power in partnerships and how these dynamics can be mediated through practices and processes of civic engagement and transformative learning. We advocate that mapping intersects of power and reciprocity, and attending to capacities for deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning, are crucial practices in effective community-engaged partnerships. These three vital practices contribute to the creation of conditions that nurture the emergence of individual, institutional, organizational, and social transformation generated through community-engaged scholarship.

## **Introduction**

**A**daptive challenges faced by campuses and communities, by definition, require new paradigms of knowing and understanding in order to intervene in ways that catalyze progress on important issues (*Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009*). This essay discusses the implications of a conceptual framework that intersects the notions of relational power (*Rowlands, 1997*) and generative reciprocity (*Dostilio et al., 2012; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996*) through deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning practices and processes. We consider how acknowledging and mapping enactments of power will open conditions for promoting generative reciprocity in community-campus partnerships. Likewise, understanding reciprocity from the perspective of manifestations of power (*Rowlands, 1997*) reinforces the civic engagement and transformative learning necessary to increase the effectiveness of community-engaged partnerships and scholarship.

Community-engaged scholarship (CES) has a role in making progress on addressing tough social challenges and improving practices of democracy. When partners employ deliberative civic engagement activities in which intersections of power and reciprocity can be illuminated and considered, CES increases the possibilities for functioning effectively in its progressive democratic role. In an iterative cycle, when scholar-practitioners and community leaders more effectively map power and reciprocity within deliberative community engagement practices, they increase capacities associated with more effectively managing partnership power inequities. Our purpose is to provide a conceptual framework to promote identifying, naming, and facilitating these dynamic relational forces and learning processes that shape the effectiveness of community engagement partnerships.

In order to more clearly identify the constructs considered, we will offer a hypothetical community engagement example. After presenting the example, we will clarify our use of key concepts as they are situated in adult learning, leadership, and civic engagement literatures. At points in the discussion, we return to the example to demonstrate how the constructs might link to community-engaged scholarship practices in a theory-to-practice progression and, finally, we offer conclusions about application and further research.

### **Hypothetical Example**

A community-engaged scholarship (CES) project is being designed to consider how local neighborhoods can more actively participate in managing the quality of water in the area. The community-campus partnership hopes to balance economic needs with principles of environmental sustainability. Water-use issues have historically been contested in this particular region. Not only is water quality essential to industry, but a sensitive local ecosystem hinges on clean groundwater. The partnership is a community-engaged scholarship project designed to consider mechanisms and pathways that offer neighborhoods increased responsibility in managing and enforcing water quality measures. The partners are recognizing that improving water quality in the region through the active participation of local neighborhoods falls into the category of adaptive challenges.

An adaptive challenge, by definition, requires new ways of knowing and understanding issues. In this case, participants will leverage community-engaged scholarship with the expectation of generating transformative learning across community-campus

partnerships. The goal is that deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning processes will uncover ways in which the entire community feels ownership of the solution and actively participates in the self-rule/regulatory process. The assumption is that if a balance between concerns for water quality and economic growth is to be realized, the community will have to approach this challenge equipped with new knowledge and alternative ways of thinking about the issue, as well as increasing deliberative democratic processes in their engagement.

The community-campus partnership includes students, faculty, professional organizations, civic organizations, and concerned citizens from the various neighborhoods connected to the project. Throughout the design process all of the stakeholders have been informed and have discussed how community-engaged scholarship differs from expert-driven models. Everybody involved in the project has made a good faith effort to shape the partnership in ways that conform to the principles of community engagement (partnership, cocreation, community values, reciprocity, mutual benefit, exchange of knowledge and resources, etc.). The community is supportive of cocreating teaching processes and outcomes with professors and students, and research processes and outcomes with faculty, which can be cycled as new knowledge about the issues.

The participants have also recognized the need to create new ways of knowing and learning in order to respond to this particular adaptive challenge. The community-engaged scholarship plan includes water quality tests, citizen science, traditional surveys, dialogue, interviews, public drama performances, and an art collective at a local farmers market. The partners have intentionally designed a scholarly process that includes multiple ways of knowing, as well as a range of scholarly and research methods. Using a range of ways of knowing in the community-engaged scholarship process is intended to enable connection with a wider range of community stakeholders.

Despite all of the intentional partnership-building efforts, the community inquiry process is currently heading toward an impasse. If the potential stalemate is not recognized and mapped, communication and power enactment norms will continue to structure power differentials and potentially undermine the quality of the partnership. The emerging community and partnership tension can be viewed through the lens of communication and power enactments, as well as transformative learning and deliberative civic engagement.

