Navigating Personal, Professional, Institutional, and Relational Dimensions of Community-Engaged Research

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Abstract

As universities around the world face plunging revenues coupled with rising expenses, many argue that today's post-secondary sector is in crisis (Anderson et al., 2020). In some regions, budgetary challenges are exacerbated by performance-based funding models that place an increased focus on impacting local economics and communities more broadly (e.g., Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances, 2019). In response to growing public, personal, and institutional demands for post-secondary institutions to improve their relevance and impact, increasing numbers of academics are pursuing community-engaged approaches to their research. In this paper, two Canadian researchers provide a collaborative autoethnographic account that reflects on and examines their experiences with meaningful and authentic community-engaged research partnerships. The authors explore themes associated with navigating personal, professional, institutional, and relational dimensions of faculty community engagement. In doing so, they draw on and present a modified version of Wade and Demb's (2009; Demb & Wade, 2012) faculty engagement model that includes relational factors informed by Bringle and Hatcher's (2002) theoretical framework of relationships. The results of this collaborative autoethnography have broad implications for the practice of research, including implications for work-life balance, tenure and promotion, how service is recognized/categorized, and institutional ethics review board processes.

Internationally, many academics and academic institutions are adopting community-engaged approaches to research in response to public, personal, and institutional pressures (Hall & MacPherson, 2011). Post-secondary institutions (PSIs) are expected to be relevant and impactful in society, to engage in public and political debates, and to provide students with a rigorous education (Hoffman, 2016; Post et al., 2016; Toffel, 2016). At the same time, researchers are recognizing the importance of including members of the community directly in research activities and processes (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [TCPS], 2018; MacKinnon, 2018). These academics may also hold personal aims and aspirations to be agents of social change, to engage in public discourse and advocacy work, and to impact policy and on-the-ground decision-making (Burawoy, 2004; Burkhardt et al., 2016; Kirchherr, 2018). These pressures and ambitions have led many universities to undertake efforts to engage their broader publics and communities. In Canada, where the authors are located, funders are calling for collaborative, partner-driven research (Nyström et al., 2018; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2019). Many universities have also identified community research partnerships as a strategic priority (Magnusson, 2013; University of Alberta, 2017; University of British Columbia, n.d., 2018; University of Toronto, 2018) and have established engaged scholarship centers (e.g., University of Alberta, n.d.; University of Saskatchewan, n.d.). Of note, 16 Canadian universities are engaged in a pilot program to develop a Canadian version of the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement (Simon Fraser University, n.d.).

In the 1990s, recognizing that public confidence in universities was declining, Boyer (1990, 1996) called for PSIs and faculty research to take an active role in addressing problems in the broader community. As Boyer stated, "the academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems…what I call the scholarship of engagement" (1996, p. 15). Based on a comprehensive review of the literature published over a 20-year period, Beaulieu et al. (2018) further conceptualized the scholarship of engagement as:

A true academic posture, rooted in values of social justice and citizenship, that prompts academics and universities, in their roles of teaching, research, and service to society, to work in ways that will build mutually beneficial and reciprocal bridges between university activity and civil society. (p. 12)

Research partnerships between universities/individual academics and community stakeholders, practitioners, organizations, and agencies (hereafter community partners) can take different forms and can be referred to by different names. Although each partnership is unique (Adams & Faulkhead, 2012), community-engaged and participatory research is generally action oriented, and those impacted by the issues being studied are directly involved in research and knowledge mobilization processes (Clinical and Translational Science Awards Consortium Community Engagement Key Function Committee Task Force on the Principles of Community Engagement, 2011; MacKinnon, 2018). Dynamics of engaged research have been investigated, including types of faculty engagement (Glass et al., 2011), tenure and promotion criteria (Hyman et al., 2001), and characteristics of engaged campuses and programs (Hamel-Lambert et al., 2012; Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 1999). Research has also explored factors that facilitate effective partnerships (e.g., power sharing, shared decision-making, co-governance) as well as factors that challenge them (e.g., differing perspectives and priorities, academic research rigor versus relevance to the community partner; Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Hall & MacPherson, 2011; Nyström et al., 2018; Stack-Cutler et al., 2017). To advance community-engaged research, scholars have recommended that future studies consider multiple institutions and institutional types, advance theoretical foundations of inquiry, and employ narratives of practice such as autoethnographic methodologies (Giles, 2008; Jones & Lee, 2017; Sandmann, 2008).

In response to these recommendations, in this paper, two Canadian community-engaged researchers (the authors) use a collaborative autoethnographic approach to examine and reflect on research practices, experiences, and challenges. The authors work at different institutions (both undergraduate, teaching-focused universities) that are mandated by the government to focus on undergraduate education and applied research. Community-engaged scholarship also features heavily in the strategic academic and research plans at both universities. The authors work in different disciplines (sociology and industrial/organizational psychology) with different populations (Indigenous Peoples, people with lived refugee experience) and are at different stages of their careers (emerging/tenure-track scholar and established/tenured scholar). This paper adds to the literature examining engagement at PSIs (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Jones & Lee, 2017) and draws on and extends Wade and Demb's (2009; Demb & Wade, 2012) model of faculty community engagement to include relational factors informed by Bringle and Hatcher's (2002) theoretical framework of relationships.