The business advocacy groups in the community have historically had significant influence in the region. In fact, key industries have previously commissioned and made investments in expert-driven studies to determine economic growth strategies. Acting in their best interests, representatives from the business community are leveraging professional jargon, media outlets, and results from their studies to influence the design of the community-engagement process in ways that differ from those that all stakeholders had initially agreed upon.

The environmental group would prefer a strategy that considers how the scholarly process can support environmental sustainability and a form of economic growth that is focused on improving the quality of jobs that exist in the region. The proposed growth rates from the environmental group do not align with those of the pro-growth business community, which would prefer a strategy that is focused on development and creating new jobs. The quality of the jobs that are created and future environmental impacts are not a primary concern for the progrowth business community.

At this point in the project, before further decisions are considered, the partners agree to create a time and space in a neutral location that will be facilitated by a neutral moderator for all involved to voice their positions, values, risks, concerns, fears, wishes, and demands. The facilitated process provides a holding environment in which the partners may openly and transparently share all information about the project that might have been previously hidden or withheld. The goal of the facilitated discussion is for all to listen and be heard; for all to *see* and *be seen* by themselves and all others.

The partners are aware that this process will require time, funds, and an experienced facilitator, and they have been proactive in planning for this contingency. They realize that this type of open dialogue holds risks for all stakeholders, but the greater risk is the failure of the project to reach its primary goal, which is for the entire community to claim ownership of the solutions and equitably participate in the decision-making process. The leaders recognize a need for partners to engage in mapping of power and reciprocity, deliberative civic engagement, and transformative learning. If they do not take time to create a holding environment that will allow these processes to emerge, the continuation of the project could be at risk.

## Literature Review of Key Concepts

We will consider first our use of five key concepts in adult learning, leadership, and civic engagement literatures, and connect these to our hypothetical example for clarification. We are interested in constructs of power, reciprocity, the intersects of power and reciprocity, deliberative civic engagement, and transformative learning. Foucault (1980, 1990, 2001) and Rowlands (1997) have developed theories of power that have informed the framework under discussion. Dostilio et al. (2012); Hoyt (2011); Jameson, Clayton, and Jaeger (2010); Janke (2012); and Saltmarsh and Hartley (2011) offer constructs of reciprocity that connect with our framework. Himmelman (2001) suggests a continuum that reflects the intersects of power and reciprocity. We turn to Gutmann and Thompson (1996), Nabatchi (2012), and Offe and Preuss (1990), for our consideration of deliberative civic engagement processes and activities. Finally, we review the ways in which the thinking of Drago-Severson (2004), Mezirow (1990, 1991, 1998), and Taylor (2009) influence our integration of transformative learning theory and practices into community-engaged partnerships.

### Constructs of Power—Foucault, Rowlands

Systems that connect and network people, including community-engaged scholarship partnerships, inherently involve elements of power (Sandmann & Kliwer, 2012). The contextual and social features of community-engaged scholarship produce a matrix of power relations that impacts effectiveness. Foucault (1990) defined power as the

multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. (pp. 92–93)

Foucault's understanding of power includes an account of both the production of the subject and of the subjugation of the

object within *force relations*. Notably, Foucault's description of power offers no judgment of power relations; that is, as conceived by Foucault, power is neither positive nor negative; it just *is*. For Foucault, power is not so much agency that people possess as it is the sociopolitical economic contexts in which we exist. Yet, in the contexts of community-engaged partnerships, we also recognize inequalities and the negative impacts of power enactments by individuals who are acting out of their particular contexts (*Dempsey, 2010; Sandmann & Kliever, 2012; Stoeker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009*). With power existing in the environment, as Foucault theorized, persons are communicating and acting out those systems of power in their partnerships. Recognizing and mapping inequities in our systemic contexts, and facilitating the mutual sharing of power from within those contexts, helps to mitigate the negative impacts of inequitable force relations in the partnership.

In her work empowering women in Honduras, Jo Rowlands (1997) applied postmodern understandings of power to outline the following four manifestations or enactments of power: (1) power over, indicating control or compliance; (2) power with, such as collaborative action; (3) power to, connoting productive action to create new possibility; and (4) power within, or the sense of agency, efficacy, and dignity (*p. 13*). In the framework we are recommending, the dimensions of power suggested by Rowlands overlap, bound, and define constructs of power enacted in community-engaged scholarship, and also coincide with typologies of community-engaged partnerships and reciprocity suggested within the literature.

Enactments of power are apparent in the hypothetical case. For example, there is a tension between how power and knowledge are experienced and managed by the various partners in the change process. The progrowth group has commissioned an economic study that is expert-driven and relies on forms of technical rationality and knowing, which can be interpreted as a power enactment for control over the decision-making process. The use of jargon, media, and research results are normative technical mechanisms that tend to exclude local neighborhoods and communities from the decision-making process. The partners with capital who can access technical mechanisms often wield power in decision-making in U.S. culture.

Meanwhile, the environmental sustainability group is endeavoring to arbitrate the economic realities of job growth in relation to sustainability objectives—a step toward creating new possibilities and power within the partnership for the entire community

to engage its own efficacy in problem-solving. The project is at a moment that requires an acknowledgment of these differing ways of knowing and enacting power, in order for adaptive learning outcomes to emerge alongside technical learning outcomes.

For the partnership to make progress, it is necessary to expose and mediate the partners' various ways of knowing and enactments of power. Understanding this point of tension through the lens of power and knowledge promotes giving proper value to each competing perspective and moves the process from one of competition to one of reciprocity. As suggested in the example, the ways in which power is acknowledged and managed have implications for how effectively reciprocity is developed in the partnership.

### **Constructs of Reciprocity—Janke, Hoyt, Dostilio et al.**

“Building on Furco’s (2010) cone of engagement with ideas advanced by Jameson, Clayton, and Jaeger (2010) on thick and thin reciprocity, I developed the cone of reciprocity” (Janke, 2012, p. 12). Janke’s (2012) *cone of reciprocity* is a tool that tracks reciprocity according to the form of engagement developed in the partnership. The cone of reciprocity suggests that engagement begins more narrowly and opens into reciprocity as the engagement becomes more collaborative, or thicker. In other words, the type of reciprocity developed in the partnership corresponds to the level of engagement developed in the partnership.

Janke and Clayton (2012) defined reciprocity as “recognizing, respecting, and valuing of the knowledge, perspective, and resources that each partner contributes to the collaboration” (p. 3). Janke (2012) proposed that reciprocity becomes more reciprocal as it becomes *thicker*, that is, as “partners share and shape ideas together in a generative and collaborative spirit” (as suggested by Jameson, Clayton, and Jaeger, 2010, in Janke, 2012, p. 16). Similarly, Hoyt (2011) described different types of community-engaged partnerships and stages of engagement commensurate with the level of power sharing and reciprocity between the partners. Her study revealed stages in partnerships from pseudo-engagement to tentative, stable, authentic, and, finally, sustained engagement. Hoyt (2011) and Janke (2012) both pointed out that types of engagement and reciprocity are iterative and fluctuate with varying degrees of involvement, which arise from a multiplicity of relational motives and social contexts.

Dostilio et al. (2012) offer a construction of nuanced orientations of reciprocity—those of exchange, influence, and generative reciprocity. These various concepts of reciprocity inform the basis and design of deliberative civic engagement spaces. *Generative reciprocity* (Dostilio et al., 2012) is a synergistic joining of partners across diversity of interests and perspectives from which emerges a new entity that would not have been possible within any partner alone, that is, a transformational partnership (Enos & Morton, 2003). In the hypothetical example, the partners are at an intersection that holds the potential for increased, thicker engagement, and the possibility for generative reciprocity to emerge. Through a facilitated dialogue of listening and sharing differing ways of knowing, values, and goals, the partnership has the potential to create an outcome that none of the partners could have created alone, or could have generated without a thicker, more authentic engagement among them.

Here we add the notion that as relational and contextual power differentials (Rowlands, 1997) are identified, mapped, and managed, and as control for decision-making is shifted to a shared synergistic agency, reciprocity becomes more generative and transformative, and new and/or different actions and outcomes are produced from the partnership. Further, as shown in Table 1, Janke's (2012) cone of reciprocity, and Hoyt's (2011) stages of engagement can be matched with Rowlands's (1997) manifestations of power to provide an understanding of how manifestations of power intersect and impact reciprocity and engagement in partnerships.

**Table 1. Power Manifestations Matched With Cone of Reciprocity, Stages of Engagement**

Power Manifestations; Rowlands (1997)	Cone of Reciprocity; Janke (2012)	Stages of Engagement; Hoyt (2011)
Power Over—Control	On	Pseudo-engagement
Power Over—Control	To	Pseudo-engagement
Power Over—Control	For	Pseudo-engagement
Power With—Collaborative	With	Tentative/Stable engagement
Power to—Creative	With	Stable/Authentic engagement
Power Within—Agency	With	Authentic/Sustained engagement



## Intersects of Power and Reciprocity— Himmelman; Saltmarsh and Hartley

Janke (2012) posed a germane question for community-engagement leaders: “How then might one consider and plan a path that is reciprocal, yet avoids exploitation?” (p. 14). In other words, how does one mediate and manage the intersects of power and reciprocity? Himmelman (2001) offered a basis for understanding the nuances of reciprocity versus exploitation that further explains the distinction. He describes a continuum of community action from *collaborative betterment* to *collaborative empowerment*. Collaborative betterment coalitions do not seek to shift power relations or produce community ownership, or to increase a community’s control in decision-making and action (p. 281). Collaborative betterment partnerships might be characterized as those in which the campus has contracted with a community in a short-term project designed for the mutual benefit of both (i.e., exchange reciprocity). An example of a collaborative betterment partnership would be a semester-limited service-learning project. Himmelman suggests, however, that collaborative empowerment coalitions are initiated from within communities that institute mutual power relations and then invite the participation of entities that might partner with them to create a new entity between the two (i.e., potential for generative reciprocity), as our hypothetical example suggests.