The theoretical framework and methods used in this paper are discussed next, followed by an in-depth discussion of the authors' experiences navigating personal, professional, institutional, and relational dimensions of community-engaged research. Finally, broader research and practical implications are considered.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is informed by Wade and Demb's (2009; Demb & Wade, 2012) faculty engagement model (FEM). FEM is a conceptual framework that articulates personal, professional, and institutional factors related to faculty community engagement. Personal factors may include race/ethnicity, gender, age, experience, values, and motivations (Wade & Demb, 2009, pp. 11-13), whereas professional factors may include discipline, department support, academic rank, and time spent in academia (Wade & Demb, 2009, pp. 10-11). Institutional priorities, leadership, budget, institutional type and structure, and tenure and promotion policies may also shape faculty participation (Wade & Demb, 2009, pp. 8-10). While the FEM conceptualizes factors that can influence, predict, and explain faculty participation in engagement activities, the model is used in this paper to examine the individual experiences of two faculty members in depth. In doing so, the significance and complicated nature of relationships between researchers and community partners is revealed in a way that Wade and Demb did not consider (2009; Demb & Wade, 2012).

To inform the relational dimension of faculty community engagement, this paper also draws on Bringle and Hatcher's (2002) theoretical framework of relationships, which articulates community-university partnerships as dynamic

interpersonal relationships between stakeholders (university faculty, students, and administrators on the university side; community members, leaders, and personnel on the community side) that progress through phases (initiation, development, maintenance, and dissolution) similar to the stages of friendship and romantic relationships. Ultimately, it is recommended that Wade and Demb's model be updated to include an increased focus on relationships with community partners.

Methods

This paper presents a collaborative autoethnographic research account that explores and compares our (the authors') personal experiences with community-engaged research. Scholars have individually and collectively used autoethnography (Cutforth, 2013; Gonzalez & Padilla, 2008; Ingman, 2016; Lac & Fine, 2018) as well as reflection and narrative inquiry (Barth, 2018; Hamel-Lambert et al., 2012; O'Meara, 2008) to explore experiences and identities as community-engaged scholars. Collaborative autoethnography is a qualitative research method that incorporates the autobiographical study of self (including class, race, gender, education, and roles); ethnographic analysis of the researchers' social, cultural, and political context; and collaborative approaches to data analysis and interpretation (Chang, 2013; Chang et al., 2013; Lapadat, 2017). Autoethnography is used in this paper as a method for critical reflexive narrative inquiry and an analytical lens that understands the self as connected to a sociocultural context (Hughes & Pennington, 2017; Wall, 2016).

Collaborative autoethnography involves iterative processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Chang et al., 2013). Our research process involved several cycles of (a) individual journaling and group sharing, (b) individual reviewing and coding to identify patterns and themes, and (c) group theme identification and writing. We used analytical-interpretive writing (Chang et al., 2013), in which we described our experiences and then interpreted them in the context of Wade and Demb's FEM. Individual free-form journaling included self-reflections on and recollections of thoughts, feelings, experiences, processes, challenges, and successes associated with our community-engaged research. Group sharing involved critical discussion and reflection, connecting shared experiences, and identifying commonalities and complexities inherent in community-engaged work. We examined and compared our individual experiences, and we interpreted them within the larger cultural, social, and institutional contexts and realities that informed our research processes (e.g., research questions, decisions) as well as within the context of literature on engaged scholarship. As a final step, we conducted a deductive analysis in which we looked for key themes in our reflections that aligned with Wade and Demb's FEM (2009; Demb & Wade, 2012) and for relational dimensions that aligned with Bringle and Hatcher's (2002) theoretical framework of relationships.

Given our focus on centering relational factors in community-engaged research, we consulted our community partners in the preparation of this manuscript. Each author asked community partners to read and provide feedback on the manuscript. In addition to asking for overall feedback, we wanted to ensure that we depicted our engagement with community partners in a way that was consistent with their experiences of working with us. The feedback that we received generally aligned with our understandings and perspectives. This may be because we regularly sought input from and engaged in debrief sessions with community partners throughout our research processes.

Navigating Personal, Professional, and Institutional Dimensions of Community-Engaged Research

There are differences and similarities across our (EM and LH's) experiences. We are from different universities, faculties, and departments; are at different stages of our careers; and are engaged in projects with different communities.

EM is engaged in education-sector projects with parents/caregivers, youth, and Indigenous Elders that aim to support Indigenous students by identifying educational inequalities and developing school-based policies and strategies to reduce them. Relations between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada have been marked by policies and practices of physical, biological, and cultural genocide, which have had devastating intergenerational consequences for Indigenous Peoples, families, and communities (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people has emerged as a national priority in Canada, and education is central to the vision of how to positively move forward (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

LH works with the settlement sector (i.e., agencies that provide resettlement services to newcomers and refugees), different levels of government, and refugee communities on a research program investigating the resettlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in Canada. Her reflections are based on her experiences working with Syrian refugees and with several South Sudanese communities in Canada. While most of the Syrian refugees she has worked with are relatively recent newcomers to Canada (many arrived in 2016–2017), most individuals from the South Sudanese communities have lived in Canada for 15–20 years.

Despite the two authors' differences, their experiences illuminate personal, professional, institutional, and relational dimensions of faculty community engagement (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Wade & Demb, 2009). These dimensions are used to structure the sections below and are illustrated with extended passages from our individual journaling.

Personal Dimensions

Personal dimensions of faculty engagement may include demographic characteristics (race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.), epistemology, previous experience, values, beliefs, and motivations (Wade & Demb, 2009). Our journaling involved ongoing reflection on our positionality, as we are outsiders relative to the communities within which we work. Both authors are White settler female scholars. EM was raised by a single father in a low-income household with four siblings, and LH was raised by a single mother who is an amputee. The following passages from our reflections demonstrate personal dimensions of faculty engagement.

EM: My work is informed by a sense of social responsibility and a desire to contribute to social change, use theory and research methods to engage with social issues, contribute to public understanding and discourse, and address issues in real-world settings. At the same time, I feel my relationships in the community often start off at a place of distrust. I have witnessed a fear associated with the word "research" (i.e., people feeling—justifiably—a sense of being "overresearched" without positive outcomes) and hesitance and distrust associated with the role of "university professor" (i.e., associated with a position

of power, privilege). A community partner recently introduced me to a group of parents (with children attending a school research site) as "a professor" and went on to assure everyone that I was not "hoity-toity" and had "been vetted" by Elders in the community and was therefore "safe." I am aware that trust is earned and easily broken.

For these reasons, I feel it is important to pursue projects in the spirit of partnership, share leadership, and work as equal participants with community partners who contribute ideas and perspectives that drive and guide the work. For example, my projects often involve an advisory committee of representatives from the community organization and adhere to the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). In a current project, the community partner is retaining ownership and possession of deidentified audio recordings and focus group and interview transcriptions, as well as materials created for knowledge dissemination. The community partner also controls the management of audio recordings, transcriptions, and dissemination materials and makes decisions regarding access to these materials in a manner that ensures respectful dissemination of findings for academic and public purposes. I am also fortunate to work closely with and receive guidance and mentorship from Indigenous Elders who ensure that research activities are meaningful, respectful, and culturally responsive.

LH: My work is guided by my values—my commitment to anti-racism and decolonization in my teaching and research and a strong desire to reduce social and economic inequalities. In a reciprocal way, that work influences who I am, the community-building efforts I engage in, the advocacy work I do, etc. Formally speaking, my partnerships are often with immigrant-serving agencies who provide services and programs to

newcomers and refugees. Within these partnerships, I often work with cultural brokers. Developing and maintaining my partnerships with the organizations and cultural brokers I work with is essential, and these relationships take months (sometimes years) to develop. Recently, I have worked primarily with two refugee communities: refugees from Syria and refugees from South Sudan. Beyond simply recruiting participants and assisting with interpretation during interviews and focus groups, these cultural brokers provide a wealth of important cultural knowledge and insight regarding community members' literacy and education levels, pre- and postmigration experiences (including exposure to trauma and violence), gender norms, religious practices, and so on. Over time, after months of working closely together, I often become quite close to these cultural brokers. For instance, when the COVID-19 pandemic started, they were the first people I reached out to, recognizing how systemic health and social inequities led to increased risks for Black, Indigenous, and people of colour. When I learned that one of my cultural brokers had experienced job loss, I assisted them with accessing the food bank, reviewed a copy of their résumé, and tried to provide emotional support during this loss.

Because we are scholars from outside the communities we work with, we include individuals from these communities as part of our research teams. We are careful to ensure that interactions, actions, and research processes are respectful, beneficial for the community, and not extractive. For a project to be successful, it is important that community partners believe in the work and trust that it is not something done *to* them or *for* them but *with* them. We are acutely aware of the need to establish credibility and trust and the importance of sensitivity to culture, values, beliefs, and language differences. We understand that participants may need referrals or the presence of support during research activities (e.g., interpreters, cultural brokers, or Indigenous Elders). We are both personally motivated by social justice and social action, and aspects of emotional labor and care work weave throughout our experiences, approaches to our work, and reflections.

Professional Dimensions

Academic disciplinary norms, faculty status and rank, professional community membership, departmental support, and socialization processes that shape individual motivations are all professional factors associated with faculty engagement (Wade & Demb, 2009). The following selections from our reflections illustrate professional dimensions of faculty engagement.

EM: I moved over 3,000 km to Alberta, Canada, to begin my faculty appointment 4 years ago with no prior personal, community, or academic colleague connections. I wanted to get involved in the broader community as way to establish a direction for the kind of new research program that I had envisioned for myself (i.e., community-engaged) and to develop meaningful relationships with education stakeholders and community organizations. As I settled into my position, my university was open to recognizing service in the broader community as part of my service duties. Although not universally supported, my work has benefited from the fact that there are social justice, applied (Romero, 2019), and publicly engaged (Burawoy, 2004) approaches in my discipline (sociology). Further, much of the research-related professional development, guidance, and mentorship that I received at the beginning of my faculty appointment came from my involvement in the community and guidance from community partners (including Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, school administrators, students, and parents) to ensure that research activities were appropriate and respectful from an Indigenous perspective as well as useful, meaningful, and relevant from a student, parent, and schooling and education perspective.