The characteristic that distinguishes *collaborative betterment* from *collaborative empowerment* coalitions is enactments of power, that is, who in the coalition has the “*capacity to produce intended results*” (Himmelman, 2001, p. 278). Himmelman further insisted that the transformation of power relations in coalitions requires the development of practices of deliberative civic engagement. That is, “power . . . must be guided by principles and practices of democratic governance, grassroots leadership development, and community organizing” (p. 278). He suggested that the conditions for engagement should provide opportunities for those involved to “practice becoming more powerful in a democratic manner” (p. 284), which includes learning to be accountable to others in the partnership through civic engagement.

Saltmarsh and Hartley (2011) took a further step by proposing that community-engaged scholarship must attend radically to its civic mission with “innovative practices that shift epistemology, reshape the curriculum, alter pedagogy, and redefine scholarship” (p. 23). They distinguish between civic engagement that is focused on *activity and place* from that focused on *purpose and process*, that is, reciprocity with democratic dimensions (pp. 19–22). They

understood reciprocity to situate persons and organizations in the community with whom scholars partner “not just as consumers of knowledge and services but also as participants in the larger public culture of democracy” (p. 21).

Generative reciprocity within the partnership allows for knowledge produced in the community to be valued equally with that produced through technical means—such as the research studies offered by the progrowth group in the hypothetical example. Community-generated knowledge, such as knowledge generated through local culture, the arts, or efforts in support of the environment, joined with technical and campus-generated knowledge, allows for a process of synergistic cocreation of knowledge. Mutual sharing of power is seen as a democratic practice that opens the partnership for a reciprocal joining in which new ways of knowing and learning emerge, enabling the cocreation of new knowledge. Deliberative civic engagement practices in this framework would allow for adaptive learning and generation of questions and knowledge previously not considered in the partnership.

### **Deliberative Civic Engagement—Space for Disagreement and Communion**

Deliberative civic engagement is defined by a particular approach to public communication, partnership, and decision-making. Deliberative engagement is a reference to forms of communication that include “respectful and rigorous communication about public problems” (*Nabatchi, 2012, p. 8*). As a result, deliberative civic engagement describes a process groups use in “working to make a difference in the civic life of our community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference” (*Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi*). Deliberative civic engagement activity not only provides the conditions necessary to make progress on tough issues, such as the one presented in the hypothetical example, but also includes learning of democratic values and processes.

Deliberation seeks to uncover “justifications which are acceptable to all” (*Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, p. 232*). The justification process that extends from deliberation ensures that partnership parameters move toward standards of fairness and consensus. Capacities for dialogue and deliberation, then, become crucial elements of building effective engaged-scholarship partnerships, in which all partners develop agency, or the “capacity to produce intended results” (*Himmelman, 2001, p. 278*), and share in mutual

power. Developing adaptive leadership capacities through deliberative civic engagement, positions individuals in ways that allow them to manage disagreement and contestation and maintain cohesion of the group's actions and partnership. Clas Offe and Ulrich Preuss (1990) suggested that processes intended to define the general will of a group can overcome disagreement when deliberation meets three criteria being: (1) fact-regarding, as opposed to dogma or pure ideology; (2) future-regarding, which moves beyond only short-term considerations; and (3) other-regarding, which includes consideration of the public good over simple calculations of self-interest (pp. 156–157).

The criteria of deliberation take on different meanings depending on one's orientation toward deliberative civic engagement and reciprocity in partnerships. Impartialist orientations to deliberative civic engagement are the most common approach to understanding the role of deliberation in responding to disagreement (Held, 2006). The impartialist perspective assumes that the best way to overcome disagreement is to link processes that produce "an expectation of rationally acceptable results" (Habermas, 1996, p. 546) with the goals of deliberative democracy. The impartialist view advances an understanding that disagreement can be overcome by connecting deliberation to the consideration of all possible public positions and all associated justifications. Deliberation and disagreement, from the impartialist perspective, become what Benhabib (1992) referred to as "reasoning from the point of view of others" (pp. 9–10). Deliberative processes that are perceived as legitimate will be able to overcome disagreement because individuals will be prepared to accept the strongest publicly justified position.

Critics of the impartialist view suggest that it is unrealistic to measure standards of deliberative civic engagement against ideal-speech conditions. Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (1996) proposed that deliberative processes ought to account for nonideal conditions. Gutmann and Thompson suggested that *incompatible values* and *incompatible understanding* will always be an element of associational politics; differing values and ways of knowing among citizens will assuredly give rise to incompatible perspectives and actions. They asserted that deliberation avoids gridlock and allows for the negotiation of disagreement when individuals justify public positions with "reasons that can be accepted by others who are similarly motivated to find reasons that can be accepted by others" (p. 232). Locating a space of agreeable justification that will be accepted by all is an essential component of associational politics.

**Creating conditions for disagreement and agreeable justification.** In the field of community outreach and community-engaged scholarship, there has been an implied assumption that being an effective community–campus partnership means moving directly toward increasing degrees of consensus. Assuming that consensus forms in a linear fashion and will include no incidents of disagreement is problematic. Creating and protecting productive channels of disagreement can promote higher levels of interpersonal reciprocity between individual partners who possess varied levels of power, communication skills, and learning capacities.

In this essay, we are interested in identifying frameworks that allow for disagreement to lead to more effective and robust partnerships. The question becomes “In what conditions can community-engaged partners reasonably ensure that disagreement in the community–campus partnership process will be productive in advancing community-engaged scholarship?” We suggest that the implementation of three practices—(a) mapping intersects of power and reciprocity, (b) deliberative civic engagement, and (c) attending to transformative learning—build conditions for the emergence of individual and social transformation in community-engaged scholarship.

The general conception of reciprocity presented by Gutmann and Thompson (1996) bounds the parameters of partnership into an area that will accommodate disagreement that can still produce “mutually acceptable reasons” for collective decisions and “adheres to basic levels of respect” (p. 79). When incompatibility arises in the partnership, as suggested in the hypothetical example, mapping power and reciprocity through practices of deliberative civic engagement would allow for those involved to unmask differences in ways of knowing and uses of knowledge in order to share resources and power in decision-making.

**Creating conditions for communion.** Realization of a joined community promotes emergence of a “we identity” (Janke, 2012) that takes into account all values and positions in determining the best course of action for the common good. Lorraine Hoyt (2011), for example, theorized that engagement reflects reciprocity as a nonlinear process, in fluctuating stages of mutually shared power that reaches its full potential in the cocreation of knowledge that affects social change. She recommended an epistemology of *relational knowing*, which supports mutual power sharing and generative reciprocity.

From within an epistemology of relational knowing, communication evolves into a process of communion in which partners may recognize that even though they have incompatible values in some arenas, they have shared values and goals in the particular project on which they have committed to work together. Conditions for agreeable justification and communion allow for disagreement in the community–campus partnership to become generative and productive, whereas masking and disallowing disagreement becomes counterproductive.

## **Transformative Learning**

Community-engaged scholarship creates the conditions in which individuals, partnerships, organizations, and communities may be shaped to strengthen structures of democracy and deepen learning. Taylor (2009) identified researchers who recognize “transformative learning as being as much about social change as personal transformation, where individual and social transformation are inherently linked” (p. 5). Transformative learning and improving the practice of democracy are integral to community-engaged scholarship (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011; Sherman & Torbert, 2000).

Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1998) that is linked to community-engaged scholarship meets transformative learning conditions when stakeholders are negotiating their interests (Dempsey, 2010; Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). During the process of forming community–campus partnerships that are working toward a common goal, competing interests among stakeholders will inevitably emerge and be expressed within differentials in power, communicative action, and orientations of reciprocity, as suggested in the hypothetical example. In this example, if the partners with differing values and ways of knowing are supported in the transformative learning processes of recognizing disorienting dilemmas and reflective dialogue, the possibilities for shifts in perspective increase, and the levels of engagement and reciprocity thicken. Therefore, transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1998) becomes vital for enabling community-engagement partners can navigate fluctuations in levels of reciprocity and power-sharing.

Davis and Kliewer (2014) proposed that “transformative learning may be enabled . . . precisely because community–campus partnerships are contexts in which different stakeholders are negotiating their individual and organizational interests . . . while also

conveying differing ways of knowing and understanding” (p. 478). They suggested that the process of forming community-campus partnerships creates conditions in which competing interests will inevitably emerge due to differing contexts, ontologies, and epistemologies, much as Gutmann and Thompson (1996) noted regarding deliberative civic engagement.