LH: My identity as a community-engaged scholar has evolved over time. As a tenure-track faculty member, I continued to coauthor laboratory-based experiments in mainstream journals. While these manuscripts are challenging, and may include five separate experiments, sometimes online data collection for

these experiments can occur in a matter of days or weeks. Now that I am through the tenure process, like many academics, I feel more comfortable pursuing projects I am passionate about and where impact will be felt in communities rather than through traditional metrics like the h-index. Community-engaged projects will have slower timelines and many have been completely halted during the pandemic. As well, in my discipline (industrial/organizational psychology), community-engaged research is viewed as inferior and less rigorous than traditional research.

The community-engaged work that we currently do represents a significant departure from the more traditional academic research training we received at some of Canada's most research-intensive universities. By traditional academic research, we mean research driven by academics in which projects are designed primarily based on scientific rigor and prevailing academic theories, academics "own" the data and conduct all analyses and interpretation of the results, and findings are published in peer-reviewed academic journals. This professional and academic socialization shaped our research activities during the early stages of our careers, and we each learned about community-engaged work through on-the-ground experience with community partners. Furthermore, as the reflections above suggest, some disciplines (e.g., sociology, social work) may be more aligned with or conducive to community-engaged research than others, and expectations associated with scholarship criteria for tenure and promotion (including some institutions' unwillingness to credit community-engaged research toward these goals) may discourage faculty from pursing engaged research until after they have achieved tenure (Antonio et al., 2000; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; O'Meara, 2005, 2008). It is also important to point out the gendered nature of community-engaged work. Female faculty are overrepresented among community-engaged scholars (Antonio, 2002; Antonio et al., 2000; O'Meara, 2003). At the same time, there are gender disparities in terms of who holds the highest ranking faculty positions and salary, and other barriers to faculty advancement include gender bias on student evaluations, work-family conflict, and perceived discrepancies in organizational support (Shreffler et al., 2019).

Institutional Dimensions

Institutional dimensions of faculty engagement may include institutional mission and priorities, institutional policies, budget and funding, institutional type, and prestige (Wade & Demb, 2009). The following excerpts from our reflections highlight institutional aspects of faculty engagement, particularly the tensions that arise between our work with community partners/members, university institutions, and community organizations.

EM: I have observed a misalignment between universities and community organizations. For example, I encountered an expectation from a community organization that I would sign a research agreement drafted by their legal department that went against university research ethics protocols. The agreement required me to share all materials produced through the project as well as permit organization employees to inspect premises where project activities were taking place or where materials were located and make copies of all records/materials (including raw data such as interview audio recordings, signed consent forms, and identified interview transcripts). Since I could not sign, project activities have been on hold for over 9 months as my community partners and I navigate how best to move forward. Moreover, staffing changes and new decisions made by community partners have resulted in pausing and redesigning projects based on new priorities, needs, and input. For example, I was recently informed 10 minutes before a focus group, while participants were entering the space, that research activities needed to be changed based on last-minute decisions. The stress of this experience was enhanced by the fact that the focus group was at 6 p.m., after the university research office had closed and could not be reached.

I have also observed misalignment between community organization actors themselves related to bureaucratic rigidities and risk aversion. This, at times, has led me to advocate for what I believe is morally and ethically the right thing

to do while simultaneously working to navigate different perspectives and positions. For example, I received direction from an organization's top-level management not to share reports/results with frontline actors/clients, including participants/community members. I was also put in a position where I felt pressured to edit a final report to remove any qualitative information shared by frontline actors/clients (i.e., participants) that may put the organization in a negative light. This was a challenging experience. On the one hand, I felt obligated to authentically represent participant voices in research products/outputs and ensure those voices were heard through knowledge dissemination. On the other hand, there were organizational expectations and pressures to "toe the line." This was important to maintain the organization's support of the project and, therefore, ensure that research findings would be used to shape organizational policies and processes. In these situations, I became the person negotiating between community members, community organization management/personnel, and university personnel, which can be frustrating and exhausting at times. I have learned to do things differently than I was taught in graduate school. For example, I am often reminded by an Elder whom I work with closely to think less and feel more and follow my heart.

LH: Political will and public attitudes often influence funding sources that impact which communities researchers partner with. For instance, in Canada under Harper's Conservative government (2006–2015), there was a focus on immigration policy and much academic research was on economic migrants. Under Trudeau's Liberal government (2015–present), there has been a shift of focus toward refugees, corresponding to the federal government's increased focus on humanitarian assistance. Trudeau's electoral promise to rapidly resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees corresponded with a funding call by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada-Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (a main federal funding agency), which cofunded a targeted pool of funds specifically for researching Syrian refugees. While the government wanted to develop an evidence base to help understand the implications of rapidly resettling cohorts of refugees, these targeted funds also created a situation in which many scholars were conducting research with—or more often on—Syrian refugees. This can create issues including participant fatigue and strain on refugee communities as well as community partners.

Community-engaged research involves different practices than traditional discovery research conducted with the purpose of contributing to academic theory and publishing in mainstream scholarly journals. It also unfolds along different timelines, which often include delays, interruptions, and pivoting to adapt to the community's evolving needs. Consider for instance the tensions between institutional bureaucracy (e.g., complying with university ethics review boards) and the emerging needs of community partners. What happens when a research project has been approved with a written consent form in participants' first language and participants arrive at a focus group with low literacy levels and struggle to sign the consent form? I remember the acute stress I felt when this happened in one of my projects, feeling like it was almost impossible to navigate emerging, time-sensitive ethical challenges that arose during my projects. These tensions—between community needs and ethics review boards—are rarely discussed in the academy, possibly out of a sense of researchers' fear. Further, while many universities claim to care about community-engaged research, recognition of this type of work remains largely absent from hiring, tenure and promotion criteria, and awards criteria. Over time, I have become increasingly vocal about the need to revise these criteria, but as I use my voice to advocate for this type of work, I am aware of the costs associated with challenging the status quo.

Simultaneously navigating community and academic spaces and expectations can be complex. Community-engaged scholars are accountable not only to ethics and performance criteria set out by academic institutions but also to community members and community partner organizations that we work with. These two groups may have different expectations of reporting (e.g., reports), definitions of impact (e.g., measurable change in the community), and standards for ethical and respectful conduct (e.g., not asking an Elder for personal details requested by the university finance department, such as social insurance number, when presenting an honorarium).

Moreover, we both hold positions in smaller teaching-intensive institutions with research cultures, communities, supports, and scholarship expectations that differ from those of larger research-intensive universities. Some institutional characteristics may be more encouraging or conducive to community-engaged research (e.g., on campus community-engaged research center, lower teaching loads, lower publication standards/expectations; Antonio et al., 2000).

Relational Dimensions

Faculty engagement can reflect a series of interpersonal relationships between university and community stakeholders that evolve through phases of initiation, development, maintenance, and dissolution (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Relationship dynamics may reflect qualities including equity, satisfaction, commitment, communication, interaction, conflict management, exchanges, distribution of power, monitoring, and evaluation, and they may convey purpose and goals, procedures, and resources (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Relationships may also vary based on community partner qualities such as unique cultural features, demographic characteristics of community partners, and whether researchers are working in partnership with individuals, collectives, or community or formal/government organizations. The following passages from our reflections illustrate relational dimensions of faculty engagement.

> **EM:** My approach to initiating projects begins with volunteering my time with community organizations, getting to know people (educators, parents, youth), and building mutually respectful and trusting relationships, which can take years. My priority is to first establish

authentic relationships, and I have found that research projects often develop naturally over time from those relationships. For example, I volunteered every Thursday afternoon for 8 months in a school classroom, and I had developed an emotional connection to the students, teachers, and school. It was at this point that the school administrator initiated a discussion with me about working together on a project. Over time, I learn about the needs and challenges of the community organization and engage in conversations with community partners about working collaboratively on projects that respond to identified needs. This way, I can engage in projects with community partners, projects where community partners are informing and guiding research activities, as well as projects that benefit those participating and make meaningful and relevant contributions.

Over the years, strong trusting relationships have developed naturally with Indigenous Elders and community members connected to the organizations where I volunteer and research, relationships that now extend beyond the walls of the organizations. I am now included in family and community events, often introduced as family in community spaces, and treated as family. I have been adopted as a friend, a sister, an aunt, and a daughter—relationships that are genuinely important to me—relationships that are separate from my work. I recently had my first child, and I was asked by an Elder and her husband if I was "recruiting grandparents," and my answer was "yes." I also consult with Elders and Knowledge Keepers regularly not only about the work that I do but also about my personal growth and development, acting with purpose, and being compassionate, caring, and kind. I have also been deeply impacted and changed by the emotional and traumatic experiences that have been shared with me as well as the fact that people trust me and feel comfortable telling me about their lives. This comes with a responsibility to honor those stories and people by continuing this work and

bringing to light issues and inequalities, contributing to organizational and public understanding, and advocating for change. I do my work from my heart; I am emotionally invested in the work I do and the people I work with.

LH: While our ethics boards require us to hold strict boundaries between our research and our participants, in my work with refugee communities, participants often need help with their resettlement. I have been asked for furniture when people are underhoused and asked for help to bring family members to Canada. I have helped participants and cultural brokers access the local food bank and find donated furniture for their homes. As a community-engaged researcher, the boundaries between myself and participants feel very different from the clearly demarcated boundaries I experience in the traditional laboratory-based research I was trained to conduct. While this blurring of boundaries helps me better understand the communities I work with, it is also a form of emotional labor (especially when we are required to say no to requests for help) that has direct implications for self-care.

Many refugees share their premigration stories, and these stories often involve trauma, including experiences of violence, torture, witnessing the death of family members (including young children), and so on. Hearing these stories is a critical part of community-engaged research, regardless of the specific research questions associated with a given project. I vividly remember the story that one mother shared of losing her daughter—a toddler—during the civil war in Syria. When I heard her story, my child was the same age as the little one that mother lost, and I struggled to hold back tears. In that moment, it felt like we were no longer a researcher and a participant. We were two mothers, connecting on a deeply emotional level. Her story haunted me for many months.