Dempsey (2010) noted that “deliberative processes play a critical role in surfacing meaningful differences among participants within community engagement initiatives” (p. 382). Expressions of, and exposure to, differences in perspectives and actions might serve as catalysts for appraisal of previously held assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives, which inform frames of reference (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1998). Differing perspectives, if allowed to be voiced and discussed to reach understanding, may serve to produce a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1998) for some individuals. Transformative learning theory proposes that the experience of a disorienting dilemma is the initial catalyst for transformation, which is required for dislodging entrenched, traditional perspectives. Once these perspectives are dislodged, consideration of other perspectives might allow for management of power in positive ways. Davis and Kliewer (2014) proposed that the process of building partnerships within engaged scholarship through mutually shared power and generative reciprocity provides a context for disorienting dilemmas to emerge, offering opportunities for transformative learning and contributing to the transformations in higher education and society originally envisioned by community-engaged scholarship (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011).

Generative orientations of reciprocity shape transformative learning by allowing for the possibilities of disorienting dilemmas, reflective thinking and dialogue, shifts in frames of reference, and shifts in actions (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1998). Generative orientations to reciprocity support what Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) referred to as *creative tensions* that produce conditions for transformative learning. When speaking regarding the relationships between non-violent direct action and social change, King highlighted how this idea of creative tensions leads to a type of transformative learning that can point toward social change.

King (1963) urged us to consider how creative tensions can facilitate a learning process that moves people beyond “myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal” (p. 3). The concept of creative tension can be constructed within deliberative civic engagement frameworks, tied to community-engaged scholarship, and designed to produce gen-

erative orientations to reciprocity that maintain the potential of transformative learning.

In our hypothetical example, the tension between the pro-environment community and the progrowth community can become a potentiality for generative reciprocity within deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning practices and processes. At this juncture, the partners must be reminded of, and take seriously, their initial commitments in shaping the partnership to conform to the principles of community engagement. In order to respond to the community's adaptive challenge, partners must recognize and respond to the need to create new ways of knowing and learning.

### **Community-Engaged Partnerships—Power and Reciprocity Framework**

As depicted in our hypothetical example, inequalities and unbalanced power relations on multiple dimensions limit the potential, integrity, and effectiveness of community-engaged partnerships (Dempsey, 2010; Sandmann & Kliwer, 2012; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). Currently, the literature fails to provide a comprehensive framework that accounts for power and reciprocity in ways that can improve the effectiveness of community-campus partnerships. We offer the following framework in an effort to begin to close this gap in the literature and in practice.

### **Creating Conditions for Deliberative Civic Engagement and Transformative Learning**

Community-engaged scholarship can be understood as a holding environment (Drago-Severson, 2004) in which adults might experience opportunities for transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1998; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Drago-Severson (2004) suggested that the transformative growth of individuals and organizations depends upon reflective practices in “a community where open and honest communication is the norm, where critical dialogue is a priority, and where a supportive, trusting environment encourages and embraces risk taking” (p. 76). Manin, Stein, and Mansbridge (1987) argued that deliberative civic engagement is in itself an educative and training process, and any instrumental outcomes of deliberation are likely a result of “educative effect of repeated deliberation” (p. 363). There is a need for individuals to exercise leadership in ways that make space for “inclusion, deliberation, and transparency” (Dostilio, 2014, p. 243). The process of



building reciprocal partnerships within community-engaged scholarship offers opportunities for transformative learning and provides a bridge for the scholarly process to address adaptive challenges of the 21st century.

In order to improve the outcomes of community-engaged scholarship, we suggest that partners create holding environments (Drago-Severson, 2004) for the enactments of deliberative civic engagement, where intersects of power and reciprocity are acknowledged and mapped among individual and organizational partners. Such a holding environment will increase the likelihood that partners will develop the capacity to engage with deliberative dialogue and enable generative reciprocity. As depicted in our example, the partnership leaders must be intentional about planning for the creation of holding environments in which dialogue and reciprocity can emerge from inherent tensions within the partnership.

### **Differing Types of Reciprocity and Differing Types of Partnerships**

Practices of civic engagement, mapping power and reciprocity, and attending to transformative learning create conditions for the development of transformational partnerships, as envisioned by community-engaged scholarship. By appropriating the differentiation that Burns (1998) made between transactional and transformational leadership, Enos and Morton (2003) identified a similar functional distinction in community-engaged partnerships. They described *transactional partnerships* as those that are instrumental in nature and are generally framed to meet limited tasks, outcomes, calendars, and budgets. *Transformational partnerships*, in contrast, are those in which “persons come together in more open-ended processes . . . to explore emergent possibilities, revisit and revise their own goals and identities, and develop systems they work within beyond the status quo” (Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq, & Morrison, 2010, pp. 7–8). The typology of transactional and transformational partnerships matches the manifestations of power (Rowlands, 1997), types of civic engagement, orientations of reciprocity (Dostilio et al., 2012), and stages of engagement (Hoyt, 2011) considered in this study, as shown in Table 2.



**Table 2. Power, Partnerships, Civic Engagement, Reciprocity, and Stages of Engagement**

Power Manifestations; Rowlands (1997)	Types of Partnerships; Enos & Morton (2003)	Civic Engagement Communication Pattern	Reciprocity Orientation; Dostilio et al. (2012)	Stages of Engagement; Hoyt (2011)
Power Over—Control	N/A	Directive	N/A	Pseudo-engagement
Power With—Collaborative	Transactional [Transitional]	Persuasive	Exchange	Tentative/Stable engagement
Power to—Creative	Transformational [Transitional]	Relational	Influence	Stable/Authentic engagement
Power Within—Agency	Transformational	Deliberative dialogue	Generative	Sustained engagement

Hoyt (2011) aptly summarized that “human relationships, particularly those that are resilient and capable of thriving through adversity, are the most critical element for achieving sustained engagement” (p. 282). As her theory of engagement proposed, resilient relationships are not automatic; rather, they are developed in stages over time. Engagement that is based on “an epistemology of reciprocal knowledge, realized through a two-way network of human relationships, allows faculty, students, civic leaders, and residents to experiment as they learn the norms and develop the values of democracy through sustained city–campus partnerships” (p. 285).

Stakeholders begin to acknowledge that the interests of their partners are also their own interests, and the divisions between *us and them* become more fluid. As distinctions break down, identity becomes a *shared we* (Janke, 2009). All involved become both teachers and learners (Jacoby, 2003, p. 4), and the cocreation of knowledge emerges. Table 2 displays a match, or cross-walk, between manifestations of power, types of partnerships, types of civic engagement communication, and how these align with orientations of reciprocity and stages of engagement.

### **Mapping Power and Reciprocity Applied**

The core issue of productive disagreement is one of communicating underlying assumptions that inform partners’ self-interests, intersected with their greater commitments to the common good. In their initial planning, community–campus partnerships need to anticipate strategies and practices designed to uncover premature consensus and insincere tolerance, as well as to build a space

of agreeable justification (*Gutmann & Thompson, 1996*). A holding environment in which all involved have equitable access to decision-making allows for everyone in the partnership to enact the “capacity to produce intended results” (*Himmelman, 2001, p. 278*).

## Revisiting the Hypothetical Example

In the hypothetical example, where the various factions are trying to make sense of how to approach the research and contextualization of the issue, the progrowth group commissioned a traditional expert-driven project, and the sustainability group is trying to mobilize the community by leveraging a range of ways of knowing. The controversy depicted in the example results from the seemingly competing ways of framing the issue—a controversy that can evolve in response to innumerable issues in partnerships. Our framework suggests that one practical response to *contestations of ways of knowing* is to create transparent processes that speak to the value of the differing approaches. The objective is to break down the tendency of differing groups to take opposing positions, and instead to find overlapping areas of agreement from which they can move forward.

As portrayed in the example, intentional development of a holding environment for the enactment of deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning must begin at the outset of the community-engaged project. In the example, all partners are informed and agree to the principles on which the partnership will be built: cocreation and accountability, community values, reciprocity, exchange of knowledge and resources, and so on. The project plan intentionally included multiple ways of knowing that would connect to a wide range of community stakeholders. The plan further intentionally included practices of deliberative democracy, as *Himmelman (2001)* suggested, to “practice becoming more powerful in a democratic manner” (*p. 284*), and learning to be accountable to others in the community. To support the processes necessary for managing these differing approaches, the project design proactively included the potential for time, location, funding support, and an agreed-upon neutral moderator—ideally someone with experience in facilitating deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning practices and processes.

As the progrowth business partners began to leverage their own influence and resources to gain inequitable power in the decision-making process, the coalition called for an information-sharing session, as had been initially agreed upon in the project’s design.

Although open, honest dialogue holds risks for each partner, the greater risk is the failure of a project to which the partners have agreed and made commitments. In the case of the hypothetical example, the goal was for the entire community to recognize ownership of the quality of their water, and have opportunities to participate in the decision-making process, or as Himmelman (2001) suggests, to have the “capacity to produce intended results” (p. 278).

The values and processes integrated into the structure of deliberative civic engagement support a community in speaking truth to power. When acknowledging and mapping enactments of power, the values and processes of deliberative civic engagement can be organized in ways that bring controversies to the surface, as opposed to defaulting to the interests of the most powerful. Nothing about this structure assumes that power will always be negotiated in equitable ways. However, by accounting for power and reciprocity through deliberative civic engagement structures, community-engagement partnerships have the capacity to work through contested issues in more equitable ways.

Thus, at the information-sharing session, the facilitator would be tasked with creating a holding environment in which the partners could revisit their mutually agreed upon goals, consider possible shifts in the goals, and voice their current concerns and contentions to unmask hidden agendas, premature consensus, and previously insincere tolerances. The intention for dialogue at this point in the project is not for agreement, but for understanding. The moderator must be one who has proven capacities for creating such an environment and facilitating such a dialogue.