Our research team has learned to set aside time to debrief and reflect as a team after we conduct interviews and focus groups. Although it was not something that ever came up in my academic training, I have learned that, as a community-engaged scholar, creating space for social support and self-care is essential. There are also beautiful tensions inherent in the work-life complexities of community-engaged scholarship. On the one hand, I often begrudge the fact that much of this work happens during evenings and weekends. On the other hand, because this work happens during evenings and weekends, I often bring my child with me. In many of the refugee communities I work with, women often bring their babies and children to events. Some of my fondest memories involve babies crawling over me as I conducted interviews. Recently my (then) 5-year-old came with me to an all-day community event with the South Sudanese community. My child was greeted with open arms, and I felt a sense of joy and belonging as I was seen as a whole person, rather than simply a researcher. Just as emotional boundaries blur when doing this type of work, so do boundaries between work and family. For me this blurring is deeply welcomed.

Given the time we dedicate to building and fostering relationships and the painful and emotional stories that community members share with us, we are personally impacted by the people we work with, and the lines between our work and personal lives can consequently become blurred. Developing trusting and mutually respectful relationships with community partners and stakeholders can take years. Maintaining these relationships requires regular communication as well as actions that support ongoing monitoring and evaluating to ensure that the partnership has reciprocal and mutual benefits, that power is shared equally, and that stakeholders continue to benefit from and value the partnership. Ending a project can bring new challenges. For example, while the community organization or grant funding may call for the completion of a project, community members and stakeholders may want the researchers to

continue their engagement in the community/ community organization and to maintain relationships fostered during the project. For community-engaged researchers, it can be difficult to disengage and reconcile the ending of a project with the relationships and connections one has established. These personal investments and emotional connections to projects and the people involved contrast with more traditional types of research relationships, which are distant, detached, objective, and neutral, as well as with the more traditional academic research training and academic socialization that many researchers receive.

Discussion

This collaborative autoethnography draws on the experiences of two community-engaged researchers. Despite our disciplinary and geographic differences, there are common themes that cut across our reflections. First, we are positioned outside the communities with which we work. We are mindful of this positionality and intentionally foster meaningful, inclusive relationships with our community partners. This process often begins by spending a significant amount of time building trust and creating research teams that include community members. Second, while we approach our work in similar ways, both of us arrived here differently. We were not trained to conduct community-engaged research; we learned through on-the-ground experience with communities. Third, through our deep involvement, we hear the emotional stories and experiences of our participants and collaborators/ partners. We experience secondary trauma and have learned the importance of self-care. We feel a deep sense of responsibility to the people and communities who have entrusted us with their stories, and this has kindled in us a desire to give back to these communities and to contribute to broader policy/practice discussions and change.

Below we provide theoretical and practical recommendations that stem from our collaborative autoethnographic study. First, we explain how our findings support an extension to Wade and Demb's model. Next, we provide recommendations for how universities and granting agencies can better support community-engaged researchers and respond to the challenges associated with disconnections between institutional environments and their stated "desire to reach beyond the ivory tower" (Byman & Kroenig, 2016).

Extend the FEM to Include Relationships With Community Partners
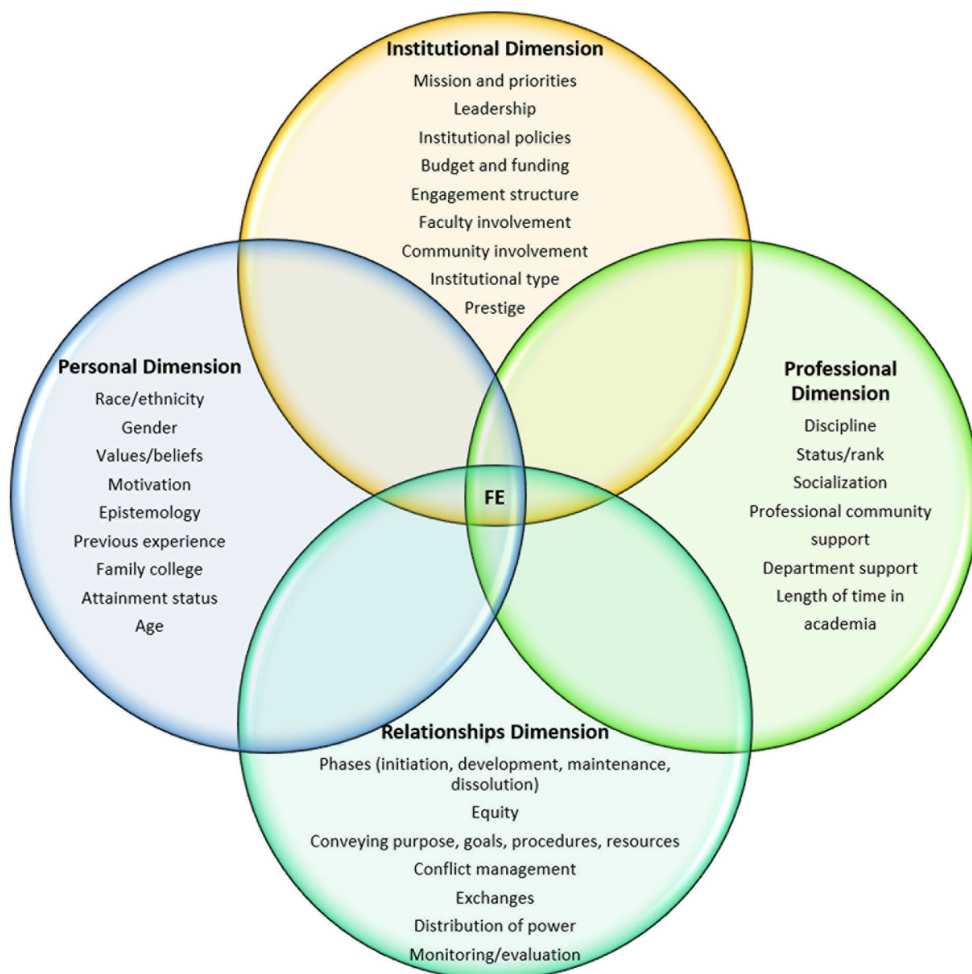
Based on the findings that emerged through our collaborative autoethnography, we recommend an extension to Wade and Demb's FEM (2009; Demb & Wade, 2012) to include an increased focus on relationships with community partners. Indeed, we extend the FEM to include relationship factors as an additional dimension related to faculty engagement. The modified FEM is illustrated in Figure 1, which is represented as a Venn diagram to capture the complexity and overlapping nature of the revised dimensions in the model.