### **The Transformational Process of Mapping Power and Reciprocity**

In creating conditions in which all involved may *see and be seen* inside a context of positive regard, reciprocity develops from a mutual sharing of power. Mutual sharing of power assumes a mutual sharing of risk and emerges from a mutual opening to vulnerability, which iteratively deepens or thickens reciprocity (Jameson, Clayton, & Jaeger, 2010). In the hypothetical story, if the community does not create job growth, it risks losing a tax base as industry moves elsewhere; if the community does not protect its environment, it risks losing an identity as citizens move elsewhere; further, if the community dwindles, the academic partners dwindle with it. The realities and nuances of all perspectives must be fully understood in order for the partnership to generate a unique response that would

not have been possible with any partner alone. The power inequities must be shifted in order for all voices to be heard.

Partners must recognize that they may be transformed in this process, for people are not truly listening to each other unless they are willing to be changed by what they hear (*Hall, 2012, p. 5*). The vulnerabilities and risks involved can be real for representatives of both community and campus, including being perceived as a *traitor* by constituents and employers when one appears to *take the side* of the other in an identity with the other. Reciprocity, however, requires that all involved maintain their integrity to their own perspective, and bring their unique perspective to the project, sharing openly so that all may benefit from others' knowledge; the process is one in which diversity is truly a strength. Reciprocity cannot be reached if the partners are not fully informed and truly understanding of all perspectives in the project, since reciprocity depends on valuing and respecting all stakeholders' positions. One cannot reciprocally value what one does not understand.

Those who might undermine the process are exposed to the possibility of experiencing a disorienting dilemma, in which their previous frames of reference are challenged by new information. If reflection upon the dilemma and its implications is facilitated in open dialogue and reflection with others, transformation of perspectives may occur for some or all partners, and the project will produce the opportunity to move forward. Without the vulnerabilities and risks of transparent dialogue, there is no potential for moving beyond the impasse, and the partners must conclude in this instance that their separate goals and individual agendas became more important than the community goals upon which they originally agreed.

## Conclusions

This essay presents a framework from adult learning and leadership research and practice that considers the potential for designing community-engaged partnerships to create intentional spaces of generative reciprocity through deliberative civic engagement and transformative learning. Our concept aims to map the dynamics of power and reciprocity through deliberative civic engagement processes and activities. We suggest this frame as a potentially generative design for community-engaged scholarship that stimulates transformative learning practices within democratic environments.

The foundational principles of engaged scholarship specify that teaching, research, and outreach need to be informed by the community (both public and private enterprises), in which knowledge and resources that contribute to the public good intrinsically reside (*Carnegie Foundation, 2017*). Deliberative civic engagement, based on mutual sharing of power, as well as space for voice and choice, would nurture a generativity orientation to reciprocity. Dostilio et al. (2012) summarized the process of mapping power in generative reciprocity:

In sum, generativity-oriented reciprocity emerges within the domain of a worldview in which . . . power, privilege, and oppression are actively and intentionally considered. . . . This form of reciprocity can lead to transformation . . . within individuals, systems, and paradigms. (p. 25)

The transformation of power relations in community-campus partnerships requires that enactments of power “must be guided by principles and practices of democratic governance, grassroots leadership development, and community organizing” (*Himmelman, 2001, p. 278*). Mutual sharing of power that produces generative reciprocity enables all stakeholders to join together synergistically to build capacities and produce outcomes that none could otherwise produce separately. Deliberative civic engagement, mapping intersects of power and reciprocity, and attending to capacities for transformative learning are all essential practices in community-engaged partnerships. We recommend these three essential practices in order to create conditions for the emergence of individual, institutional, organizational, and social transformation in community-engaged scholarship. Further research needs to explore empirically the application and efficacy of these practices in order to further inform the development of these concepts within community-campus partnerships.

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## Note

Earlier versions of this essay are published in the Proceedings of the XI International Transformative Learning Conference (2014) and in the Proceedings of the 56th Annual Adult Education Research Conference (2015).

Davis, K. L., & Kliewer, B. W. (2014, October). Mapping intersects of power, communication, and reciprocity: Conceptual and functional space for transformative learning in community-engaged scholarship. In A. Nicolaides & D. Holt (Eds.), *Spaces of Transformation and Transformation of Space* (pp. 478-485). Proceedings of the XI International Transformative Learning Conference, New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/at82wlt4gh6cute/2014.pdf?dl=0>

Davis, K.L., Kliewer, B.W., and Nicolaides, A. (2015). Mapping intersects of power and reciprocity in adult education, deliberative civic engagement, and leadership development in community-engaged scholarship. *Adult Education Research Conference*. Retrieved from <http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2015/papers/20>



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