We believe this extension speaks directly to Wade and Demb's desire to present a comprehensive model of the factors that impact faculty participation in community-engaged scholarship. Our experiences highlight that the richness of our community partnerships fuels our passion and motivation to engage in this type of work. Importantly, our proposed extension responds to Wade and Demb's call to challenge "the observer to reflect on the completeness and accuracy of the [model's] elements and their interactions" and to leverage the original model as a "systematic basis for discussion and further exploration" (2009, p. 13). Indeed, our own reflections suggest that adding relationship factors to the model would increase its comprehensiveness and accuracy. Additional implications are discussed below, and many are aligned with emerging university strategic plans, funding agency priorities, and political demands.

Reconceptualize Capacity Building and the Training of Highly Qualified Personnel

We recommend that graduate and undergraduate programs offer robust courses on community-engaged research. These courses can provide students with a foundation in the technical skills associated with more traditional research projects (e.g., learning how to review the literature, collecting and analyzing data) as well as skills related to critical analysis of complex problems, civic engagement, translation of academic jargon into accessible language, communication with partners, and soft skills such as listening and empathy (especially when engaged in projects that address sensitive issues). Ideally, these courses would incorporate experiential/ community-service learning opportunities in which students could partner with experienced faculty members to conduct small community-engaged research projects. This approach would

Figure 1. Revised FEM

Institutional Dimension
Mission and priorities
Leadership
Institutional policies
Budget and funding
Engagement structure
Faculty involvement
Community involvement
Institutional type
Prestige

Personal Dimension
Race/ethnicity
Gender
Values/beliefs
Motivation
Epistemology
Previous experience
Family college
Attainment status
Age

FE

Professional Dimension
Discipline
Status/rank
Socialization
Professional community support
Department support
Length of time in academia

Relationships Dimension
Phases (initiation, development, maintenance, dissolution)
Equity
Conveying purpose, goals, procedures, resources
Conflict management
Exchanges
Distribution of power
Monitoring/evaluation

Note. FE = Faculty engagement (community-based research, service-learning, professional service)

build the capacity of emerging scholars and practitioners by intentionally creating both one-on-one and classroom-based opportunities for students to learn how to conduct community-engaged research. O'Meara and Jaeger (2006, pp. 144–145) offer several recommendations for integrating community engagement into doctoral programs (see also Morin et al., 2016), including the development of curricula and programs that train students to conduct applied and participatory action research and to analyze community needs and assets. Ideally, these programs would also encourage interdisciplinary approaches and make university campuses central to the broader community by establishing connections to policy-makers and economic development initiatives. With few academic faculty positions available, introducing students to applied and community-

engaged work offers opportunities for networking, developing transferable skills, and exploring career paths outside of academia.

We also encourage universities and granting agencies to consider ways to recognize and support opportunities for community-engaged scholars to facilitate capacity building among community members/partners. While research and project-management training and capacity building opportunities, for example, open doors for our work to be reciprocal and mutually beneficial for community partners, these aspects of community-engaged research programs are often not captured in most major grant applications and reporting templates (including those designed for community partnerships). Grant applications invite comment on training that undergraduate/graduate students receive via the project but not on the training and

capacity building community members/partners receive via the project. This does a disservice to communities and the researchers who cocreate knowledge with them.

Provide Concrete Support for Community-Engaged Faculty Members

Tensions may exist between the evolving, time-consuming, needs-based nature of community-engaged research and the rhythms of the September to April academic schedule, which can create competing demands with teaching and service work. Supporting community-engaged research will require administrators to consider alternative teaching schedules (e.g., loading all courses into one semester, team teaching, alternative delivery models such as blended and block, and/or online teaching). PSIs must also consider ways to capture and recognize service in the broader community as part of faculty tenure and promotion criteria and workload. In addition to their research activities, community-engaged scholars are often carrying out advocacy work on and off campus, forming anti-racism groups, sponsoring families, spearheading fundraising campaigns, and enacting other initiatives for and with communities. These efforts are essential, yet they frequently represent a form of invisible labor.

We also encourage institutions to create formal structures to support and recognize the largely invisible care work and emotional labor that are disproportionately carried out by community-engaged scholars—particularly community-engaged scholars who are women and people of color. Such support could include access to counseling and mental health services and formal training on principles of trauma- and violence-informed care in the context of community-engaged research. These supports would be especially significant for students engaging in community-engaged independent study, thesis/dissertation-based work, and course-based work.

Institutions are further encouraged to create opportunities for community-engaged researchers (faculty, students) to connect with and learn from one another and to connect with community partners (practitioners, community organization stakeholders). While these connections may emerge organically (as was the case for the authors, who met while adjudicating national grants), universities could offer learning communities, mentorship programs, workshops, and roundtables catered to fostering community-engaged research, community partnerships, and an engaged research

culture and community. These opportunities could draw on faculty members and students from several local universities, which would especially benefit researchers at smaller, teaching-focused institutions who have no access or limited access to institutional research support and larger networks of like-minded faculty. To support community engagement, O'Meara and Jaeger (2006) similarly recommend that universities establish development programs and infrastructure for faculty interested in community-engaged research, such as grant writing and sharing of university resources (pp. 144–145). For community-engaged researchers to conduct meaningful, impactful work, it is critical for these researchers to participate in dialogue and processes of collective learning (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013).

Revise University Hiring, Tenure, and Promotion Processes

How to recognize and value community-engaged research is an important consideration for institutions, since there is a disconnect between many universities' stated interest in community-engaged research and their hiring, tenure, and promotion processes (Hall & MacPherson, 2011; Post et al., 2016; Sandmann et al., 2008). Typically, hiring committees and tenure and promotion criteria place a heavy emphasis on traditional outlets for knowledge mobilization, where publishing in peer-reviewed, A-level journals continues to be the gold standard. These journals are often theory driven, and a paper's acceptance may hinge on its ability to make a substantial theoretical contribution to its discipline. This practice is well suited for traditional discovery research, but it flies in the face of community-engaged research, the purpose of which is to contribute to the needs of community. This dynamic is increasingly important in the context of university funding models that seem to place a heavy focus on outcomes. Of note, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario recently pushed for the introduction of new postsecondary performance metrics that would "require institutions to publish faculty workload data including teaching loads, research outputs and salary levels" (Weingarten et al., 2019, p. 4). In this funding context, what kinds of outputs "count" toward tenure for community-engaged scholars?

Discussions about revising university hiring, tenure, and promotion processes must be accompanied by careful consideration of the definition and measurement of scholarly impact. Traditionally, bibliometrics captured the impact of academic publications using citation indices (e.g.,

h-index, i10-index). More recently, altmetrics have emerged to capture the reach and impact of scholarly output via engagement on social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook. What is missing, however, is the ability to meaningfully report on the impact of community-engaged research *to communities*. When a community-engaged project results in the creation of tangible outcomes like programs or infrastructure, it is challenging—yet possible—to articulate this impact. In contrast, when community-engaged research results in less tangible outcomes (e.g., stronger relationships between community members and a local school division), impact is difficult to define and articulate (Strunk, 2020). As noted earlier, women and people of color are overrepresented among community-engaged scholars (Antonio, 2002; Antonio et al., 2000; O'Meara, 2003) and are also less likely to receive tenure and promotion to full professor status (Shreffler et al., 2019). While many changes are needed to dismantle the systems of oppression that perpetuate these inequities, revising hiring, tenure, and promotion criteria by reconceptualizing impact is vital.

Create University Research Ethics Guidelines That Reflect the Realities of Community-Engaged Research

Community-engaged scholars have long discussed the ethical tensions and challenges they encounter with university ethics review boards (Brunger & Wall, 2016; Fouché & Chubb, 2017; Malone et al., 2006; Reid & Brief, 2009). One of the authors has spent 4 years serving on two different research ethics boards in Canada. Serving in this capacity, combined with her own experience as a community-engaged scholar, has revealed many of the existing cracks expressed by previous scholars (Fouché & Chubb, 2017; Malone et al., 2006; Reid & Brief, 2009). Ethics review committees need to be responsive and should facilitate timely modifications and changes as research projects evolve in response to community partners' needs. The requirement to continually go back to ethics boards as tiny changes are made to a project becomes administratively burdensome in a way that is disproportionate to any real or perceived ethical considerations. This is exacerbated when ethics review boards shut down over the summer months.

Conclusion

Through the lens of collaborative autoethnography, this paper offers the reflections of two researchers on their experiences with and approaches to community-engaged research. The individual-level challenges and insights shared here reveal broader implications for research practice and institutional environments. This paper adds to the literature examining engagement at PSIs by drawing from and extending Wade and Demb's (2009; Demb & Wade, 2012) FEM to include relational factors informed by Bringle and Hatcher's (2002) theoretical framework of relationships. There is a need for more literature examining community-engaged researchers' approaches, processes, conditions, and experiences (Nyström et al., 2018), and more research is likewise needed on practices that both encourage respectful and collaborative research environments and address participation barriers (Stack-Cutler et al., 2017). Further research will be especially important, as researchers engaging in authentic and respectful research partnerships have different needs and encounter different challenges based on their career stage, research area, institution (e.g., institution size and associated research support, research-intensive versus teaching-intensive), and the communities they work with.

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